

Aligning First Language (L1) Curricula with PISA Reading Proficiency Levels: A Comparative Analysis of Ireland and Türkiye

Mustafa Ulutaş^a

Received : 13 January 2026
Revised : 28 April 2026
Accepted : 20 May 2026
DOI : 10.26822/iejee.2026.451

^a **Corresponding Author:** Mustafa Ulutaş,
Uşak University, Faculty of Education.
E-mail: mustafa.ulutas@usak.edu.tr
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8317-7682>

Abstract

This study undertakes a comparative examination of the alignment between first language (L1) curricula in Ireland and Türkiye and the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework. The study is motivated by the need to understand how the structural design of L1 curricula relates to the distinct performance gaps observed in international assessments, beyond socio-economic variables. Adopting a qualitative research design grounded in document analysis, the study systematically maps reading-related learning outcomes from both national curricula onto the proficiency levels defined by PISA. Rather than relying on conventional grade-level comparisons, the analysis employs a proficiency-oriented perspective to evaluate the cognitive demands embedded in curricula and the progression of reading skills. The findings indicate that the Irish curricula consistently incorporates higher-level reading skills associated with PISA Levels 4 and 5, supported by a clearly structured and coherent progression that begins in the early years of primary education. In contrast, Türkiye's 2015–2019 curricula primarily emphasize basic and intermediate reading proficiencies corresponding to PISA Levels 2 and 3, while advanced reading skills are addressed in a limited, inconsistent, and fragmented manner. However, the analysis of the 2024 Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum reveals a substantial structural shift. This new model demonstrates greater potential to align with PISA's advanced reading requirements, including critical, reflective, and problem-solving reading, by embedding these competencies within a more comprehensive and developmentally organized framework. The study concludes that examining curricula through their structural alignment with international proficiency standards provides a robust foundation for interpreting cross-national performance differences and offers practical insights to inform curriculum development and reform. Specifically, the study recommends adopting proficiency-oriented analytical frameworks for international curriculum comparisons and emphasizes the need to enhance teachers' capacity for high-order questioning to effectively implement curriculum reforms. Furthermore, ensuring the vertical continuity of advanced reading skills across all educational levels is proposed as a strategic priority for national education policy.



www.iejee.com
ISSN: 1307-9298

2026 Published by KURA Education & Publishing.
This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Keywords:

Reading Proficiency, Curriculum Alignment, Pisa 2022, First Language Curricula, Maarif Model

Introduction

International large-scale student assessments provide a valuable reference framework for the comparative evaluation of educational outcomes across national education systems. Among these assessments, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures not only students' basic reading comprehension but also their capacity to interpret and evaluate texts, engage in critical thinking, and employ metacognitive strategies during reading (OECD, 2023a). From this perspective, PISA provides a robust analytical basis for examining the quality and cognitive demands of reading skills embedded in countries' first-language curricula (Hopfenbeck et al., 2018).

The PISA 2022 results reveal statistically significant and distinct differences between countries in both average achievement levels and the distribution across proficiency levels in reading literacy. While Ireland stands out as one of the high-performing OECD countries, Türkiye's average reading literacy scores are relatively low (OECD, 2023b). This performance gap suggests that, beyond socio-economic variables, the structural design of L1 curricula and their alignment with global proficiency standards warrant a rigorous comparative examination. Studies have determined that pedagogical practices and teaching approaches are related to PISA reading performance (Ho & Gan, 2023). Accordingly, the way curricula structure reading skills can be linked to PISA results. In this context, it is essential to examine the cognitive depth and continuity of reading skills in countries' first language curricula.

In contemporary educational understanding, reading literacy encompasses cognitive competencies that go far beyond simply understanding a text, including establishing connections between texts, questioning the author's intent, critically evaluating information, and being able to monitor one's own mental processes as a reader (Butterfuss et al., 2020; Sirén & Sulkunen, 2025). In this respect, the PISA reading literacy framework defines literacy as the processes of understanding, using, evaluating, and reflecting on texts (OECD, 2019).

PISA's reading proficiency framework defines reading skills at different proficiency levels and shows the extent to which countries' education systems support them. Therefore, the extent to which curricula align with the reading proficiencies defined by PISA is essential not only for education policies but also for curricula

effectiveness (Batur & Ulutaş, 2013). At this point, rather than curricula directly targeting PISA, the fact that the dominant cognitive reading actions required in these curricula can be analytically linked to PISA reading proficiency levels forms the basis of the concept of "level of alignment" used in this study. Specifically, this study approaches the curricula not merely in terms of content coverage, but through their structural alignment with PISA's reading proficiency levels, which serves as a standard analytical yardstick for cross-national comparison. While PISA performance is influenced by a complex array of factors, empirical evidence suggests a significant relationship between the cognitive demands of national curricula and student outcomes. Studies conducted in the Turkish context indicate that the specific level of reading skills mandated in curricula is associated with students' PISA achievement (Suna et al., 2020; Ulutaş & Kaya, 2023). Furthermore, comparative analyses of high-performing countries reveal that their curricula tend to emphasize higher-order cognitive skills, whereas those in lower-performing countries often focus on lower-order skills (Cer, 2018; Sandoval-Hernandez et al., 2023). This suggests that the structural design of reading instruction and the nature of cognitive actions emphasized in teaching practices are closely associated with countries' PISA reading performance.

This study has two purposes; the main goal is to analyze, through a comparative examination of the Irish and Turkish examples, how the cognitive demands placed on reading skills in first language curricula are structured at different levels and how this structure demonstrates continuity and deepening across levels within the context of the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework. This analysis reveals the level and distribution of cognitive demands placed on reading skills in the Irish and Turkish curricula by mapping learning outcomes onto the proficiency levels defined by PISA.

The second purpose of the study is to examine the 2024 Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum, which has been implemented in Türkiye since 2024. Through this examination, the differences between Türkiye's previous curricula and the new curriculum approach are evaluated in the context of PISA reading literacy, thereby discussing the potential of this change to support higher-level reading skills and offering insights into the curriculum development process in Türkiye.

Conceptual Framework

Defining Reading Skills within Contemporary Approaches

This study approaches reading skills not only as an individual cognitive competency but also as a learning domain structured and guided through the curricula. According to the traditional understanding

of reading, novice readers acquire a hierarchical set of sub-skills that gradually develop comprehension skills; once these sub-skills are acquired, readers are considered experts who understand what they read. In this approach, reading is treated mainly as a text-centered linguistic activity, limited to recognizing and restating explicit information in written texts over a long period of time; the reader is seen as a passive recipient of that information. Based on the assumption that meaning resides in the text itself, the reader's primary goal is defined as correctly deciphering and reproducing the meaning presented in the text (Dole et al., 1991). However, in contemporary educational approaches, reading is defined as a competency area that involves multidimensional, higher-level cognitive processes, in which the reader constructs meaning through interaction with the text. In this context, reading is a complex cognitive activity that encompasses not only comprehension but also interpretation, evaluation, and critical thinking (Rosado-Castellano & Martín-Sánchez, 2023).

In contemporary reading theory, the reader is not a passive recipient of the text but an active subject who constructs meaning based on prior knowledge, contextual information, and objectives (Butterfuss et al., 2020). This process involves higher-order cognitive actions, such as establishing connections between texts, questioning the author's intent, evaluating the reliability of the information, and making inferences from the text. In this context, the contribution of processes such as assessing the reliability of texts and making inferences to reading performance has also been empirically demonstrated (Kiili et al., 2024).

One of the distinguishing features of contemporary reading theory is the consideration of metacognitive processes as an integral component of reading proficiency. The reader's ability to monitor their own comprehension processes, be aware of the strategies they use, and adjust these strategies when necessary, is among the key determinants of reading success. Indeed, studies based on PISA data reveal that metacognitive strategies, in particular, have a powerful effect on students' reading performance (Memisevic & Cehic, 2022). This finding shows that reading proficiency is closely related not only to text characteristics but also to the reader's cognitive awareness.

PISA Reading Literacy Framework

PISA defines reading literacy as the capacity of individuals to understand, use, evaluate, reflect on, and interact with written texts to achieve personal and societal goals (Koyuncu & Firat, 2020). The education literature also indicates that reading literacy is approached as an interactive structure encompassing this entire set of cognitive processes (Arastaman et al., 2024). This points to the fact that

reading skills are positioned not only as a school-based academic achievement area but also as the ability to use information sources effectively and critically in daily life. In this respect, PISA addresses reading skills as a functional, life-related competency (Pulkkinen & Rautopuro, 2022).

Within the PISA reading literacy framework, students' performance is classified into proficiency levels defined by the complexity of the cognitive reading actions required. At lower proficiency levels, skills such as finding explicit information in the text and grasping the basic meaning come to the fore; at higher proficiency levels, complex cognitive processes such as analyzing the implicit meanings of the text, comparing different perspectives, establishing relationships between multiple texts, and making critical evaluations are decisive (Araújo et al., 2020). This structure demonstrates that PISA approaches reading skills from a hierarchical and developmental perspective.

Analyses of high-performing countries reveal that the advanced competencies defined within the PISA reading framework are closely related to metacognitive evaluation and the ability to consciously manage the reading process (Bu & Chen, 2023). In particular, evaluating the reliability of the text and critically filtering information are among the distinguishing components of high-level reading proficiency. This demonstrates that the PISA reading literacy framework exhibits a substantial theoretical overlap with contemporary understandings of reading. In this respect, the PISA reading literacy framework provides a functional theoretical basis for analyzing the reading skills required in curricula, as it addresses interpretation, evaluation, critical thinking, and metacognitive processes that are prominent in contemporary reading comprehension within a holistic framework.

The Relationship Between Curriculum and Reading Proficiency

Curricula are fundamental policy documents that outline what knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors an education system expects from its students (Gökalp, 2020). Learning outcomes are perceived as tools for educational and instructional planning and curriculum development, as well as for measuring effectiveness and accountability (Proitz, 2010). In this context, the learning outcomes or acquisitions included in curricula clearly reflect which cognitive actions students are expected to perform. Therefore, curricula structure not only the content to be taught but also the levels of thinking required of students (Ersöz & Demirel, 2025).

In terms of reading skills, curricula determine the nature and limits of the relationship students will establish

with the text. The fact that curricula primarily focus on basic comprehension and retelling-based learning outcomes may lead students to experience a learning process limited to superficial reading skills. In contrast, the systematic structuring of learning outcomes that include higher-order cognitive processes, such as interpretation, evaluation, and critical thinking, supports students in developing deeper, more functional reading proficiencies. Studies conducted in the Turkish context indicate that a relationship exists between the level of reading skills required in curricula and students' PISA performance (Suna et al., 2020).

In this context, analyzing curricula in relation to the reading proficiency levels defined by PISA reveals the level of reading skills that curricula aim to equip students with. This competency-based approach allows for the comparison of curricula from countries with different education systems, independent of grade levels; it enables a more objective assessment of the cognitive demands placed on reading instruction by curricula. Therefore, the PISA reading literacy framework provides a functional, theoretical, and analytical basis for analyzing curricula.

Problem Statement

International comparative assessment studies provide data-driven grounds for discussions on restructuring education policies by revealing the strengths and weaknesses of countries' education systems. In this context, PISA has gained a prominent place on the policy and research agenda due to its approach, which does not limit reading literacy to basic comprehension but also considers more complex reading actions such as interpretation, evaluation, critical thinking, and metacognitive processes. Indeed, the increasing diversification of PISA-focused studies over the past twenty years, the intensification of technical discussions in the literature, and indicators at the student, school, and system levels demonstrate the continuity of this impact (Zheng et al., 2024).

In this study, Ireland was selected as the comparison country based on both empirical and theoretical considerations rather than a random choice. Since the early cycles of PISA, Ireland has consistently demonstrated strong performance in reading literacy (Shiel, 2002). With the exception of a decline observed in the 2009 cycle (Perkins et al., 2011), Ireland has generally performed above the OECD average. Following a series of educational reforms, including curriculum renewal, teacher education initiatives, and policy-driven instructional improvements, a marked recovery and improvement in reading performance was observed by 2018 (Hepworth et al., 2021; Looney et al., 2022; Shiel et al., 2022). Most recently, Ireland ranked among the highest-performing OECD countries in reading literacy in PISA 2022 (OECD, 2023b).

Beyond achievement outcomes, Ireland represents a relevant case due to its curriculum design in first language education, which systematically integrates higher-order cognitive processes—such as critical reading, intertextual analysis, and reflective thinking—starting from the early years of schooling (Department of Education and Youth, 2025). These features demonstrate a strong structural alignment with the PISA reading literacy framework. Therefore, Ireland was selected not only because of its high performance, but also because it exemplifies a proficiency-oriented and developmentally structured approach to reading instruction.

PISA results indicate significant differences in reading proficiency across countries; the gap between Türkiye and high-performing countries underscores the need to address the various components of the education system. However, the diversity of variables highlighted in the literature to explain reading success makes the question of the extent to which these variables are structured in line with the cognitive reading actions required by the curricula even more critical (Araújo & Costa, 2023; Kılıç-Depren & Depren, 2022; Şahin & Güzle-Kayır, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore, the comparative examination of the cognitive depth and continuity with which reading skills are structured in curricula constitutes a curriculum-based problem area.

The focus of this study on reading skills and reading proficiency is grounded in the central role of reading literacy as a key cognitive competence for both academic achievement and lifelong learning. Reading proficiency functions as a foundational tool that enables access to, comprehension of, and engagement with knowledge across all learning domains (Aturamu, 2025; Cadiz-Gabejan & Quirino, 2021).

Within the PISA framework, reading literacy extends well beyond basic comprehension to encompass higher-order cognitive processes such as interpretation, evaluation, integration of information across multiple sources, and metacognitive awareness (Thomson et al., 2013). Consequently, reading proficiency provides a powerful indicator for understanding cross-national differences in educational system performance as a whole. The literature consistently emphasizes a direct relationship between students' reading proficiency and the cognitive demands embedded in curricula (Department of Education, 2022). Accordingly, the question of how curricula structure reading skills across different cognitive levels constitutes not only a pedagogical concern, but also a strategically significant issue for education policy.

Findings regarding the metacognitive dimension of reading proficiency further reinforce the importance of a curriculum-based examination. The significant

impact of metacognitive strategies on reading success directly raises questions about how reading instruction is structured in curricula (Memisevic & Cehic, 2022). Therefore, although variables explaining reading success have emerged in the literature, there remains a strong need to examine them comparatively in the context of curricula's cognitive demands.

There are significant methodological debates in the literature regarding the interpretation and comparability of PISA data. Evidence that students may not take low-stakes exams seriously, potentially introducing bias into scores and country rankings, makes it challenging to base "cause-and-effect inferences" directly on PISA results (Akyol et al., 2021). Assessments that the representativeness of the sample and participation issues may increase the uncertainty of PISA findings also support this cautious approach (Jerrim, 2021). Furthermore, the fact that "non-construct" elements may significantly affect item difficulty in converting the assessment framework into item properties underscores the need to carefully consider the gap between the measured construct and its application (Marcq & Braeken, 2025). Such discussions suggest that positioning PISA as an analytical reference framework for comparing the cognitive demands of curricula, rather than treating it as the "final outcome" in itself, may be a more consistent approach. Findings that PISA is effective in influencing policy and reform processes on a global scale through "soft governance" mechanisms also increase the need to examine the extent to which curricula align with PISA proficiencies (Li et al., 2025). However, it is emphasized that the criticisms directed at PISA constitute a comprehensive area of discussion regarding the program's basic assumptions, implementation, and the impact of its results on global education; therefore, it is essential to ground PISA-based comparisons in pedagogical and curricular frameworks (Zhao, 2020). Thus, when PISA's worldwide impact and the critical agenda directed at PISA are evaluated together, studies that concretely examine how curricula structure reading skills can help bring many abstract claims in policy discussions to the ground. For this reason, in this study, PISA is positioned not as a "final result that ranks countries," but as an analytical reference framework for comparing the cognitive reading actions demanded by curricula.

The Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum claims to transform the quality and scope of reading skills compared to previous curricula. However, it is not yet clear how this transformation corresponds to the reading proficiencies measured by PISA, nor at what levels the curriculum intensifies cognitive reading demands. Furthermore, the limited number of studies that have examined Türkiye's previous curricula and the Maarif Model comparatively with the PISA reading literacy framework, using Ireland as an example,

which performed highly in PISA 2022, highlights the problem area of this study.

In this context, the comparative analysis of Irish and Turkish first language curricula in line with the PISA reading literacy framework constitutes a significant challenge for revealing the level, distribution, and continuity of the cognitive demands placed on reading skills by these curricula. Such an analysis will enable more in-depth assessments of the relationship between curricula and student performance by focusing on the structural characteristics of curricula, which are the fundamental policy documents shaping these factors, beyond the multidimensional factors affecting reading achievement.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the reading acquisitions and learning outcomes included in the Irish and Turkish first language curricula compare in terms of PISA 2022 reading proficiency levels?
2. How do the Irish and Turkish first language curricula differ in terms of the level at which they demand high-level reading proficiency?
3. What is the shift in orientation between the 2015-2019 Turkish Language Curriculum and the 2024 Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum in Türkiye in terms of PISA reading proficiency?
4. To what extent does the Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum implemented in Türkiye align with the PISA 2022 reading literacy framework?

Method

Research Design

This study was structured within a qualitative research framework and conducted using the document analysis method. Document analysis is a method that allows systematic analysis of written materials within the scope of the research and is widely preferred, especially for examining official policy texts such as teaching programs (Bowen, 2009). In this study, document analysis was used to evaluate the reading acquisition and learning outcomes in the Irish and Turkish first language curricula, in line with the PISA 2022 reading literacy framework.

The research is based on a comparative education approach. In this context, the comparison is made using PISA's proficiency-based reading framework rather than directly matching countries' curricula at the grade level. Thus, the cognitive level of reading

skills required in first language curricula across primary and secondary school levels has been made comparable in terms of continuity and differentiation through a common reference framework. As the PISA assessment covers the 15-year-old age group, the analysis process also included middle school curricula in Türkiye and Junior Cycle curricula in Ireland.

Data Sources

The curricula included in this study were selected through purposive sampling. The primary criterion guiding this selection was representativeness, specifically ensuring that the curricula reflected those to which students participating in the PISA 2022 assessment were exposed during their compulsory education.

In the Irish context, the 1999 Primary School English Curriculum, the 2015 Junior Cycle English Curriculum, and the 2019 Primary Language Curriculum collectively capture the developmental trajectory of reading instruction from primary to lower secondary education. These documents allow for an examination of the historical continuity and proficiency-oriented design of reading skills in Ireland.

In the Turkish context, the 2015, 2018, and 2019 Turkish Language Curricula represent the instructional frameworks experienced by the majority of students comprising the PISA 2022 sample. In addition, the 2024 Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum was included to reflect the recent paradigmatic shift in curriculum design in Türkiye. This inclusion enables the analysis not only of existing practices, but also of the potential orientation of curriculum reform with respect to reading proficiency.

The data sources for the research consist of official documents related to the first language curricula implemented in Ireland and Türkiye. Three curricula from Ireland and four from Türkiye were examined within the scope of the study.

The curricula examined in the Irish context are as follows:

1. 1999 Primary School English Curriculum (3rd and 4th grades),
2. 2015 Junior Cycle English Curriculum, and
3. 2019 Primary Language Curriculum (Fifth and Sixth Classes).

The curricula examined in the Turkish context are as follows:

1. 2015 Turkish Language Curriculum (grades 3, 4, and 5),
2. 2018 Turkish Language Curriculum (grades 6 and 7),

3. 2019 Turkish Language Curriculum (grade 8), and
4. 2024 Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum (3rd–8th grades).

The curricula included in the study were selected through purposive sampling to represent the curricula that students participating in the PISA 2022 assessment were exposed to during their compulsory education, as well as the new curriculum approach implemented in Türkiye.

Data Collection Process

During the data collection process, the reading skill-related acquisitions and learning outcomes included in the examined curricula were determined. The terms “acquisition” in Turkish curricula and “learning outcomes” in Irish curricula were accepted as the unit of analysis. In this study, the terms “acquisition” and “learning outcomes” are used together as the umbrella term “acquisition/learning outcome” throughout the text.

All identified acquisitions and learning outcomes were included in the analysis by being directly taken from the curriculum texts, without any linguistic or semantic changes. This was done to prevent any shifts in meaning arising from the researcher’s interpretation during the analysis.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis process, reading acquisitions and learning outcomes from the curricula have been correlated with the proficiency levels defined within the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework. PISA proficiency levels are performance descriptors defined by test items; therefore, matching them to learning outcomes in curricula is, by nature, an interpretive classification process. In this study, the mapping was not carried out to test whether the curricula directly targeted PISA; instead, it was done to make the dominant cognitive reading actions required by the learning outcomes comparable through a common proficiency framework. In this process, each acquisition or learning outcome was linked to one of the PISA reading proficiency levels based on the dominant cognitive reading action it required. All reading learning outcomes included in the curricula were analyzed; in the findings section, examples of the analysis were presented in tabular form for the learning outcomes corresponding to the same PISA reading proficiency level.

In level matching, action verbs included in the learning outcomes (e.g., identifying, interpreting, evaluating, comparing, justifying) and the cognitive processes required for these actions have been taken

into account. Expressions related to finding explicit information in the text and understanding the basic meaning are associated with lower proficiency levels; expressions requiring interpretation, evaluation, critical thinking, establishing intertextual relationships, and metacognitive awareness are associated with higher proficiency levels. Level 6 competencies, as defined within the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework, were not included in the scope of the analysis. Level 6 involves advanced academic literacy skills such as advanced synthesis, intertextual integration, and ideological analysis of abstract, multi-layered, and often contradictory texts. Therefore, Level 4 and Level 5 competencies, which have concrete counterparts in curriculum learning outcomes and are suitable for comparative analysis, served as the basis for “high-level reading skills” in this study.

A two-stage approach was used in the analysis. In the first stage, each curriculum was analyzed individually to determine the distribution of reading acquisition and learning outcomes across PISA proficiency levels. In the second stage, comparisons were made between countries and curricula to reveal general trends in reading proficiency. The tables presented in the findings section were created from the outputs of this two-stage analysis.

Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity of the research, the PISA reading literacy framework used in the analysis has been adopted as an internationally recognized, standardized reference. Furthermore, the fact that all acquisitions and learning outcomes are directly drawn from the curriculum texts supports the validity of the data source.

To ensure reliability, consistent criteria were used in the level matching process, and each acquisition or learning outcome was evaluated based on the dominant reading activity. The stages of the analysis process were reported in detail to ensure the transparency of the research. Thus, the research was designed to be traceable and reproducible by similar studies.

To ensure the reliability of the data analysis, the consistency of the researcher’s coding (PISA level matching) was assessed using the ‘peer debriefing’ method. In this context, a second coder, who is an expert in the field of Turkish Education and is familiar with the PISA proficiency framework, independently coded the learning outcomes in the data set; the agreement coefficient between the two coders (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was calculated as .90. Items on which there was disagreement were discussed, and the analysis was completed with full agreement.

Findings

This section presents a comparative analysis of the cognitive demands placed on reading skills in the Irish and Turkish first language curricula, based on the PISA 2022 reading literacy framework. The analysis was conducted based on proficiency levels, revealing the distribution of learning outcomes across PISA proficiency levels rather than matching curricula one-to-one by grade level. The learning outcomes presented in the tables were taken directly from the curriculum texts and grouped together under the “learning outcome umbrella” to ensure comparability.

PISA 2022 Reading Proficiency Profiles of The Curricula

To reveal the overall picture of differences in reading proficiency between the Irish and Turkish curricula, this section first presents the distribution of all learning outcomes across PISA 2022 reading proficiency levels. This approach allows the difference between the curricula to be assessed by considering all learning outcomes, rather than just selected examples.

Table 1 shows PISA Level 1a as a separate sub-level because it involves basic reading actions, such as recognizing explicit information in the text and making direct inferences. The numerical and percentage distributions in the table show a clear structural difference between the Irish and Turkish curricula in reading proficiency. It is observed that a significant portion of learning outcomes in Irish curricula is

Table 1.

Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Reading Learning Outcomes in Irish and Turkish Curricula According to PISA 2022 Reading Proficiency Levels

Country/Curriculum	Level 1a	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Türkiye 2015 (3-5)	1 (6.7%)	7 (46.7%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Türkiye 2018 (6-7)	0 (0.0%)	2 (15.4%)	6 (46.2%)	5 (38.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Türkiye 2019 (8)	0 (0.0%)	2 (12.5%)	6 (37.5%)	7 (43.8%)	1 (6.2%)
Türkiye 2024 Maarif (3-8)	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.9%)	6 (35.3%)	8 (47.1%)	2 (11.8%)
Ireland 1999 (3-4)	1 (10.0%)	5 (50.0%)	2 (20.0%)	2 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ireland 2015 Junior Cycle	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	3 (25.0%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (8.3%)
Ireland 2019 (5-6)	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	3 (25.0%)	6 (50.0%)	2 (16.7%)

concentrated at PISA Levels 4 and 5, whereas those in Türkiye's 2015-2019 curricula are predominantly clustered at Levels 2 and 3. The Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum, implemented in Türkiye in 2024, shows a marked increase in the proportion of learning outcomes at Levels 4 and 5 compared to previous curricula. This distribution suggests that Ireland, which performed well in PISA 2022, has given greater emphasis to higher-level reading competencies in its curricula.

The general distribution presented in Table 1 is detailed in Table 2, along with representative learning outcomes. This table presents sample learning outcomes that correspond to PISA reading proficiency levels in the curricula. Therefore, the Irish 1999 Primary School English Curriculum, which mainly includes basic and intermediate proficiency levels, is not represented in this table.

Table 2 shows that the fundamental difference between the Irish and Turkish curricula lies in the level of cognitive reading actions required, rather than the number of learning outcomes. While higher-

level reading proficiencies are structured early and systematically in Irish curricula, Türkiye's 2015/2018 curricula show that reading skills are concentrated mainly at Level 3, with the level rising in 2019. It is noteworthy that in Türkiye, higher-level proficiencies are defined through a limited number of learning outcomes. In contrast, in the Maarif Model, these proficiencies are more visible and systematically incorporated into the curriculum structure. This general overview necessitates a more detailed examination of how curricula demand higher-level reading proficiencies in particular.

Level of Demand for Advanced Reading Proficiency in Reading Skills

The findings presented under this heading reveal how the Irish and Turkish first language curricula differ in terms of the level of demand for advanced reading proficiency. Table 3 presents sample learning outcomes at the relevant levels to illustrate how the curricula demand advanced reading proficiency. Therefore, not all curricula are represented in this table.

Table 2

Comparison of Curricula in Terms of PISA 2022 Reading Proficiency Levels

Country / Curriculum	Learning outcome	PISA reading proficiency level	PISA level matching rationale (predominant reading activity)
Ireland (Primary 2019)	Compare, contrast, and critically reflect on the intent of different authors.	Level 5	Comparing authors' intentions, critical reflection, and multi-text evaluation
Ireland (Junior Cycle 2015)	Select key moments from texts and give thoughtful value judgements.	Level 4	Developing reasoned value judgments on selected elements from the text
Türkiye (2015)	Identifies the main idea and main emotion of what they read.	Level 3	Deriving the main idea from the text as a whole
Türkiye (2018)	Summarizes the text.	Level 3	Selecting and integrating basic information
Türkiye (2019)	Analyzes media texts.	Level 5	Critically and analytically analyzing multi-source texts
Türkiye (2024 - Maarif)	Critically evaluating printed and digital media texts.	Level 5	The purpose of media texts, credibility, and impact assessment

Table 3

Representation of Higher-Level Reading Skills in Curricula

Country / Curriculum	Learning outcome	PISA reading proficiency level	PISA level matching rationale (predominant reading activity)
Ireland (Junior Cycle 2015)	Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies...to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate.	Level 5	Multi-stage reading involving questioning, synthesizing, and evaluating
Ireland (Primary 2019)	Identify, appreciate, and compare how different genres shape texts and the reader's experience.	Level 4	Inter-genre comparison and reader experience evaluation
Türkiye (2015)	Interprets the text by referring to examples and details.	Level 3	Text-based, limited interpretation
Türkiye (2019)	Questions the reliability of information sources.	Level 4	Critical reading based on source evaluation
Türkiye (2024 - Maarif)	Generating a solution to the problem in the text and justifying the solution.	Level 5	Problem identification, solution generation, and reflection

The learning outcomes presented in Table 3 reveal not only which proficiency levels the programs include, but also at which grade levels these proficiencies are structured, through which cognitive reading actions, and to what extent they are sustained.

In Irish curricula, high-level reading proficiency is addressed from an early stage within a vertical development framework. The fact that the learning outcomes included in the Junior Cycle (2015) curriculum, which involve multi-stage cognitive processes such as inquiry, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, are linked to PISA Level 5 demonstrates that Ireland has a curriculum approach that demands the highest level of reading proficiency even at the middle school level. Furthermore, the positioning of learning outcomes involving complex cognitive actions such as cross-genre comparison and reader experience evaluation at Level 4 within the Primary Language Curriculum (2019) reveals that high-level proficiencies are systematically structured from primary school onwards. This suggests that advanced reading skills in Irish curricula are addressed in accordance with the principles of temporal continuity and cognitive deepening.

When examining Turkish curricula, it is observed that higher-level reading proficiency exhibits a more limited, fragmented structure. The fact that the learning outcome included in the 2015 Turkish Language Curriculum, which involves interpreting text based on examples and details, is positioned at PISA Level 3 indicates that reading skills during this period were primarily addressed at the level of intratextual comprehension and limited interpretation. In the 2019 curriculum, the learning outcome related to questioning the reliability of information sources aligns with Level 4, indicating that the critical reading dimension has become more visible. However, it is difficult to say that these proficiencies are addressed in a systematic vertical structure throughout the

curriculum.

Shift in Reading Skills in Turkish Curricula

Table 4 clearly shows the shift in focus of reading skills over time in Turkish curricula. While reading was approached more as a process of comprehension and retelling in the 2015 and 2018 curricula, the 2019 curriculum has introduced, albeit to a limited extent, the dimensions of evaluation and problem-solving. The Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum represents a clear shift in orientation within this table. The positioning of the learning outcome, which includes problem-solving and justification of the solution, at PISA Level 5 indicates that, for the first time in Turkish curricula, higher-level reading competencies are directly linked to complex cognitive processes such as problem-solving, reflection, and justification. This finding suggests that the Maarif Model tends to disseminate and systematize higher-level reading proficiencies not only through limited examples but also within the curriculum's general approach to earlier grade levels.

Level of Alignment Between Reading Learning Outcomes in the Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum and PISA 2022 Reading Proficiency Levels

The findings presented in Table 5 show that the reading learning outcomes/objectives of the Maarif Model 2024 Turkish Language Curriculum are highly aligned with the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework. The curriculum for grades 3 and 4 in elementary school is structured at Levels 2 and 3, with learning outcomes that emphasize cognitive demands such as constructing basic meaning, identifying the main idea, and making text-based inferences. As students progress to higher grades, learning outcomes shift towards Level 4 and Level 5 proficiencies, with a noticeable increase in reading activities based on interpretation, comparison, evaluation, criticism, and problem-solving.

Table 4.
Transformation of Reading Skills in Turkish Curricula

Curriculum	Learning outcome	PISA reading proficiency level	PISA level matching rationale (pre-dominant reading activity)
Türkiye (2015)	They tell the fable, fairy tale, or story they have read.	Level 2	Rephrasing public information
Türkiye (2018)	Identifies the main idea and supporting ideas of the text.	Level 3	Deriving the main meaning from the text as a whole
Türkiye (2019)	Generates different solutions to the problems addressed in the text.	Level 4	Alternative thinking based on the text
Türkiye (2024 - Maarif)	Interpreting the text and rephrasing it from different perspectives.	Level 4	Interpretive and transformative reading
Türkiye (2024 - Maarif)	Generating a solution to the problem in the text and justifying the solution.	Level 5	Problem identification, solution generation, and reflection

Table 5.

Distribution and Representation of Reading Learning Outcomes in the Maarif Model 2024 Turkish Language Curriculum According to PISA 2022 Reading Proficiency Levels

Grade Level	Learning outcome/objective	PISA reading proficiency level	Level matching rationale
3-4	Forms an opinion about the content of the text based on its title and images.	Level 2	Establishing the basic meaning based on the image and headline
3-4	Identifies the main idea/main emotion in the text they read.	Level 3	Deriving the main meaning from the text as a whole
3-4	Expresses whether they agree or disagree with the messages in the text they read, stating their reasons.	Level 4	Reasoned assessment and judgment formation
3-4	Makes different suggestions regarding the structure of the text he reads.	Level 4	Interpretation based on text conversion
5-8	Ability to make high-level inferences to determine the deeper meaning of the text	Level 4	Contextual inference based on the entire text
5-8	Ability to compare texts	Level 4	Comparison between different texts
5-8	Ability to evaluate what one reads (by setting standards)	Level 5	Norm-based judgment and evaluation
5-8	Ability to evaluate printed and digital media texts	Level 5	Critical reading and source evaluation
5-8	Ability to generate solutions and reflect on the problem in the text	Level 5	Problem identification, solution generation, and reflection

Discussion

This study compares the Irish and Turkish first language curricula based on the PISA 2022 reading literacy framework. The findings reveal significant differences between the two countries' curricula in terms of the level and distribution of cognitive demands placed on reading skills. In particular, how higher-level reading literacy (PISA Levels 4 and 5) is addressed in curricula provides essential clues to understanding the performance differences between countries.

The general distribution presented in the 'Findings' section shows that a significant portion of the reading learning outcomes in Irish curricula are concentrated in proficiencies requiring higher-order cognitive processes. Consistent with this finding, Burke and Welsch (2018) emphasize that higher-order cognitive reading actions are systematically structured in these curricula from the earliest grade levels onwards. In contrast, when the Turkish 2015 (grades 3, 4, and 5), 2018 (grades 6 and 7), and 2019 (8th grade) Turkish Language Curricula experienced by students forming the PISA 2022 sample in Türkiye are evaluated as a whole; it is seen that the acquisitions related to reading skills are strategically shaped around the basic and intermediate level proficiencies within the scope of PISA Level 2 and Level 3, while the acquisitions representing higher-order cognitive skills remain at a limited level of representation. Indeed, Cer (2018) found that the learning outcomes in the curricula of countries that perform well on PISA tests are concentrated at the middle-to-high cognitive levels, while the curricula in Türkiye are predominantly focused on the lower cognitive levels. According to the author, this structural feature is directly related to Türkiye's relatively low performance observed in PISA reading results.

Findings on the developmental distribution of reading skills indicate that in Irish curricula, higher-level proficiencies are not limited to specific grade levels but are addressed within a vertical structure that deepens over time. In Türkiye, however, in previous curricula examined at the primary school level, the development of reading skills is concentrated more on basic comprehension and retelling; skills such as evaluation, critical thinking, and metacognitive awareness are limited to higher grade levels. In their study examining middle school Turkish language assessment tools, Dilekçi and Çiçek (2022) confirm this situation by finding that the majority of questions are concentrated at the lower cognitive levels of PISA, while level 5 and 6 questions requiring evaluation, reflection, and critical thinking are almost absent from textbooks and exams. This difference reveals how the pedagogical priorities assigned to reading instruction in curricula vary between countries.

The findings from the study, particularly when evaluated alongside the analysis of the Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum presented in Table 5, indicate that reading instruction in Türkiye is undergoing a significant shift in orientation at the curriculum level. The Maarif Model structures reading skills at Levels 2 and 3, starting in primary school, while systematically transitioning to Levels 4 and 5 proficiencies in middle school. This structure suggests that higher-level reading proficiencies, which were limited and intermittent in previous Turkish Language Curricula, are being addressed for the first time within a comprehensive and developmental curriculum architecture.

In the Maarif Model, the critical, reflective, and metacognitive dimensions of reading skills have become more visible; learning outcomes related to

higher-level reading proficiencies have increased both numerically and proportionally. The study reveals that learning outcomes in the reading domain in the 2024 curriculum are designed to be more intensively and systematically linked to critical thinking processes. This reflects Türkiye's efforts to establish a more systematic framework for higher-level reading proficiency, which was only partially reflected in previous curricula. Indeed, the 2024 curriculum shows a significant increase in the coverage of critical thinking sub-components in learning outcomes related to reading skills compared to the 2019 curriculum (Ulutaş & Karadedeli, 2025). However, how this trend will be reflected in student performance should be evaluated in the long term, taking into account the implementation process of the curriculum and its interaction with teaching environments. The success of these curricular structural improvements in classroom applications depends on teachers adopting this new approach, preparing teaching materials accordingly, and making assessment practices process-based. El-Annan and Hassoun (2025) emphasize that when there is no complete alignment among curriculum objectives, classroom teaching practices, and assessment tools, the impact of structural reforms on student achievement will be limited; the most critical link in this process is high-quality professional development. In the Turkish context, teachers mentioned the need to update the curriculum with advancing technology, the positive aspects of simplification, and that the need for change became more apparent as the curriculum was implemented. Alongside these positive views, negative criticisms regarding the curriculum not being well explained, being somewhat complex, and the transition being too rapid confirm the importance of preparing teachers for the process and establishing a comprehensive support mechanism for the successful implementation of structural improvements (Gül et al., 2025). Otherwise, there is a risk that the emphasis on 'high-level skills' in the curriculum text will remain a theoretical aspiration with no counterpart in practice.

In this study, the comparison was based on the cognitive reading demands defined in the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework rather than a grade-level-matching approach. This approach enabled comparisons of the cognitive demands placed on reading skills across curricula from different education systems using a common reference framework. In this context, "alignment" refers not to curricula directly targeting the PISA reading proficiency framework, but rather to the structural and functional relationships between the reading acquisitions and learning outcomes in curricula and the reading proficiency levels defined by PISA. Indeed, analyses conducted by the Board of Education reveal that the skills included in the Turkish Language Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools under the Türkiye Century Maarif

Model are fully aligned with PISA reading proficiency levels and offer an orientation aimed at developing higher-level cognitive reading skills (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı - Board of Education, 2024, pp. 242-243). In this regard, the study's findings indicate that the Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum has greater potential for structural alignment with the cognitive reading requirements defined by PISA than previous curricula.

Overall, the study's findings indicate that a relationship can be established between the structural characteristics of education systems, the nature of reading skills emphasized in teaching, and countries' PISA reading performance. Indeed, in high-performing countries, reading instruction is structured to encompass higher-order cognitive processes such as comprehension, application, and reflection; in contrast, teaching practices in relatively low-performing countries do not sufficiently support these cognitive demands (Sandoval-Hernandez et al., 2023). In this context, considering curricula not only in terms of content scope but also in terms of the level of cognitive reading actions required of learners provides a crucial analytical basis for interpreting the performance differences observed in the PISA reading domain. The Irish example shows that structuring reading instruction to include higher-level cognitive processes from early stages can support student proficiency. In Türkiye, the shift in orientation offered by the Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum has the potential to better align with the reading proficiencies measured by PISA. In this context, evaluating curricula not only in terms of content but also the cognitive reading actions required offers an essential perspective for improving educational outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study comparatively examined the Irish and Turkish first language (L1) curricula based on the PISA 2022 reading proficiency framework. The findings indicate that the distinct performance gap between the two countries in PISA reading is closely related to the structural alignment of their curricula with cognitive proficiency levels.

The findings of this study demonstrate that policy comparisons conducted at the curriculum level provide substantial input for the restructuring of national education policies related to reading proficiency. OECD's Education Policy Outlook studies, which are based on comparative policy analyses, highlight the decisive role of evidence-based and comparable evaluations in assessing and repositioning countries' education policies (OECD, 2020). Within international assessment frameworks, reading literacy is conceptualized not merely as a language-specific skill, but as a core competence that reflects individuals'

capacity to engage with diverse texts, integrate and evaluate information, and use knowledge for purposeful goals—thereby indicating the cognitive demands and learning depth of education systems (OECD, 2019). These findings suggest that curriculum reforms should be understood not only as content updates, but as comprehensive policy instruments aimed at increasing the level of cognitive demand placed on learners. In this regard, the Irish case is particularly noteworthy, as the early and systematic integration of higher-order cognitive processes—such as interpretation, evaluation, and metacognitive awareness—into reading instruction appears to contribute positively to student performance in the long term.

A fundamental conclusion of the study is that the Irish curriculum structures reading skills within a vertical progression that integrates higher-level proficiencies (PISA Levels 4 and 5) from the early stages of education. In contrast, Türkiye's 2015 - 2019 Turkish Language Curricula predominantly clustered reading skills around basic and intermediate proficiencies (Levels 2 and 3). This suggests that Türkiye's relatively low performance in PISA reading may stem from the limited cognitive demands placed on students by those curricula.

The 2024 Maarif Model Turkish Language Curriculum represents a significant shift in orientation regarding this structural limitation. The emphasis on critical, reflective, and problem-solving-oriented reading outcomes indicates that the model has greater potential for structural alignment with PISA's advanced reading proficiencies than previous curricula.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. International comparative studies of curricula should adopt the "proficiency-based analysis" approach used in this study instead of direct grade-level matching. This method enables a more objective evaluation by comparing curricula through a common cognitive reference framework across different educational systems.
2. To translate the "advanced proficiency" claims of the Maarif Model into the classroom, teachers' skills in high-level questioning and text processing must be supported. Unless the theoretical claims of the curriculum are simultaneously reinforced by classroom practices and assessment tools (e.g., textbooks, exams), the impact of this structural reform on student achievement risks remaining limited.
3. Reading instruction policies in Türkiye should be reconfigured based on the principle of "vertical continuity" observed in the Irish example. The cognitive deepening of reading skills should show a systematic increase from primary school onwards;

advanced proficiencies (Levels 4 and 5) should form the backbone of the curriculum rather than being exceptional outcomes.

4. Longitudinal studies should track the development of students exposed to the new curriculum to measure the actual impact of this orientation shift in the Maarif Model on student performance in proficiency tests such as PISA.

Declarations

Funding

The author declares that this study received no funding from any organization.

Ethics Statement

All procedures were conducted in compliance with relevant ethical principles, guidelines, and regulations.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Akyol, P., Krishna, K., & Wang, J. (2021). Taking PISA seriously: How accurate are low-stakes exams? *Journal of Labor Research*, 2021 (42), 184-243. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12122-021-09317-8>
- Arastaman, G., Bulus, M., Konaş, H., & Özcan, B. (2024). Understanding the role of cognitive constructs employed in reading in global math and science achievement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, (2024), 15: 1470977. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1470977
- Araújo, L., & Costa, P. (2023). Reading to young children: Higher home frequency associated with higher educational achievement in PIRLS and PISA. *Education Sciences*, 2023 (13), 1240. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13121240>
- Araújo, L., Costa, P., & Crato, N. (2020). Assessment Background: What PISA Measures and How. In *"Improving a country's education: PISA 2018 results in 10 countries"* Nuno Crato (Ed.), pp. 249-263.
- Aturamu, O. O. (2025). The role of reading skill in enhancing academic success among senior secondary school students. *The International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9 (8), 7570-7582. <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.908000629>

- Batur, Z., & Ulutaş, M. (2013). An analyze of the correspondence levels between Turkish reading proficiency objectives and the PISA scale. *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, 6 (2), 1549-1563. 10.9761/jasss_651
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9 (2), 27-40.
- Bu, Y., & Chen, F. (2023). What key contextual factors contribute to students' reading literacy among top-performing countries and economies? Statistical and machine learning analyses. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 122 (2023), 102267.
- Burke, P., & Welsch, J. G. (2018). Literacy in a 'broad and balanced' primary school curriculum: the potential of a disciplinary approach in Irish classrooms. *Irish Educational Studies*, 37 (1), 33-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2017.1421088>
- Butterfuss, R., Kim, J., & Kendeou, P. (2020). *Reading comprehension*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education. Retrieved 16 Oct. 2025, from <https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-865>.
- Cadiz-Gabejan, A. M., & Quirino, M. C. (2021). Students' reading proficiency and academic performance. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 3 (6), 30-40. doi: 10.32996/ijels
- Cer, E. (2018). A Comparison of mother-tongue curricula of successful countries in PISA and Turkey by higher-order thinking processes. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 73 (2018), 95-112. doi: 10.14689/ejer.2018.73.6
- Department of Education and Youth. (2025). Enactment of the primary language curriculum: A focus on Irish. In *Department of education and youth inspectorate report (2024) and thematic review*, pp. 39-52. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/enactment-of-the-primary-language-curriculum-a-focus-on-irish/> on 20.12.2025
- Department of Education. (2022). *Effective teaching of reading: Overview of the literature*. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/Documents/literature-review.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com on 12.01.2026
- Dilekçi, A. & Çiçek, S. (2022). An analysis of secondary school Turkish language course assessment tools in the sense of PISA reading skill criteria. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 9 (1), 417-431.
- Dole, J. A., Duffy, G. G., Roehler, L. R. & Pearson, P. D. (1991). Moving from the old to the new: Research on reading comprehension instruction. *Review of Educational Research*, 61 (2), 239-264.
- El-Annan, S. H., & Hassoun, R. A. (2025). Teachers' perceptions of curriculum alignment, professional development, and teaching practices. *International Journal of Instruction*, 18 (3), 141-158. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2025.1838a>
- Ersöz, A. ve Demirel, Ş. (2025). Classification of 2024 Turkish course curriculum learning outcomes according to the revised Bloom taxonomy. *BUGU Journal of Language and Education*, 6 (3), 331-352. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46321/bugu.1203>
- Gökalp, M. (2020). *Eğitimde program geliştirme ve değerlendirme Curriculum development and evaluation in education*. Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık [Nobel Academic Publishing].
- Government of Ireland. (1999). Primary school English curriculum. Retrieved 15 July. 2025, from https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/5b514700-e65c-46a7-a7d0-c8e05e115bf9/PSEC01a_English_Curriculum.pdf
- Government of Ireland. (2015). Retrieved 15 July. 2025, from https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/d14fd46d-5a10-46fc-9002-83df0b4fc2ce/JuniorCycle_English_specification_amended_2018.pdf
- Government of Ireland. (2019). Retrieved 15 July. 2025, from https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/2a6e5f79-6f29-4d68-b850-379510805656/PLC-Documents_English.pdf
- Gül, A., Ersoy, N., Aşıkcan, M., & Taşkaya, S. M. (2025). Teachers' views on the renewed initial literacy instruction with the Türkiye Century Education Model. *Journal of Theory And Practice in Education*, 21 (2), 109-128.
- Hepworth, N., Galvis, M., Gambhir, G., & Sizmur, J. (2021). *Using PISA to inform policy: Learning from the Republic of Ireland*. National Foundation for Educational Research.

- Ho, S. K., & Gan, Z. (2023). Instructional practices and students' reading performance: a comparative study of 10 top performing regions in PISA 2018. *Lang Test Asia* 13 (48), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-023-00261-1>
- Hopfenbeck, T. N., Lenkeit, J., El Masri, Y., Cantrell, K., Ryan, J., & Baird, J. A. (2018). Lessons learned from PISA: A systematic review of peer-reviewed articles on the Programme for International Student Assessment. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 62 (3), 333-353.
- Jerrim, J. (2021). PISA 2018 in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales: Is the data really representative of all four corners of the UK? *Review of Education*, 9 (3), e3270. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3270>
- Kiili, C., Strømsø, H. I., Bråten, I., Ruotsalainen, J., & Räikkönen, E. (2024) Reading comprehension skills and prior topic knowledge serve as resources when adolescents justify the credibility of multiple online texts. *Reading Psychology*, 45 (7), 662-689. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2024.2351485>
- Kılıç-Depren, S., & Depren, Ö. (2022). Cross-cultural comparisons of the factors influencing the high reading achievement in Turkey and China: Evidence from PISA 2018. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 31 (4), 427-437. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00584-8>
- Koyuncu, İ., & Fırat, T. (2020). Investigating reading literacy in PISA 2018 assessment. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 13 (2), 263-275. <https://doi.org/10.26822/iejee.2021.189>
- Li, J., Xue, E., & Guo, S. (2025). The effects of PISA on global basic education reform: A systematic literature review. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 12, 106. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04403-z>
- Looney, A., O'Leary, M., Scully, D., & Shiel G. (2022). Cross-national achievement surveys and educational monitoring in Ireland. In *Cross-national achievement surveys for monitoring educational outcomes: Policies, practices and political reforms within the European Union*, Louis Volante, Sylke V. Schnepf, Don A. Klinger (Eds.), pp. 153-177. Joint Research Center.
- Marcq, K., & Braeken, J. (2025). From framework to functionality: A cross-country analysis of PISA 2018 reading assessment framework's item features as determinants of item difficulty. *Large-scale Assessments in Education*, 13, 26. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40536-025-00261-y>
- Memisevic, H., & Cehic, I. (2022). The importance of metacognitive strategies in reading literacy-Results of the PISA testing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology*, 21(2), 116-124.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education]. (2015). *Türkçe dersi öğretim programı (1-8. sınıflar)* [Turkish language curriculum (grades 1-8)]. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı [Board of Education].
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education]. (2018). *Türkçe dersi öğretim programı (İlkokul ve Ortaokul 1-8. sınıflar)* [Turkish language curriculum (Primary and Secondary School Grades 1-8)]. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı [Board of Education].
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education]. (2019). *Türkçe dersi öğretim programı (İlkokul ve Ortaokul 1-8. sınıflar)* [Turkish language curriculum (Primary and Secondary School Grades 1-8)]. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı [Board of Education].
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education]. (2024). *Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli Ortaokul Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programı (1, 2, 3 ve 4. sınıflar)* [Türkiye Century Education Model Middle School Turkish Language Curriculum (Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4)]. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı [Board of Education].
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education]. (2024). *Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli Ortaokul Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programı (5, 6, 7 ve 8. sınıflar)* [Türkiye Century Education Model Middle School Turkish Language Curriculum (Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8)]. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı [Board of Education].
- OECD. (2019). *PISA 2018 assessment and analytical framework*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2019). *PISA 2018 Results (Volume I): What students know and can do*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/5f07c754-en>.
- OECD. (2020). *Education policy outlook: Turkey*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2023a). *PISA 2022 assessment and analytical framework*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/dfe0bf9c-en>.

- OECD. (2023b). *PISA 2022 results (volume I): The state of learning and equity in education*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en>
- OECD. (2025). *OECD Recommendation on public policy evaluation: Implementation toolkit*. Public Governance Committee and the Committee of Senior Budget Officials.
- Perkins, R., Moran, G., Cosgrove, J., & Shiel, G. (2011). *PISA 2009: The performance and progress of 15-year-olds in Ireland*. Educational Research Centre.
- Prøitz, T. S. (2010). Learning outcomes: What are they? Who defines them? When and where are they defined? *Educ Asse Eval Acc*, 2010 (22), 119-137. 10.1007/s11092-010-9097-8.
- Pulkkinen, J., & Rautopuro, J. (2022). The correspondence between PISA performance and school achievement in Finland. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 114, 102000.
- Rosado-Castellano, F., & Martín-Sánchez, M. (2023). Pedagogical importance of reading literacy: A comparative study on PISA. *Aibi Research, Management and Engineering Journal*, 11 (3), 105-114.
- Sandoval-Hernandez, A., Zhao, D., Chen, Z., & Eryilmaz, N. (2023). The Association between educational systems and reading literacy performance in PISA across the Asia-Pacific region and countries. In: Lee, W.O., Brown, P., Goodwin, A.L., Green, A. (eds) *International handbook on education development in the Asia-Pacific*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6887-7_26
- Shiel, G. (2002). The performance of Irish students in reading literacy in the programme for international student assessment (PISA). *The Irish Journal of Education*, 2002 (xxxiii), 7-30.
- Shiel, G., McHugh, G., Denner, S., Delaney, M., Cosgrove, J., & McKeown, C. (2022). *Reading literacy in Ireland in PISA 2018: Performance, policy and practice*. Educational Research Centre.
- Sirén, M., & Sulkunen, S. (2025). Critical literacy in the PISA 2018 reading literacy assessment. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 69 (2), 270-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2023.2287458>
- Suna, H. E., Tanberkan, H., & Özer, M. (2020). Türkiye’de öğrencilerin okuryazarlık becerilerinin yıllara ve okul türlerine göre değişimi: Öğrencilerin PISA uygulamalarındaki performansı [Changes in students’ literacy skills in Türkiye by year and school type: Students’ performance in PISA assessments]. *Eğitimde ve Psikolojide Ölçme ve Değerlendirme Dergisi [Journal of Measurement and Evaluation in Education and Psychology]*, 11 (1), 76-97.
- Şahin, H., & Güzle Kayır, Ç. (2022). The variation in Turkish students’ reading skills based on PISA 2018: The effects of the teaching and learning process. *Croatian Journal of Education*, 25 (2), 491-525. <https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v25i2.4671>
- Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı [Board of Education]. (2024). *Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli Matematik, Fen Bilimleri ve Türkçe dersi öğretim programlarında yer alan becerilerin PISA yeterlik düzeyleri ile ilişkilendirilmesi [The Türkiye Century Education Model: Linking the skills included in the Mathematics, Science, and Turkish language curricula to PISA proficiency levels]*. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye]. Retrieved 12.11.2025 from <https://ttkbyayin.meb.gov.tr/yayin/261>
- Thomson, S., Hillman, K., & De Bortoli, L. (2013). *A teacher’s guide to PISA reading literacy*. ACER Press.
- Ulutaş, M., & Karadedeli, İ. (2025). The evolution of critical thinking in middle school Turkish language curricula: A comparative analysis based on the 2019 and 2024 acquisitions/learning outcomes. *Eurasian Journal of Language Education and Research*, 9 (2), 110-129.
- Ulutaş, M., & Kaya, M. F. (2023). Examining the 2019 Turkish language curriculum and PISA 2018 reading skills test in terms of main idea teaching. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 11(1), 9-22. 10.7575/aiac.ijels.v11n.1p.9
- Zhang, F., Jin, C., & Fan, C. (2024). Factors influencing students’ reading literacy in Morocco: A multilevel analysis. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, 1056. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03575-4>
- Zhao, Y. (2020). Two decades of havoc: A synthesis of criticism against PISA. *Journal of Educational Change*, 21, 245-266.

Zheng, J., Cheung, K., & Sit, P. (2024). Insights from two decades of PISA-related studies in the new century: A systematic review. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 68 (3), 371-388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2022.2148273>