



# Education Quarterly Reviews

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**Kanmaz, A. (2022). Teachers' Reading Comprehension and Use of Reading Strategies Levels: A Study on the Secondary School Teachers. *Education Quarterly Reviews*, 5(1), 1-14.**

ISSN 2621-5799

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1993.05.01.413

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

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Published by:  
The Asian Institute of Research

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# Teachers' Reading Comprehension and Use of Reading Strategies Levels: A Study on the Secondary School Teachers

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## Abstract

As highlighted by international assessments, the reading comprehension levels of Turkish students are far from the desired level. In this sense, the competencies of teachers who play a vital role in promoting students' reading comprehension skills are of high importance. The expectation that teachers who have a long educational life will have a high level of reading comprehension skills is the central starting point for this study. Identifying the level of reading comprehension of teachers is crucially important in terms of revealing competency levels of teachers. In this study, a descriptive screening model, one of the quantitative research methods, was employed to identify teachers' levels of reading comprehension and use of reading strategies. The universe of the research consists of teachers working in secondary schools in Denizli province. Stratified sampling, which is based on probability sampling, was used for the selection of the sample. The sample included a total of 418 teachers. The research findings indicate that the teachers' reading comprehension and use of reading strategies levels differ by the branch variable, and Turkish teachers exhibit better reading comprehension than other teachers since it is their field of study. In addition to that, it is seen that there is a positive and significant relationship between the level of use of reading strategies and the level of reading comprehension. Therefore, it is thought that an effective instruction of reading strategies will enable teachers of other branches to yield better performance.

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Reading Strategy, Secondary School Teachers

## 1. Introduction

People are born in different mother tongues and the mother tongue shapes their experience of the world. Language is the house of thoughts and the main component of life. Further, the capacity of people's world of thought can expand as much as the limits of their own language structure (Heidegger, 2002). The form of thinking is determined by language and thus it is the major factor that directs peoples' lives (Berger & Luckmann, 2008). The way of using language is the main tool in revealing the world of thought. Verbal and written communication processes in daily life are present in the context of language. Building healthy relationships in the society depends on the interaction of individuals' basic language skills. The development of these skills enables the existing world of thought to emerge in the best possible way. Reading activity is not a process limited to vocalizing the alphabet the

letters. Because the meaning is constructed from the text through reading activity. In addition to that, the message in the text is comprehended more accurately in the meaningful reading (Habermas, 2001). The improvement of reading process is directly proportional to the individuals' relationship with their environment. The development process of language skills begins in the zone of proximal development and those skills progress in a systematic and cumulative way throughout people's lives (Bügel & Buunk, 1996; Tayşi, 2007).

Despite the constant changes in the education and training programs, the number of reading comprehension studies is insufficient in our country. This shortcoming is observed especially in international assessments of reading comprehension and Turkish students are far from the desired level. This negative picture is at the center of the discussions towards educational and training activities (PISA, 2015; MEB, 2019; Baltacı, 2017; Kurnaz & Akaydın, 2015). For this reason, reading comprehension competencies are always at the center of the curriculum development efforts. In this process, it may not be enough to focus only on student competencies. Therefore, it is very important to consider the competencies of teachers who will contribute to students' reading comprehension skills. Teachers should also have qualified reading comprehension skills so that students can be able to reach the desired level in reading comprehension. In this frame, determining the reading comprehension level of teachers will both contribute to students' language and comprehension skills and allow them to better express themselves in the social process. Not only student competencies but also teacher competencies have long been one of the most discussed topics in our country. Reading comprehension skills are also one of the discussion topics. In this respect, identifying the reading comprehension levels of teachers will make an important contribution to reading comprehension skills. One of the most important goals of the education and training process is to develop students' reading comprehension skills (Çam, 2006). In this respect, studies have been carried out since primary school years. It is known that reading comprehension at a certain speed is very effective on the student's academic success. Therefore, improving students' reading comprehension skills can make learning and teaching activities more effective. (Suna, 2005). Further, it is important to note that exams should be implemented and evaluated in this regard and school activities for reading and comprehension skills should be developed.

Reading and comprehension process is the most effective way of understanding the reality of everyday life, facilitating the acquisition of information, and gaining a critical perspective on phenomena. In this context, reading involves skills such as understanding, analysis, synthesis and assessment (Ehri, 2005). To describe the reading activity as a real action, the individual must understand what he/she reads. This situation indicates that cognitive awareness or reading comprehension strategies work through reading (Coelho & Correa, 2017). The thoughts and emotions written down by others are reconstructed depending on the individual's reading comprehension skills. Thus, the individual who obtains the information through the reading activity can create differences in terms of cognitive, affective or behavioral aspects. The process of making a difference in the message of the read text is called the ability of reading comprehension (Saracaloğlu & Karasakaloğlu, 2011). The real aim of reading is to quickly grasp the text's message and create a distinct cognitive, affective, or behavioral difference in the person. The more the person interacts with the text he/she reads, the greater the probability of comprehending the message in the text (Davey, 1983). Reading comprehension skill requires the inclusion of various mental and affective processes regarding any text. Posing verbal or written questions about the basic message of the reading text is sufficient to reveal the level of reading comprehension at the cognitive and affective levels. Following the assessment of students' answers to the questions posed, students' reading comprehension levels can be easily understood. However, it is very difficult to determine the effect of the texts read on attitudes and behaviors (Karatay, 2007; Vega, 1996). To illustrate, it may require quite long observations to figure out the effect of some images and texts of social norms on students.

The reading activities in schools in our country are mostly based on a text and carried out in line with the instructions in the textbooks. In fact, reading instruction should enhance individual's affective skills, and it should also involve a series of purposes such as how the individual will read any text, what to pay attention to, what inferences can be made about the text, and how to perceive different types of texts. In this sense, the concept of reading strategies has come to the fore. Many different definitions have been proposed in the conceptualization of reading strategies that we encounter in the language teaching process. Since it is associated with reading skill, it can be expressed in various ways. The difference between the terms "skill" and "strategies" is that skills may suggest only passive abilities which are not necessarily activated, whereas the term "strategies" refers to deliberate

actions that learners or readers select and control to achieve desired goals or object (Carrell, 1989). Reading strategies are the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively and make sense of what they read (Barnett, 1988). Reading strategies are a range of problem solving behaviors which readers employ to get meaning from the text (Barnett, 1988, cited in Sim, 2007: 23). Reading strategies are the mental processes that readers consciously choose to use in accomplishing reading tasks (Cohen, 1990). Thus, the notion of reading strategies is a process that can effectively support students to achieve their reading goals. Reading strategies can help individuals develop skills they have unconsciously acquired and gain new skills. Because the concept of strategy refers to an immediate action taken by an individual to address the reading problems. It also contributes to a much more planned and permanent learning process when considered individually as before, during and after reading for the whole reading process.

The reading comprehension process, which emerges depending on the effective use of reading strategies, is one of the most important indicators of the individual's cognitive level of achievement. In addition, reading comprehension can also determine the social awareness levels of individuals. While the level of cognitive achievement can be measured by verbal or written expressions, social awareness can be measured by the change in attitudes and affective behaviors towards that process. Reading comprehension activities may contribute to the development of the individual's cognitive level.

The amount of an individual's vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important factors affecting the reading comprehension process. Teachers access various reading materials throughout their education life and come across many words. One of the most important assumptions about teachers is that they can fluently read their mother tongue with careful attention to grammar rules. The expectation that teachers who have a long educational life will have a high level of reading comprehension skills is the central starting point for this study. Teachers, who come across with various types of texts in their professional life, need to understand these texts correctly and carry out studies accordingly. Identifying the level of reading comprehension of teachers is crucially important in terms of revealing competency levels of teachers. Further, this study aimed at identifying teachers' reading comprehension levels will provide important insights on the adequacy of the teacher training process.

One of the major goals of teachers in the education process is to nurture students' reading comprehension skills by establishing good reading habits. In addition to that, they also encourage students to actively use the mother tongue in daily life through various activities. Classroom teachers enable students acquire reading and reading comprehension skills at the basic level. Students are directly influenced by the language habits of branch teachers as of the second grade. Identifying reading and comprehension skills of teachers, who play an effective role in this process, will provide information about the effectiveness of the education given to the students. This study will make an important contribution for us to gain insight into this topic. One of the most important findings to be obtained from this study is the results about the teachers' level of comprehension of the text's message. Furthermore, given the relevant studies on this topic, findings indicate that reading comprehension skills increase people's communication skills (Bügel & Buunk, 1996), efficiency (Ehri, 2005) and effectiveness within the organization, and enable new job opportunities (Chavez, 2001).

In addition to that, teachers should be able to use reading strategies and be aware of this issue so that they can organize effective educational activities. In this respect, the use of reading strategies enables teachers to increase their cognitive effectiveness in terms of reading comprehension. Therefore, reading strategies are a process that can be used not only in Turkish lessons but also in other lessons and studies. Raising strategy-based readers in our education system is also crucial in terms of increasing the quality of the education environment.

Since there are only few research studies investigating teachers' reading comprehension levels, this study has come forefront. In this sense, this study aims to provide suggestions for educational decision makers, teachers and teacher training institutions. In addition, it is important in every respect that the stakeholders in our education system are "strategic readers". In this respect, it is aimed to examine the levels of reading comprehension and the use of reading strategies of teachers, who are the most important stakeholders of our education system. The research question is whether reading comprehension and use of reading strategies levels of secondary school teachers differ according to various variables and thus the study attempts to find out the relationship between the

levels of reading comprehension and use of reading strategies. To this end, answers to the following questions will be sought:

1. What is the reading comprehension level of secondary school teachers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the reading comprehension levels of secondary school teachers and their demographic characteristics (gender, education level, branch and seniority)?
3. What is the secondary school teachers' use of reading strategies level?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the use of reading strategies of secondary school teachers and their demographic characteristics (gender, education level, branch and seniority)?
5. Is there a relationship between secondary school teachers' reading comprehension and use of reading strategies levels?

## 2. Methodology

In this study, descriptive screening model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used to determine teachers' reading comprehension and use of reading strategies levels. Survey models are research approaches which aim to describe a past or current situation in the way it exists (Karasar, 2010). In the descriptive survey model, the research problem is tried to be determined within its context.

### 2.1. The Study Group

The universe of the research consists of 418 teachers working in secondary schools in Denizli and Adana provinces. Stratified sampling, which is based on probability sampling, was used for the selection of the sample. Using the stratified sampling method, 376 teachers were selected. However, the number of sample was increased to improve the validity of the study and the sample included a total of 411 teachers. Demographic information of the study group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Variable	Group	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	241	57.7
	Male	177	42.3
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	325	77.8
	Graduate	93	22.2
Seniority	1-5 years	92	22.0
	6-14 years	189	45.2
	15-24 years	85	20.3
	25 years and above	52	12.4
Branch	Science	62	14.8
	English	40	9.6
	Mathematics	69	16.5
	Religion Culture	34	8.1
	PCG	51	12.2
	Physical Education	22	5.3
	Social Studies	50	10.0
	Turkish	50	12.0
	Art	25	6.0
	Music	15	3.6

### 2.2. Data Collection Tools

In this study, "Reading Strategies Scale" developed by Karatay (1998) was used to determine reading strategies. In order to determine the level of reading comprehension, an informative and narrative reading comprehension test developed by Karatay was employed. The response choices in the Reading Strategies scale ranged from 1 to

5. The reliability coefficient calculated by Karatay (2007) for the overall scale was .84. This result implies that the scale is reliable (Şencan, 2005). As a result of the reliability analysis for the scale, the coefficient was calculated as 0.87. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was utilized to determine the reliability coefficient. The evaluations made in the context of reading comprehension, the correct answers of the participants were scored as "2" and the wrong answers as "0". The total scores and averages were rated on a 100 points-scale. As a result of the analysis, KR-20 reliability coefficient was calculated as .73 for the narrative text and .75 for the informative text. These values indicate that the test is reliable (Şencan, 2005).

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The research data were obtained in a digital environment by the researcher in the 2020-2021 academic year. The participant teachers were informed about the test and scale. The answers given by the teachers to the Informative and Narrative Reading Comprehension Test and Reading Strategies Scale were converted into numerical form of data to make an evaluation in the computer environment. The scale was rated on a 100- points and the multiple-choice questions in the Reading Comprehension Achievement Test were each worth 2 points. Five categories were employed to interpret the scores obtained from the scale. Accordingly, the average score values are: "very weak" between 0 and 10.00, "weak" between 10.01 and 20.00, "moderate" between 20.01 and 30.00, "good" between 30.01 and 40.00, "very good" between 40.01 and 50. In the Reading Strategies Scale, for each of the items, the participants used a rating scale of "1= Never", "2= Very Rarely", "3= Sometimes", "4 =Very Often" and "5= Always". The data gathered in the study were analyzed using the SPSS 17 program. The reading strategies scale consisted of 33 items on a 5-point Likert -type scale. The minimum number of points that could be obtained on the scale was 33, while the maximum was 165. The competency level of each sub-dimension were determined. The total points scored by the participants were calculated. In addition to that, skewness and kurtosis coefficients and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were scanned to see the normal distribution of scores and decide the following analyzes to be performed, and the results are presented below.

Table 2: Normality test results regarding score distributions

Scale	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Kurtosis		Skewness		K-S Test
			Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	
Reading Strategy	176.44	17.713	-.867	.513	-1.178	.254	<b>p=0.611</b>

According to the data in Table 2, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were tested before proceeding to the analysis of data. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients were checked for the normality assumption. Looking at the skewness and kurtosis coefficients, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis values of all sub-dimensions and the total scores of the scale lie between -2 and +2. A skewness value between -1.5 and +1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and a skewness value between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2010) are considered as an indicator of normal distribution. The kurtosis values of this study were found between -.867 and .513, and the skewness values were between -1.178 and .254. In this context, the scores recorded by 418 students indicate a normal distribution in terms of both the total scale and sub-dimensions. Therefore, t-test and Single Factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which are parametric statistical techniques, were employed to respond to the sub-problems of the scale. Data were analyzed using SPSS 17.0. The significance level (p) was accepted as 0.05 in the analysis process of the data.

### 3. Results

The descriptive statistics for teachers' reading comprehension levels are tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3: The descriptive statistics for teachers' reading comprehension levels

Dimensions	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	1	2	3
Reading Comprehension Level of Informative Texts	418	22.67	6.25	-		
Reading Comprehension Level of Narrative Texts	418	32.99	5.05	83*	-	
General Reading Comprehension Level	418	27.71	4.64	68*	80*	-

As can be seen in Table 3, the participant teachers' reading comprehension level of narrative texts is good ( $\bar{X}$  =32.99) while their reading comprehension level of the informative texts ( $\bar{X}$  =22.67) and the overall scale ( $\bar{X}$  =27.71) are moderate. When the correlation coefficients between text types are evaluated, a positive and high level ( $r=.83$ ) relationship is found between informative and narrative texts. Given the relationship between the general reading comprehension level and its sub-dimensions, there is a positive and high level ( $r=.80$ ) relationship between the general reading comprehension level and reading comprehension level of narrative texts and there is a positive and moderate relationship ( $r=.68$ ) between the general reading comprehension level and the reading comprehension level of informative texts.

Table 4: Differentiation of teachers' reading comprehension levels by gender variable – independent sample t-test analysis results

Dimensions	Gender	N	X	Sd	Sd	t	p
Reading Comprehension Level of Informative Texts	Female	241	24.30	5.89	.38	.708	.000
	Male	177	21.94	4.64	.35		
Reading Comprehension Level of Narrative Texts	Female	241	32.46	4.74	.30	1.093	.252
	Male	177	31.98	4.17	.31		
General Reading Comprehension Level	Female	241	28.38	4.49	.58	1.109	.000
	Male	177	26.96	3.29	.49		

Table 4 indicates the results as to whether the teachers' reading comprehension levels of informative texts differ by the gender variable. Accordingly, it is seen that female teachers' reading comprehension levels ( $\bar{x}$ =24.30; Sd=5.89) are higher than male teachers' reading comprehension levels ( $\bar{x}$ =21.94; Sd=4.64) and there is a significant difference in favor of female teachers ( $t=0.708$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Although there is a significant difference, both female and male teachers comprehend the informative texts at a moderate level. Given the statistical data regarding the reading comprehension level of narrative texts, there is no significant difference between female and male teachers ( $t=1.093$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Teachers in both groups comprehend narrative texts at the moderate level. Given the analysis of the teachers' general reading comprehension levels, it is determined that the female teachers' reading comprehension levels ( $\bar{x}$ =27.38; SD=4.49) are higher than the male teachers' reading comprehension levels ( $\bar{x}$ =26.96; Sd=3.29) and the significant difference is in favor of female teachers ( $t=1.109$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). When this result is considered together with the sub-dimensions average scores, it can be argued that the main factor revealing this difference emanates from the difference in informative texts. In a broad sense, it can be contended that reading comprehension levels of male and female teachers are moderate in informative texts and good in narrative texts.

The data concerning whether the teachers' reading comprehension levels vary by education level are reported in Table 5.

Table 5: Differentiation of teachers' reading comprehension levels by education level variable – independent sample t-test analysis results

Dimensions	Education Level	N	X	Sd	Sd	t	p
Reading Comprehension Level of Informative Texts	Bachelor's	325	21.94	5.51	.30	-1.488	.137
	Degree	93	22.88	4.91	.50		
	Graduate						
Reading Comprehension Level of Narrative Texts	Bachelor's	325	32.30	4.37	.24	.380	.704
	Degree	93	32.10	4.98	.51		
	Graduate						
General Reading Comprehension Level	Bachelor's	325	27.12	3.95	.43	-.782	.434
	Degree	93	27.49	4.29	.89		
	Graduate						

Table 5 shows the results regarding whether the reading comprehension levels of the teachers as regards to the dimension of reading comprehension level of informative texts differ by the gender variable. As can be seen from the table, the undergraduate teachers' reading comprehension level of informative texts is ( $\bar{x}$ =21.94; SD=5.51), while the graduate teachers' reading comprehension level of informative texts is ( $\bar{x}$ =22.88; Sd=4.91), and there is

no significant difference between the groups ( $t=-1.488$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). In addition to that, the teachers in both groups have a moderate level of reading comprehension of informative texts. Given the statistics regarding reading comprehension level of narrative texts, no significant difference is found in terms of education level variable ( $t=.380$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). In a similar vein, the teachers in both groups have a moderate level of reading comprehension of narrative texts. Given the data related to the general reading comprehension level, there is no significant difference ( $t=.782$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). According to these results, contrary to expectations, teachers with graduate degree do not have any significant effect on reading comprehension levels.

The statistics on whether the reading comprehension levels of the teachers differ according to the variable of seniority are stated in Table 6. Given the Table 6, the scores of teachers with 1-5 years of seniority regarding the reading comprehension level of informative texts are  $\bar{x}=22.50$ ;  $Sd=6.49$ , the scores of teachers with 6-14 years of seniority are  $\bar{x}=23.11$ ;  $Sd=6.68$ , the scores of teachers with 15-24 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=22.12$ ;  $Sd=5.40$ ), and the scores of teachers with 25 years or more seniority are ( $\bar{x}=22.23$ ;  $Sd=5.52$ ). As a result of the analysis of variance based on these averages, no significant difference was found between the groups ( $F=.640$ ;  $p=.590>0.05$ ). Thus, it can be stated that teachers at all seniority comprehend the informative texts at a moderate level.

Given the results of the narrative texts, the reading comprehension scores of the teachers with 1-5 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=33.62$ ;  $Sd=4.55$ ), the reading comprehension scores of the teachers with 6-14 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=32.63$ ;  $Sd=5.51$ ), the reading comprehension scores of the teachers with 15-24 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=32.75$ ;  $Sd=4.90$ ), and the scores of teachers with 25 years and more seniority are ( $\bar{x}=33.60$ ;  $Sd=4.32$ ). As a result of the analysis of variance performed, no significant difference was observed between the groups ( $F=1.108$ ;  $p=.346>0.05$ ). In view of the data obtained, it can be articulated that teachers at all seniority comprehend the narrative texts at a moderate level.

Table 6: Differentiation of teachers' reading comprehension levels by seniority variable – independent sample t-test analysis results

Dimensions	Seniority	N	X	Ss'	Sd	F	p	Differentiation
Reading Comprehension Level of Informative Texts	1-5 years	92	22.50	6.49	.67	.640	.590	
	6-14 years	189	23.11	6.68	.48			
	15-24 years	85	22.12	5.40	.58			
	+25	52	22.23	5.52	.76			
Reading Comprehension Level of Narrative Texts	1-5 years	92	33.62	4.55	.47	1.108	.346	
	6-14 years	189	32.63	5.51	.40			
	15-24 years	85	32.75	4.90	.53			
	+25	52	33.60	4.32	.59			
General Reading Comprehension Level	1-5 years	92	27.98	4.71	.98	.294	.830	
	6-14 years	189	27.69	5.04	.72			
	15-24 years	85	27.91	4.30	.93			
	+25	52	27.72	3.65	1.01			

Given the general reading comprehension level of the teachers, the general reading comprehension scores of the teachers with 1-5 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=27.98$ ;  $Sd=4.71$ ), and the scores of the teachers with 6-14 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=27.69$ ;  $Sd=5.04$ ), the scores of teachers with 15-24 years of seniority are ( $\bar{x}=27.91$ ;  $Sd=4.30$ ), and the scores of teachers with 25 years or more seniority are ( $\bar{x}=27.72$ ;  $Ss=3.61$ ). As a result of the analysis of variance, no significant difference was detected between the groups ( $F=.294$ ;  $p=.830>0.05$ ). The findings demonstrate that the general reading comprehension levels of teachers at all seniority levels are moderate. More specifically, it can be argued that seniority has no effect on reading comprehension.

According to Table 7, the reading comprehension levels of the teachers differ significantly by the branch variable. Given the reading comprehension levels of informative texts, it is seen that Turkish teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}=30.03$ ;  $Sd=8.60$ ), English teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}=24.10$ ;  $Sd=5.32$ ), Mathematics teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}=21.84$ ;  $Sd=6.52$ ), Religious Culture

teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =23.50; Sd=5.86), PCG teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =22.41; Sd=3.47), Physical Education teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =19.64; Sd=2.46), Social studies teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =20.08; Sd=4.09), Science teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =19.96; Sd=4.18), Art teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =20.52; Sd=3.07), and Music teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =20.93; Sd=4.71). As a result of the variance analysis, it was observed that teachers' reading comprehension level of the informative texts differed in terms of the branch variable ( $F=11.424$ ;  $p=.000<0.05$ ). According to the Tukey HSD test results, the difference is in favor of Turkish teachers when compared to teachers in all other branches. Following the test between English Teachers and Physical Education, Social Studies, Science and Art Teachers, a significant difference was found in favor of English teachers. Further, given the analysis between Religious Culture teachers and Physical Education, Social Studies, Science and Art Teachers, a significant difference was found in favor of the Religious Culture teachers. In addition to that, it was understood that Turkish teachers comprehend the informative texts at a good level, while the Physical Education and Science teachers comprehend at a weak level, and the teachers in other branches have a moderate level of reading comprehension.

Table 7: Differentiation of teachers' reading comprehension levels by branch variable – independent sample t-test analysis results

Dimensions	Branch	N	X	Sd	Sd	F	p	Differentiation
Reading Comprehension Level of Informative Texts	Turkish	62	30.03	8.60	.89	<b>11.424</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1/2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10</b>
	English	40	24.10	5.32	.84			
	Mathematics	69	21.84	6.52	.78			
	Religion and Culture	34	23.50	5.86	.86			
	PCG	51	22.41	3.47	.48			
	Physical Education	22	19.64	2.46	.52			
	Social Sciences	50	20.08	4.09	.57			
	Science	50	19.96	4.18	.59			
	Art	25	20.52	3.07	.61			
	Music	15	20.93	4.71	.91			
Reading Comprehension Level of Informative Texts	Turkish	62	36.37	6.56	.83	<b>7.075</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1/2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10</b>
	English	40	33.17	3.98	.63			
	Mathematics	69	30.57	5.10	.61			
	Religion and Culture	34	34.18	4.07	.69			
	PCG	51	33.88	3.97	.55			
	Physical Education	22	30.23	4.90	.64			
	Social Sciences	50	32.06	4.10	.58			
	Science	50	32.44	4.32	.61			
	Art	25	32.64	4.18	.83			
	Music	15	33.60	3.68	.95			
General Reading Comprehension Level	Turkish	62	33.20	6.04	.84	<b>9.333</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1/2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10</b>
	English	40	28.64	3.91	.83			
	Mathematics	69	26.21	5.14	.74			
	Religion and Culture	34	28.84	4.25	.73			
	PCG	51	28.14	2.44	.68			
	Physical Education	22	24.93	2.47	1.05			
	Social Sciences	50	26.07	3.26	.92			
	Science	50	26.20	3.22	.91			
	Art	25	26.58	2.97	.78			
	Music	15	27.26	3.32	.77			

Based on the data on the reading comprehension levels of narrative texts, Turkish teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =36.37; Sd=6.56), English teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =33.17; Sd=3.98), Mathematics teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =30.57; Sd=5.10), Religious Culture teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =34.18; Sd=4.07), PCG teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =33.88; Sd=3.97), Physical Education teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =30.23; Sd=4.90), Social Studies teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =32.06; Sd=4.10), Science teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =32.44; Sd=4.32), Art teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =32.64; Sd=4.18), and Music teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =33.60; Sd=3.68).

As a result of the analysis of variance, it was observed that teachers' reading comprehension level of narrative texts differed by the branch variable ( $F=9.333$ ;  $p=.000<0.05$ ). According to the Tukey HSD test results, the difference between Turkish teachers and teachers in all other branches was in favor of Turkish teachers while there was a significant difference in favor of English teachers when compared to Mathematics and Physical Education Teachers. Further, following the analysis between Religious Culture teachers and Mathematics, Physical Education and Social Studies teachers, a significant difference was found in favor of Religious Culture teachers. Consequently, it can be interpreted that there is a significant difference between the mean scores and the reading comprehension scores of the teachers in all branches are at a good level.

According to data on the general reading comprehension scores of teachers, Turkish teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =33.20; Sd=6.04), English teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =28.64; Sd=3.91), Mathematics teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =26.21; Sd= 5.14), Religious Culture teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =28.84; Sd=4.25), PCG teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =28.14; Sd=2.44), Physical Education teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =24.93; Sd=2.47), Social Studies teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =26.07; Sd=3.26), Science teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =26.20; Sd=3.22), Art teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =26.58; Sd=2.97), and Music teachers' reading comprehension scores are ( $\bar{x}$ =27.26; Sd=3.32). As a result of the variance analysis, it was observed that the general reading comprehension levels of the teachers significantly varied in terms of the branch variable ( $F=9.333$ ;  $p=.000<0.05$ ).

The results of Tukey HSD test conducted to reveal the difference between the groups revealed that the difference between Turkish teachers and teachers in all other branches was in favor of Turkish teachers while there was a significant difference in favor of English teachers when compared to Mathematics and Physical Education, Social Studies and Science Teachers. Further, following the comparison between Religious Culture teachers and Mathematics, Physical Education and Social Studies, Science and Art teachers, a significant difference was found in favor of Religious Culture teachers. In addition to that, when the general reading comprehension scores of the teachers were examined, it was concluded that the reading comprehension levels of the Turkish teachers were good, while the teachers in all other branches were at a moderate level. This result is related to the fact that the content of reading comprehension is incorporated into the curriculum of Turkish lessons and Turkish teachers conduct activities on this topic. Looking at the mean scores, it can be said that the most successful group after Turkish teachers are English teachers who carry out studies in the context of language education.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics regarding the level of teachers' use of reading strategies

	N	Minimum	Maximum	$\bar{X}$	Sd
<b>Reading Strategies</b>	418	3.27	4.60	3.79	0.26

Statistics on the level of teachers' use of reading strategies are stated in Table 8. Thus, it is seen that the mean level of teachers' use of reading strategies is 'Very Frequent' ( $\bar{x}$ =3.79; Sd=0.26). When this result is associated with reading comprehension levels, it can be concluded that strategy use is effective on comprehension skills.

Table 9: Variance analysis and t-test results of the level of teachers' use of reading strategies

Variable	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	F/t	p	Differentiation
Gender	Female	241	3.98	0.38	1.412	0.041	
	Male	177	3.79	0.29			
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	325	3.84	0.57	-.874	.383	
	Graduate	93	3.90	0.32			
Seniority	1-5 years	92	3.80	0.25	.859	.376	
	6-14 years	189	3.89	0.12			
	15-24 years	85	3.86	0.32			
	25 years and above	52	3.78	0.20			
Branch	Turkish	62	4.20	0.19	1.925	.007	<b>1/2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10</b>
	English	40	3.87	0.21			
	Mathematics	69	3.83	0.33			
	Religion Culture	34	3.88	0.25			
	PCG	51	3.89	0.22			
	Physical Education	22	3.75	0.16			
	Social Studies	50	3.80	0.19			
	Science	50	3.83	0.16			
	Art	25	3.75	0.16			
	Music	15	3.68	0.18			

The data on whether the level of teachers' use of reading strategies differ by demographic variables is shown in Table 9. According to Table 9, gender ( $t=-1.412$ ;  $p=0.041<0.05$ ) and branch ( $F=9.333$ ;  $p=.007<0.05$ ) variables yield significant differences while there are no significant differences in terms of education level ( $t=-.874$ ;  $p=.383>0.05$ ) and seniority ( $F=.859$ ;  $p=.376<0.05$ ). 0.05) variables. When the differences among groups are examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference in favor of female teachers according to the gender variable. This result coincides with the results of the reading comprehension level by the gender variable. According to the Tukey HSD test results related to the branch variable, it is understood that the difference is in favor of Turkish teachers when compared to teachers in all other branches. This result demonstrates that Turkish teachers use reading strategies more frequently than teachers in all other branches. Thus, it is not surprising that they have a high level of reading comprehension.

Table 10: Teachers' results regarding scales and correlation coefficients

	$\bar{X}$	Sd	N
Reading Comprehension	27.71	4.64	418
Use of Reading Strategy	3.79	0.26	418

  

Correlation	Reading Comprehension	Use of Reading Strategies
Reading Comprehension	1	.623**
Use of Reading Strategy	.623**	1

\*\*  $p<0,01$

The fifth sub-problem of the study attempts to determine whether there is a relationship between teachers' use of reading strategies and their reading comprehension levels. The Pearson product moment correlation results regarding teachers' use of reading strategies and reading comprehension level scores are given in Table 11. As we can see from Table 11, there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between teachers' use of reading strategies and their reading comprehension level ( $r=.623$ ,  $p<.001$ ). In view of the data obtained, as the level of teachers' use of reading strategies increases, their level of reading comprehension also increases.

#### 4. Discussion and Interpretation

The level of reading comprehension has been documented in the literature by several studies. Much attention has been drawn to the relationship between demographic variables and the level of reading comprehension. Previous studies confirm that variables such as gender, education level, branch, and seniority have various effects on reading comprehension (Brantmeier, 2003; Bügel & Buunk, 1996; Chávez, 2001; Pine, 2006; Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000; Karatay, 2007; Phakiti, 2003; Suna, 2006; Tayshi, 2007). Contrary to the results of this study, previous studies also indicate that professional seniority has a positive effect on reading comprehension. Teachers gain more experience as they get older and tend to reflect their life experiences on the text they read (Brantmeier, 2003). The reading comprehension process is also significantly affected by teachers' level of education (Bügel & Buunk, 1996; Chavez, 2001).

Given the relevant literature, it is understood that the level of reading comprehension is quite low in some studies conducted with students, pre-service teachers and teachers (Başaran, 2013; Yılmaz, Köse, & Korkut 2009; Urgan, 2008; Kartal & Özteke, 2010; Topuzkanamış & Maltepe, 2010; Saracaloğlu & Karasakaloğlu, 2011). However, it is important to note that different results have been obtained as well. Some other studies reveal that reading comprehension is at moderate or high levels. (Odabaş, Odabaş & Polat, 2008; Can, Türkyılmaz & Karadeniz, 2010). Teachers with high level of reading and comprehension skills play an effective role in providing students with the desired knowledge and skills. One of the most crucial part of the learning and teaching process is teachers' ability to transfer knowledge. Therefore, teachers can transfer their knowledge, skills and behaviors more easily (Friedman & Miyake 2004).

The use of reading strategies is of vital importance in terms of the effectiveness of the reading comprehension process. In the present study, results denoted that the reading comprehension levels of the teachers who could do strategy-based reading were quite high. Given the branch variable, it is seen that Turkish teachers are also very successful in this regard. A positive and significant relationship was also found between the use of reading strategies and reading comprehension levels. Similar to the findings obtained in this study, Van Kraayenoord and Schneider (1999) concluded in their study that there is a positive and significant relationship between reading and reading comprehension processes and reading strategies. With respect to the effectiveness of comprehension strategies, Stevens (1988) conducted a strategy training whereby students' ability to comprehend and identify the main idea of paragraphs improved. Likewise, studies investigating the effects of reading and comprehension strategies on reading comprehension yielded consistent results ( Paporello, 1991; Swennumson, 1992; Mayer, 1996; Brandshaw, 1998; Salembier, 1999; Kıroğlu, 2012; Botsas & Padeliađu, 2003; Tok, 2003; Hardebeck, 2006; Fotovatian & Shokrpour, 2007; Aydoğan, 2008; Çöğmen, 2008; Clark, 2009). Further, Swennumson (1992) underlined that strategy-based reading also had a positive effect on reading speed. In another study stressing the effect of reading strategy use, Rich and Blake (1994) pointed out that these strategies also had a positive effect on people's recall levels. Previous studies in the relevant literature also unveiled that the use of reading strategy is not effective on reading comprehension skills (Cantu, 2006; Özyılmaz & Alcı, 2011).

Our research findings on the gender variable are supported by several researchers as well. According to previous studies, girls reported statistically significant higher reading comprehension than boys. In their study, Çiftçi and Temizyürek (2008) investigated the reading comprehension success level of fifth grade students and found that female students achieved a higher level of success than boys. Bazaar and Ateş (2009) examined girls' reading comprehension success and attitudes towards reading and posited that girls were better than boys. Ceran, Oğuzgiray Yıldız, and Özdemir (2015) examined students' reading comprehension levels by gender and age variables and they acknowledged that there was a significant difference in favor of female students. Sallabaş (2008)

evaluated the reading comprehension levels and reading attitudes of 8th grade students and reported that there was a gender difference in favor of female students. According to previous studies revealing the effectiveness of language skills such as reading comprehension, girls are more successful than boys. Some scholars associate it with gender-related differences in the maturation process (Akyol, 2005; Güneş 2004).

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