Abstract
Phonological awareness skills begin to develop at preschool ages and support reading skills during school ages. Studies on phonological awareness show great relationship with reading skills development. Since literacy talents such as phonological awareness and vocabulary represent future success in reading, assisting literacy skills during preschool period, has a great importance in preventing problems associated with reading abilities of upcoming years. Literature suggests positive effects of phonological awareness on reading abilities. However, not only the positive effects of phonological awareness on reading skills, but also the relation between phonological awareness and reading skills should be considered. The aim of this article is to emphasize phonological awareness in terms of description, development and its’ effects on reading skills and discusses the possible positive outcomes of the phonological awareness skills training given beginning from the preschool period in Turkey.

Keywords
Phonological Awareness, Reading Skills, Metalinguistic Skills.
Phonological awareness that begin to develop at preschool ages supports reading skills during school ages. A review of the literature demonstrates that phonological awareness is considered as the most important step of developing reading abilities. Besides, studies on phonological awareness present great correlation with reading skills development (Acarlar, Ege & Turan 2002; Phelps, 2003). Children discriminate different sounds, vocalize and reflect the level of phonemic potential first. The awareness of children on vocalizing phonemes and recognition of the order of phonemes during a daily conversation or reading is identified as “phonological awareness skills” (Otto, 2006; Phelps, 2003). Children who have acquired phonological awareness skills, take a step forward to metalinguistic skills by the manipulation of sounds (Bialystok, & Ryan-Bourchan, 1985; Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

The Development of Phonological Awareness Skills:

The order of the acquisition of phonological awareness skills are as follows:
- rhyme skills
- spelling
- recognizing words with similar sounds ahead
- recognizing words with similar sounds at the end
- recognizing the number of sounds in a word and spelling vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel, consonant-vowel-consonant style words
- spelling consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel-consonant and consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant style words
- Manipulating the sounds in a word (e.g. Deleting /c/ and pronouncing a new word /at/ instead of /cat/) (Paul, 1995).

Children might be at different skill levels on word awareness and syllable awareness in the same process. However, it should be considered that phonological awareness skills are the basics of developing reading abilities (Jenkins & Bowen 1994; Owens, 1999; Roth & Baden, 2001; Roth, Troia, Worthington & Handy, 2006; Stone, Merritt & Cherkes-Julkowski, 1998; Wright & Jacobs, 2003).
Relationship between Phonological Awareness Skills and Reading:

Phonological awareness skills are considered as the most important indicators of early reading skills. Literature suggests a strong positive correlation between phonological awareness skills and reading skills development. Besides, longitudinal studies show that children who don’t have phonological awareness skills have difficulties in reading (Taylor, 1996). Moreover, experimental studies on phonological awareness suggest that the implementation of phonological awareness education has positive effects on the development of reading and spelling abilities (Acarlar, Ege & Turan 2002; Mann & Foy, 2003; Phelps, 2003).

The Use of Phonological Connections in Reading Process:

It is necessary to acquire three different but related skills in normal the development of phonological awareness skills. One of these skills is phonemic perception, the other one is articulation skills and the third one is phonological awareness, which is the ability of discrimination and association of the sounds in words (Acarlar & Ege, 1996; Grawburg, 2004; Topbaş, 2005).

Children who get familiar with rhymes and alliterations during preschool are more successful than children who don’t. Standard complicated phonological skills require the production of words by beginning and ending sounds (Ball, 1997; Ott, 1997; Stiller, 2005; Snowling, 2000). Similar to rhyme and alliteration skills, children who recognize the beginning and ending sounds of words are more successful than children who don’t (Jenkins & Bowen 1994; Phelps, 2003; Ball, 1997).

Children with reading problems have phonological problems as well. These problems are generally related to the discrimination of rhymes into smaller phonemic units. Children with severe phonological problems during preschool are at risk for developing reading and spelling skills (Reason & Frederickson, 2000; Roth et al, 2006; Snowling, 2000; Snowling & Stackhouse, 2001; Thomson, 2001). However, acquiring phonological awareness skills and learning the links between sounds in order to express the written symbols have positive effects on overwhelming these problems (Lovett, Laceren-
Phonological awareness skills have positive effects on reading process and fluent reading and are the indicators of future reading abilities as well (Blachman, 2000; Mc, Laughlin, 1998; Bryant, Bradley, Maclean, & Corossland, 1989; Oktay & Aktan, 2004). Problems on phonological awareness detected during preschool, will help predict the impending problems such as reading problems and reading capacity at school period (Chaney, 1992). Thus, early intervention will help prevent the future reading problems (Katzir, Wolf, O’Brien, Lovett & Morris, 2006).

In Turkey, curriculum on developing reading skills is based on phonemic approach. Since the written language of Turkish is based on alphabetical coding, students meeting with written language the first time in the classroom will possibly have reading problems. The authors of the present study suggest that the phonological awareness skills instruction at preschool period will prepare children to develop reading skills and prevent possible reading problems.
References/Kaynakça


