To the memory of my beloved father

Mehmet Demirkol….

AN INVESTIGATION OF TURKISH PREPARATORY CLASS STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS AND PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLES

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF TURKISH PREPERATORY CLASS STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS AND PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLES

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Listening is a skill that many Turkish EFL learners have constant problems with and perceptual learning styles of the students is a factor that plays an important role in students' learning a foreign language. This study aimed to find out (a) the most and the least frequent listening comprehension problems of the students, (b) the difference in listening comprehension problems in terms of proficiency levels and gender, (c) common perceptual learning styles among the Turkish university students, and (d) the relationship between students perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems. The study was conducted at Gazi University, School of Foreign Languages, with the participation of 295 students from three different proficiency levels (pre-intermediate,

intermediate, and advanced). The data were collected through two questionnaires, both of which consisted of 30 items.

The quantitative data analysis showed that Turkish EFL students had listener related listening comprehension problems most frequently and task related listening comprehension problems least frequently. The advanced level students reported having more listening comprehension problems than other proficiency levels. In addition, there was difference in the types of listening comprehension problems reported by females and males. The results also indicated that the most prominent perceptual learning style was visual, followed by auditory, and then kinesthetic. However, the further analysis showed that students' perceptual learning style preferences changed according to their gender and proficiency level. Finally, it was found that students who preferred visual learning style more than the other perceptual learning styles reported having more listener and speaker related problems.

Key words: Listening, listening comprehension problems, and perceptual learning styles.

ÖZET

TÜRK ÜNİVERSİTELERİNDEKİ HAZIRLIK SINIFI ÖGRENCİLERİNİN YABANCI DİLDE DİNLEDİĞİNİ ANLAMA PROBLEMLERİNİN VE ALGISAL ÖGRENME STİLLERİNİN ARAŞTIRMASI

Tuba Demirkol

Yüksek lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

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Yabancı dilde dinleme bir çok Türk üniversite öğrencisinin süregelen problemler yaşadığı bir beceri ve öğrencilerin algısal öğrenme stilleri de yabancı dil öğrenimlerinde önemli roller oynayan bir faktördür. Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin en az ve en çok sıklıkla bahsettikleri dinleme problemlerini, bu problemlerinin seviye ve cinsiyet açısından gösterdiği değişiklikleri, Türk üniversite öğrencileri arasındaki yaygın algısal öğrenme stillerini ve öğrencilerin algısal öğrenme stilleriyle dinleme problemleri arasındaki ilişkiyi bulmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu çalışma Gazi Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulu'nda, farklı seviyelerden (orta altı, orta ve ileri) 295 öğrencinin katılımıyla yürütülmüştür. Veriler her biri 30 maddeden oluşan iki anketten elde edilmiştir.

Sayısal veri analizi, Türkiye' deki İngilizce öğrencilerinin en sık karşılaştığı dinleme problemlerinin dinleyicilerin kendileriyle ilgili olduğunu, en az karşılaştıkları

problemlerin de dinleme etkinlikleriyle ilgili olduğunu göstermiştir. İleri seviyedeki öğrencilerin diğer iki seviyedeki öğrencilerden daha fazla dinleme problemi rapor ettiği görülmüştür. Üstelik, bayan öğrenciler ve erkek öğrenciler tarafından rapor edilen problemlerin farklı tiplerden olduğu ortay çıktı. Sonuçlar, algısal öğrenme şekilleri için öğrencilerin tercihlerinin öncelikle görsel, daha sonra işitsel, daha sonra da hareketsel öğrenme stilleri için olduğunu gösterdi. Öte yandan, ileri düzeydeki analizler öğrencilerin algısal öğrenme tercihlerinin cinsiyete ve dil seviyesine göre değiştiğini gösterdi. Son olarak, görsel öğrenme stilini diğer iki öğrenme stilinden daha çok tercih eden öğrencilerin dinleyici ve konuşmacıdan kaynaklı dinleme problemlerini daha fazla rapor ettiği bulundu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dinleme, dinlediğini anlama problemleri ve algısal öğrenme stilleri

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As English has gained popularity around the world, language learners have gained numerous opportunities for exposure to English. While some of this exposure has been in social life through commercials, movies or television series, some has been compulsory through lectures and conferences in education. Especially this compulsory encounter with English has brought with it an urgent need to improve the listening skill of students in order to help them understand English adequately. Unfortunately, despite its widely accepted importance in language learning, listening in L2 has been a problematic area for many language learners. This ongoing situation is illustrated clearly and strikingly in the following scene:

"Scene: A first level foreign language class where the teacher is giving a listening comprehension test.

Students: You are talking too fast.

Teacher: You are listening too slowly." Sherrow (1971, p. 738)

Problems related to listening comprehension cannot be attributed only to instructors. Many variables have been noted as affecting listening comprehension and have been found useful to some extent in understanding and overcoming the difficulties related to listening. These variables show a great variety from speed of speech and the nature of the listening tasks to listening comprehension strategies and the listeners' own characteristics, such as their lack of interest, proficiency levels, or different perceptual learning styles. However, we cannot claim that all of these variables, especially the ones

related to the listeners themselves, have been researched thoroughly. In addition, there is not a study exploring directly perceptual learning styles of Turkish university students. So, we need to dig deeper into particularly the significant area of Turkish university students' perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems in order to help learners to be more successful in their foreign language education, as well as in the complex and also mysterious field of listening (Feyten, 1991). This study will search, therefore, for the perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems of Turkish university students, for the possible differences in listening comprehension problems due to gender and different proficiency levels, and for the possible relationships between perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems.

Background of the Study

Although listening is accepted to be a receptive skill, in which we are not necessarily expected to produce an explicit response, Fang (2008) defines listening comprehension as "an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge" (p. 22). Underwood also points out that listening is in fact an active process, during which "we need to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions, and not simply to understand the word themselves" (1989, p. 1).

Listening is essential for people's evaluation of their environment and "is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values" (Guo & Wills, 2006, p. 3). Even paying attention to the amount of time we

spend while listening helps us to see the importance of this skill. In overall communication, we spend 9% of our time on writing, 16% on reading, 30% on speaking, and the remaining 43% of the time on listening (Feyten, 1991; Morley, 2001).

When regarding its place in language learning, listening as a source of input has been the basis of language instruction at all levels and listening comprehension has been considered to be at the heart of language learning (Feyten, 1991; Morley, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007). However, unfortunately, listening has not been understood or researched satisfactorily (Vandergrift, 2007) and has sometimes been defined as a Cinderella skill (Fang, 2008). All these facts have led researchers to seek a deeper understanding of teachers' and students' attitudes towards the listening skill in order to help students achieve it satisfactorily.

With the increased importance attached to the listening skill in language learning, another aspect, how to teach listening, has also gained significance. Teaching listening skills has been the responsibility of language teachers and this has brought about the need to define teachers' roles in teaching listening. Underwood (1989) describes these roles as "exposing students to a range of listening exercises…, making listening purposeful for the students…, helping students understand what listening entails and how they might approach it…, and building up students' confidence in their own listening ability" (p. 21-22). While the teaching of listening in L2 is still an area that is under discussion and that many language teachers have difficulties with, teachers have reached a point where they really need to understand how their students listen, and their students' beliefs about this skill and about their ability (Graham, 2006).

Making students feel comfortable with listening is an area that has been awaiting urgent solutions. There is general agreement that learners tend to perceive listening as a very difficult skill (Vandergrift, 2007), because understanding natural spoken English is a skill that many EFL learners have problems with (Hasan, 2000). Goh (2000) agrees that all language learners have problems with L2 listening, which may differ in low or high level proficiency learners. Moreover, in a study related to learners' beliefs about listening, Graham (2006) found that many learners feel less successful in listening than in other language skills and most learners tend to see "their own supposed low ability" (p. 178) in the listening skill as an important factor affecting their success.

Diagnosing listening problems and variables related to these problems appears to be very significant for being able to develop the listening skill of students (Graham, 2006; Hasan, 2000). When considering the listening comprehension problems that many learners of English have, different variables are mentioned in the literature. Vandergrift (2006, 2007) points to vocabulary knowledge and grammatical knowledge as important factors and mentions gender as a significant factor in answering different types of questions after listening. In a study related to Arabic students' perceptions of listening problems, Hasan (2000) looks at several problems that are related to the message, the speaker, the listener and the strategies that students use for listening. Yousif (2006) makes a broader categorization that consists of linguistic and conceptual variables, discourse variables, acoustic variables, environmental variables, psychological variables, and task variables.

Even though these variables seem to provide a taxonomy of listening comprehension problems, we still do not know exactly what underlies these problems and what brings real success in listening comprehension. Learners are sometimes labeled as good listeners on the basis of strategies they use (Fang, 2008) and looking at strategies employed by learners leads us to the related field of learning styles, since it is known that learning styles are important factors underlying strategy choices (M. Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). The term "learning styles" is used to classify learners on the basis of their prevailing methods or strategies which they use in acquiring information (Felder & Silverman, 1988). Different dimensions of learning styles exist, such as the cognitive styles dimension that comes from research in ego psychology, and the perceptual learning styles dimension, which comes from the study of perceptions/sensory channels, which are auditory, visual, and kinesthetic (M. Ehrman, 1998; M. Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; M. Ehrman, 1996).

There are studies exploring perceptual learning styles of students from different cultures (Reid, 1998), however, no study explores directly Turkish students' perceptual learning styles. In addition, the aspect of learning styles has been largely overlooked in relation to listening, although it has been found to be related to success in other skills. For example, Carbo (1983, cited in Reid, 1987) found visual and auditory learners to be more successful in reading than tactile and kinesthetic learners. In a study looking at how learning styles and cultural background affect learners' strategy choices in listening, especially the strategies used for academic listening, Braxton (1999) discovers that learning styles, along with cultural background, are among the most important variables affecting students' strategy choices and their success in listening. Although

Braxton looks at the influence of learning styles on learners' listening strategy choices, there still exists the need for a study that clearly and directly looks at the relationship between perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems. Therefore, the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems is also an aspect that will be investigated by this study, as well as common perceptual learning styles of Turkish preparatory class students.

Statement of the Problem

Although it is a very crucial skill in language learning, there remains a need for more research on listening (Vandergrift, 2006, 2007). Existing studies generally look at listening problems from isolated perspectives such as just teachers' perceptions or students' perceptions. There are several studies looking at perceptions of language teachers' on the teaching of listening and difficulties in the field (Saglam, 2003; Yukselci, 2003), or at students' perceptions of listening comprehension problems (Goh, 2000; Hasan, 2000; Yousif, 2006). In addition, there is a study by Braxton (1999), in which the author observes the relationship between perceptual learning styles and listening strategy use through case studies and highlights the perceptual learning styles among the variables affecting learners' listening strategy choices and thus listening comprehension. However, in the literature there has not been a study that looking at the relationship between listening comprehension problems and learners' perceptual learning styles or a study that looks at these problems from different perspectives, such as proficiency level and gender, at the same time.

Like many EFL students around the world, university students in Turkey have great and persevering problems related to listening skill. These ongoing problems show

that language teachers need practical implications to use or consider while teaching listening. In addition, there is a widely accepted emphasis on the importance of teaching students by taking their learning styles into account. So, this study will look at listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles of Turkish university students. Moreover, it will look at whether these two variables are related to each other and consider how they change according to proficiency levels and gender, to get a broader picture and suggest alternative solutions.

Research Questions

The research questions posed by this study are:

1) What are the problems that Turkish university preparatory school students report having in listening comprehension?

a) What are the most frequently reported problems?

b) What are the least frequently reported problems?

2) Do listening comprehension problems vary in terms of the following variables?

a) Proficiency levels

b) Gender

3) What perceptual learning styles are common among Turkish university preparatory school students?

4) What is the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems?

Significance of the study

It is accepted that more research is needed into students' second language listening comprehension problems in order to be able to increase success in the learning and teaching of this field. Results of this study may provide more information about the relationship between students' listening comprehension problems and their proficiency levels and gender. In addition, the relevant literature lacks a study that looks at the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems, so this study may demonstrate whether particular learning styles of learners can be associated with particular kinds of listening comprehension problems.

Exploring students' listening comprehension problems in relation to their proficiency levels, gender, and perceptual learning styles is important also pedagogically. First of all, these kinds of relationships may emphasize the significance of detecting students' differences in proficiency level, gender, and learning styles, and language teachers may be able to help with listening comprehension problems on a more conscious level, possibly adjusting their listening lessons in order to address their students' different characteristics. As Cheng and Banya (1998, p. 84) point out "effective teaching requires teachers' awareness of students' individual differences and teachers' willingness to vary their teaching styles to match with most students". Moreover, by detecting students' perceptual learning styles, teachers will be facilitators of students' listening comprehension by providing appropriate tasks and even assessments that match their learning styles. Students may be reminded to take into consideration the ways they receive information, and how these may affect their success. This can lead students to learn how to utilize the other learning styles and apply

appropriate strategies to complete listening tasks successfully. For curriculum designers, evidence of this kind of relationship will point to the need for selecting or designing listening tasks that are appropriate for all learning styles.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the problem have been presented. In the next chapter, the literature related to listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles will be reviewed. In the third chapter, the methodology of the study will be described. The fourth chapter will present the data analysis and results. In the fifth chapter, the results will be discussed, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Listening in a foreign language has been a problematic area for many second language learners at different proficiency levels (Fernandez-Toro, 2005). Nonetheless, it is a very crucial skill for success in language learning. Learning styles is also an important aspect for language learning and teachers should take into consideration in order to "…provide appropriate learning paths in terms of syllabus design, choice of materials, and alternative assessments of proficiency" (Tyacke, 1998, p.34). This study will look at listening comprehension problems and learning styles, and the aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the literature on listening comprehension, the factors affecting listening comprehension, and learning styles. The first section of the chapter provides detailed information about the listening comprehension process and the factors affecting listening comprehension, while the second section presents information about learning styles.

The Importance of Listening

In order to highlight the importance of the listening skill, the most suitable point to start is the name of the category it belongs to. Listening is described as a receptive skill, which indicates that we use listening as a tool to receive some information from the outer world, and then we internalize or make sense of this information in our inner worlds. Wolvin and Coakley (1979) stress the importance of listening by claiming that listening greatly affects peoples' attitudes, skills, behavioral patterns and understanding. Even nearly 30 years after Wolvin and Coakley's description of the listening skill,

listening increasingly keeps its vitality in our daily lives as a vehicle to interact with the outer world, especially, as Grant (1996) states, due to the technological developments of recent years, which promote sounds as much as images and print.

In addition to its indispensable use in social life, listening has been an essential part of education, since it is via the listening skill that in teacher centered classrooms, students can understand the teacher or, in communicative classrooms, students and teachers can negotiate meaning. It has been necessary at all levels of classroom instruction (Wolvin & Coakley, 1979), has been accepted as a major and separate skill to be taught, and there has been an increase in the number of materials and methodologies to teach listening (Thompson, 1995). Since it is such a vital skill, it is important to define and describe this process satisfactorily.

Defining Listening Comprehension

Defining listening has been a challenge for researchers since it is a skill that involves different features. In addition, the process the term stands for is largely unknown. While searching for the exact definition of listening, Rost (2002) concludes that definitions of listening have changed according to the dominating interest areas over time, or according to the research foci of individuals, because every definition of listening has focused on a different aspect of this skill. In the 1940s, the definition of listening was based on transmission and recreation of messages due to the advances in telecommunication, while in the 1960s, it was based on "heuristics for understanding the intent of the speaker" due to the rise of transpersonal psychology. Listening was defined as "being open to what is in the speaker" by psychologists and as "negotiating meaning" by applied linguists, while listening meant "catching what the speaker says" for

language students. However, despite the uniqueness and differences in these definitions, Rost highlights four commonly attributed perspectives in these attempts to define listening: receptive, constructive, collaborative, and transformative perspectives. On the basis of these perspectives, he presents four definitions: from the receptive perspective, listening is "receiving what the speaker actually says", from the constructive perspective, listening is "constructing and representing meaning", from the collaborative perspective listening is "negotiating with the speaker and responding", and from the transformative perspective listening is "creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy" (pp. 2-3).

In his definition of listening, Linch (2002) emphasizes the continuous progression of listening in people's lives and defines listening as "involving the integration of whatever cues the listener is able to exploit – incoming auditory and visual information, as well as information from internal memory and previous experience" (p. 39). Regardless of the listening definition that is accepted, it is certain that in order to listen, we go through several stages in a process. So it is important to know about this process in order to understand the sources of problematic areas in listening.

The Process of Listening Comprehension

Although listening is accepted to be an unobservable and mysterious process and the difficulty of reaching satisfying success in the listening skill is partly attributed to this mystery, there have been various attempts to explain this unknown process. However, the differences in these attempts also signal its complexity. The process of

listening may be seen as an enigma since "it involves the listeners' internal behaviors and hence does not lend itself to direct measurement" (Bensemmane, 1996, p. 120).

Bottom-up processing and top-down processing are two commonly mentioned processing theories related to listening comprehension (Morley, 2001). Buck (1995) describes bottom up processing as referring to a process that starts from attention to phonetic input, then takes consideration of lexical meaning and analysis of syntactic knowledge, before making semantic connections based on the context and background knowledge. However, Buck states that this fixed order is misleading. He claims that people continuously employ top down processes such as context knowledge, general knowledge, and past experiences, without depending on a fixed order, since meaning is not only constructed upon the texts but also on the different sources of knowledge such as linguistic knowledge and context knowledge.

Underwood (1989) summarizes the listening comprehension process in three distinct stages by focusing on the brain's functions during listening. At the first stage, the sounds go into the echoic memory, where they stay for a very short time and have to be sorted out into meaningful units as soon as possible because there are streams of sounds arriving continuously. At the second stage, the sounds that are now in the form of words go into the short term memory, where they again stay for a very short time, perhaps only a few seconds. In short term memory, the meaning of these words has to be linked with existing knowledge in order for the listener to transfer this meaning into the long term memory. Once the listener grasps the meaning these words carry, they are generally forgotten because at the third stage, the meaning is stored in the long term memory on the basis of the gist of the message rather than the words themselves.

Wolvin and Coakley (1979) describe listening as a complex process composed of four interrelated components, which are receiving, attending, assigning meaning and remembering. Receiving corresponds to the physiological process of grasping words, voice cues, nonlinguistic sounds, and nonverbal cues. Attending corresponds to paying attention to a limited number of stimuli out of a great many stimuli. The next component, assigning meaning, refers to the process in which the brain matches the meaning of the words with those in already existing categories. The authors emphasize that the more knowledgeable and experienced a person is, the more successful he/she is in grasping the intended message. The last component, remembering, is "the storage of aural stimuli in the mind for the purpose of recalling them later" (p. 4).

For the process of listening, Lynch (2002) mentions a series of levels: sublexical, phonological, prosodic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. Among these, sublexical and pragmatic are the lowest and the highest levels, respectively. Sublexical level is characterized by the signals such as Hmhm or Uhuh that give clues about the speakers' attitude and pragmatic level is characterized by the effect of culture on the listeners' comprehension. Even though these may not be unquestionable descriptions of the listening process, they are valuable in helping teachers to at least understand the process and adapt their instruction.

Different Types of Listening

Listening is a process in which we spend a large part of our time, both in our social lives and in education. Looking at the different types of listening categorized for daily life and education gives the impression that we devote our lives to listening for

different purposes and it is important to be aware of these different types in order to employ useful strategies and to be successful listeners both in social life and education.

For social life situations, Wolvin and Coakley (1979) categorize listening situations into five types, which are appreciative listening, discriminative listening, comprehensive listening, therapeutic listening, and critical listening. Appreciative listening is carried out to "enjoy or to gain a sensory impression" (p. 7) as in the examples of listening to music, to a movie or to a speaker's language style. Discriminative listening concentrates on the discrimination of sounds in addition to noticing emotional features carried out by these sounds. Another type, comprehensive listening, is carried out when the listener aims to understand as much as possible from what he/she listens to, as in while listening to briefings, conferences or work training programs. In therapeutic listening, the listener is expected to only listen without evaluation or judgment, and as its name suggests it is commonly carried out by therapists. The last type, critical listening, requires the listener to understand the message and make comments about it. Wolvin and Coakley suggest that this type of listening is mostly carried out while listening to persuasive messages such as television or radio advertisements.

In contrast to Wolvin and Coakley's (1979) perspective, Rost (2002) refers to three different types of listening from an academic point of view, which are intensive listening, selective listening, and interactive listening. According to Rost, intensive listening is a type that focuses on the recognition of "precise sounds, words, phrases, grammatical units, and pragmatic units". He suggests that this type of listening may be given a short time at the end of each lesson because it is not widely used in real life.

However, it is essential for students to understand words exactly, and intensive listening, which is best performed by dictation activities, is the best type of listening to provide students with needed practice. The second type of listening defined by Rost, selective listening, refers to the situations where students listen in order to answer specific questions rather than to remember every detail. He points to the importance of this type by indicating that selective listening is closely linked to global listening, a term referring to daily life situations such as listening to television, a recipe for dinner or the news. The suggested activity for selective listening is note taking, which is essential in listening to lectures. The last type of listening, interactive listening, is a process occurring during communicative tasks. This type of listening is vital for students since in this type of listening, meaning is the primary concern and students are forced both to understand language and to produce output by using the appropriate linguistic forms. Rost states that collaborative tasks containing information gaps and ambiguous stories are appropriate for this kind of listening. Linch (2002) mentions clarification requests and confirmation checks as the most important strategies for interactive listening.

Diaz-Rico and Weed (2006) also categorize listening into types from a similar perspective to Rost's (2002), but using different names. The first type, listening to repeat, focuses on the recognition of sounds, as in intensive listening. The authors emphasize minimal pair instruction for this kind of listening. Listening to understand refers to occasions where listening is performed to select the correct answer from the whole message, as in selective listening. The final type, listening for communication, is similar to interactive listening, but Diaz-Rico and Weed state that students are never forced to speak and they are just expected to show their understanding in listening for

communication, while in interactive listening students are certainly expected to show their understanding by producing some utterances.

Being aware of the types of listening and the differences among them is important for instructors, especially in planning their lessons, since each type has a different focus and requires different strategies. It is important also for students in selecting appropriate strategies to enhance their understanding.

Teaching Listening Comprehension

As it has not been too long since listening has been accepted as a separate skill to be taught, the teaching of listening is an area that is under discussion and developing. Rost (1990) mentions three approaches related to the teaching of listening: oral approaches to language teaching, which focus on the identification and discrimination of language structures during listening; listening based language learning, which focuses on listening as a critical element that provides input for learning language; and communicative language teaching, which focuses on understanding meaning by listening to input in real life like situations. These existing approaches to teaching listening have evolved in the past 50 years, and they are generally eclectic approaches that draw something from different areas including education, linguistics, psycholinguistics, language acquisition and instructional design (Rost, 2002).

According to Tauroza (1997), teachers mostly test listening instead of teaching because they adapt a 'testing style approach'. He illustrates this approach as:

> - Students listen to a passage once or twice. They respond to some questions. They are told the answers and mark their responses. They get their scores but little is done to help them overcome any difficulties they had in answering the questions. (pp. 161-162)

Tauroza's point of view supports the judgment that teaching listening is still a difficult area for many language teachers since it is not satisfactorily clear for many of them how to teach this skill effectively, how to deal with listening comprehension problems, and what kind of strategies to teach. However, there are studies that show that this picture has started to change in a promising direction.

In a study Yukselci (2003) conducted about teachers' perceptions regarding listening, she found that many of the participants were aware of the importance of teaching listening strategies, and different strategies were integrated into the listening lessons. Another important finding was that, despite the fact that they used ready-made listening materials, more than half of the participants indicated self confidence in their ability to prepare listening materials. Another study, indicating that teachers are aware of the importance of teaching listening strategies, was conducted by Saglam (2003), who found that many language teachers took into account their students' problems and tried to adapt their lessons with strategies such as using simple linguistic forms and avoiding formal academic language, in order to help students understand what they listen to.

Field (1996) states that there have been 'major developments' in the teaching of listening, because, in addition to its acceptance as a separate skill, it is being taught by helping students to establish expectations from listening and by adapting real life like tasks. He illustrates his point of view with a lesson plan in which the learners are motivated in a meaningful context, pre-set questions are answered after listening to the text several times by employing strategies, and the learners are guided to infer the meanings of unknown words.

As a guide for an effective listening comprehension lesson, three stages are mentioned: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. Field (2002) mentions two goals to be achieved in the pre-listening stage: providing a real life like context and motivating students for listening. According to Underwood (1989) it is at this stage that students' background knowledge related to language and the topic is activated. In addition, Field (2002) emphasizes that the appropriate time length for this stage is five minutes and spending too much time at this stage may cause a loss of curiosity by the students. The suggested activities for this stage are brainstorming the vocabulary, discussing the topic of the listening text, and looking at relevant pictures (Field, 2002; Underwood, 1989). Moreover, it is crucial to preset the purposes for the coming listening task at the pre-listening stage instead of asking the students to do something by depending on their memory at the while-listening stage (Field, 2002; Underwood, 1989). In order to enable the students to decide on what kind of information they should concentrate, they should be made aware about the comprehension questions that will be answered or what they are required to do after listening (Field, 2002; Underwood, 1989).

Underwood (1989) suggests that the aim of the while-listening stage is to assist the students in eliciting the appropriate messages from the listening text. While-listening activities should be easy to accomplish and fun to engage in since it is important to prevent demotivation of the students and it is not the appropriate time to test their comprehension (Underwood, 1989). At this stage, the students may be asked to label buildings on a map, to fill a form, or to draw shapes on a picture (Field, 2002).

At the last stage of a listening lesson, post-listening, it is important to evaluate whether the students have reached the expected success or what appeared to be problematic for them. Depending on the students' objectives, it may be possible to test the students' understanding at this stage. If the students' aim is to take a listening comprehension test, it is appropriate to ask multiple choice or other kinds of comprehension questions at this stage (Underwood, 1989). Furthermore, the teacher may link the topic to the other language skills by assigning group discussions or writing homework (Underwood, 1989). Also, at this stage, the students should be provided with immediate feedback about their success in completing the task while they still have the relevant information in their minds (Underwood, 1989).

In addition to being aware of the stages that should be involved in designing a listening lesson, it is important for teachers to know the factors that affect success in listening comprehension. The following section will review the factors that have been observed to influence the listening skill. This will be useful for the sake of this study by revealing the possible explanations underlying listening problems.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are defined by Chamot (1995) as "the steps, plans, insights, and reflections that learners employ to learn more effectively" (p.13). Learning strategies are important contributors to one's success in listening, as they are in the other language skills. They can enhance success if they are chosen in accord with learners' personal features like learning styles and if they are easily applicable (Tauroza, 1997). Studies show that the more effective strategies learners employ, the more successful they become (Hasan, 2000). Another important point about strategies is that the

strategies should be used by learners consciously, which means that learners should notice when they are employing the strategies and when they are not (Rost, 2002).

Mendelsohn (1995) suggests that listening lessons should employ a strategy based approach and learners should be taught useful strategies to assist them to overcome the difficulties they encounter. He argues that a strategy based listening course should include strategies to determine setting, interpersonal relations, mood, topic, and the essence of the meaning of an utterance, as well as the strategies to form hypotheses, to predict, and to make inferences.

Goh (2000) suggests that language instructors teach strategies that address students' problems, and she mentions listening strategies under three groups: cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective. These three classes are the most widely agreed upon listening strategies (Peterson, 2001; Rost, 2002). Cognitive strategies are related to perceiving the input; metacognitive strategies, which are described as useful especially in top-down processing, are related to the management of cognitive processes and difficulties during listening; and social-affective strategies are related to other people involved in the process and the management of negative emotions. Chamot (1995) exemplifies cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies as "use of prior knowledge…,to monitor a task in progress…, and cooperating with peers on a language learning task" respectively (p. 15).

According to Rost (2002), five particular kinds of strategies are associated with successful listening and these strategies are often used by many successful listeners. These successful listening strategies are: "predicting information or ideas prior to listening, making inferences from incomplete information based on prior knowledge,

monitoring one's own listening process and relative success…attempting to clarify areas of confusion and responding to what one has understood" (p. 155).

Listening Texts

A second factor influencing listening is the types of texts listened to. These may be authentic such as news, songs, and movies, or they may be specially designed for the course, such as interviews and dialogues.

Thompson (1995) states that it is important to consider the text features while choosing listening texts for listening instruction, since they may contribute to or hinder understanding. She mentions some valuable criteria that should be taken into account while choosing a text. The first criterion is orality vs. literacy, which indicates that texts that are closer to spoken language have conversational features such as repetitions and pauses and are easier for students, in comparison to texts that are closer to written language, which have longer and more complex sentences. This factor should be taken into consideration by teachers or material designers while choosing listening texts. Material designers should choose "listener friendly" texts since it has been found that difficult grammatical structures are among the most widely mentioned listening comprehension problems (Goh, 2000; Hasan, 2000; Yousif, 2006).

Another criterion brought up by Thompson is vocabulary, which is another one of the most commonly mentioned factors affecting the listening comprehension of students (Goh, 2000; Graham, 2006; Hasan, 2000; Yousif, 2006). She comments that especially for lower proficiency level students, it is valuable to know or be able to infer the meaning of key vocabulary from the context. However, it is possible that students may not be able to understand even familiar words in unfamiliar contexts.

Elaboration and redundancies also should be attended to. “Discourse markers at major discourse boundaries” such as “what I am going to talk about today is” appear to make understanding easier for all listeners, in addition to repeated nouns for lower proficiency level students and paraphrases and synonyms for higher proficiency levels (Thompson, 1995, p. 39).

Thompson states that speech rate is an important criterion in affecting listening comprehension and the high speed of speech may be assumed to make listening more difficult for lower level proficiency students. Rixon (1986) also supports this view by stating that the high speed of speech means that listeners have to process the information as quickly as possible. This concern is in accordance with the study by Goh (2000), who found that the students quickly forgot what they heard, possibly because of the limited capacity of their short term memory. Also, because of fast speech, students may fail to recognize the words they know. However, the findings related to the effect of speech rate are still controversial. It is mentioned that there is a need for further research about the topic (Barker, 1971; Thompson, 1995; Zhao, 1997).

Speaker

Speakers of the listening texts are also among the factors that influence students’ listening comprehension. On the one hand, speakers may contribute to the comprehension of the listeners. Listeners may utilize this factor to make some inferences in terms of the speaker’s body language, tone of voice, intonation, and pitch, through which speakers tend to indicate important points such as new ideas or doubts in spontaneous conversation (Underwood, 1989). On the other hand, speakers may cause difficulty in listening comprehension. The speaker’s accent may be unfamiliar for the

students or he or she may tend to say things only one time without repeating or paraphrasing, which does not give a second chance to students for checking the correctness of what they understand (Rixon, 1986). Another important point is that the existence of more than one speaker may cause some problems in the recorded listening texts if they have a similar tone of voice, or if they have different perspectives on the topic.

Characteristics of Listeners

In addition to the factors such as the learning strategies, speaker, and the text, listeners themselves also have been stated to be important in affecting their own understanding from several aspects. Underwood (1989) states that, first of all, students need to have some background knowledge on the topic to be able to make reliable inferences or interpretations from what they listen to. Another issue addressed by Underwood related to listeners is the attention or concentration level of listeners. She comments that listeners should be able to pay attention and concentrate on what they are listening to for a long time, so that they will not miss the important points from the continuous flow of stimuli. However, students sometimes may easily withdraw their attention and feel tired during listening if they make a great effort to catch every word they hear, and listener fatigue hinders effective listening (Barker, 1971; Underwood, 1989) . Underwood points to "established learning habits" as the reason behind these great amounts of effort to understand every word. She states that traditionally, teachers have directed students to understand as much as possible from their listening, which has caused students feel under stress while listening. Moreover, Graham (2006) found that many unsuccessful listeners tended to accept themselves as having low ability in

listening, which supports the view that students' perceptions of their "own supposed ability" enhance or decrease their success in listening (p. 178).

Listening Tasks

Due to the shift from testing based listening instruction to real life-like listening instruction, choosing appropriate listening tasks has been greatly important in the teaching of listening, as well as in promoting learners' success in listening. Listening tasks refer to the requirements that listeners are expected to fulfill in order to show their understanding of what they listen to, such as forming an outline of the notes or completing a diagram (Ur, 1984). Ur (1984) maintains that "listening exercises are most effective if they are constructed round a task" (p. 25). She mentions six important aspects of "a well constructed task" (1984, p. 27). A pre-set purpose is the first necessity of a listening task and it requires listeners' awareness about what kind of information to look for during listening and what to do after listening. The second important aspect is an ongoing learner response, which means that listeners should show their understanding with easy responses such as physical movement, drawing or ticking-off during listening, not at the end of listening (Ur, 1999). Guariento and Morley (2001) state that students should be expected to focus on communicating rather than on repeating grammatical structures. Motivation is another aspect that should be enhanced by the listening tasks by having interesting topics and encouraging students to respond actively. Ur also points out that the aim of listening tasks is to take students to success, not failure, which can be achieved by asking listeners to do an activity instead of requiring them to give correct answers in multiple choice tests. Simplicity in both preparation and administration is also a necessity for effective listening tasks. The last

aspect to take into account for listening tasks is feedback. Both Ur (1984) and Underwood (1989) highlight that feedback for listening should be provided immediately after the task so as to be valuable and effective for the listener, since immediate feedback may allow students to refer back to the task easily while delayed feedback may cause a loss of interest in the students.

Visual Support for the Input

Visual support, which may be in the form of body movements, facial expressions, sketches or pictures, is considered to be important in improving understanding both in live listening and recorded listening (Hasan, 1996; Ur, 1984). While listeners are listening to a speaker during a live listening such as a lecture, facial expressions and body movements of the speaker may enhance motivation and concentration by drawing the interests of the listeners (Barker, 1971; Underwood, 1989; Ur, 1984). The speaker may use his facial expressions even to change the meaning of his utterances. Ur (1984) points out that if students are listening to a record, the presence of some visuals is essential for contextualizing the situation. As students are watching a video, they may be able to catch valuable clues about the speaker's age and mood (Underwood, 1989, p. 96). The importance of visuals also changes according to the listening exercises, which can be classified as visual based exercises and visual aided exercises (Ur, 1984). According to Ur, visual based exercises, which may be presented in the form of completion of a diagram or making changes on a sketch, are of immense value especially for young learners. She highlights that in these types of exercises every student should have a copy of the visuals, while in visual aided exercises, it may be enough to use only one poster on the board in order to give a general sense.

While these are the factors that are known to be influential in listening comprehension, exploring students' perceptions of listening comprehension and related problems is also very useful in developing realistic solutions to these problems.

Students' Perceptions of Listening Comprehension Difficulties

Listening in L2 has been perceived as a difficult area by most of the language learners (Goh, 2000; Graham, 2006; Guo & Wills, 2006). It is suggested that being aware of students' thoughts about listening is extremely beneficial because these thoughts not only give clues to the researchers about what is happening during the listening process or what is causing listening comprehension problems but also may affect learners' success in listening (Graham, 2006; Hasan, 2000). Since students' perceptions are invaluable sources in detecting listening comprehension problems, many researchers have sought these perceptions to detect listening comprehension problems on the basis of them.

Graham (2006) investigated learners' beliefs about the reasons for their success or failure in listening in a study, whose participants were 16-18 year old high school students learning French as L2. In addition to the questionnaires answered by all the participants, she interviewed several students and she found that many learners reported listening as their area of least success and most of those pointed to the difficulty of the task and their supposed inability as the most important reasons. In addition, less effective listeners among the interviewed students seemed to be unaware of the importance of strategy employment in the listening skill.

Hasan (2000) conducted a study with university students whose second language was English, in order to explore students' perceptions of their listening comprehension

problems. Hasan found that the tasks and the activities, the message, including the vocabulary and grammatical structures, the speaker, the listener, and the physical setting were important factors affecting listening comprehension and have to be taken into account to improve listening. He also suggested that students should be trained in effective listening strategies, of which many learners were unaware.

Another study based on students' perceptions of listening was conducted by Goh (2000). The data were collected from group interviews, immediate retrospective verbalization procedures, and learners' self reports. Goh looked at listening comprehension problems from a cognitive perspective by considering the phases of perception, parsing, and utilization and she identified ten problems related to these phases. The problems were related to attention deficiency, inability to recognize familiar words, speed of speech, lack of effective strategies, and lack of prior knowledge. Goh stated that many learners reported quickly forgetting what is heard and she pointed out weakness in short term memory as a possible reason behind this problem.

Although learning strategies, listening texts, speakers, attitudes of listeners, listening tasks, and visual supports are the factors frequently reported to influence listening comprehension, it is possible to find other factors related to students' success in listening. Perceptual learning styles of students may show this kind of relation, since they are directly related to learning.

Learning Styles

Although how learning takes place is an area that has been studied for years, we still do not know the exact process of learning. However, we have been able to discover that there is not a unique way of learning among individuals and each individual has

his/her own preferred way of learning, which is called learning styles (Tuckman, Abry, & Smith, 2008). Felder and Henriques (1995) define learning styles as "the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains, and retrieves information" (p. 21). Ehrman and Oxford (1990) mention the existence of at least twenty different dimensions in learning styles. This study will focus on perceptual learning styles, which are described by Oxford (2001) as the styles most relevant to language learning and by Brown (1994) as very salient in the classroom. Perceptual learning styles are immensely important in language learning because as Sprenger (2008) points out, "input, output, and patterning all rely on our senses and the connections that are made to learning are via visual, auditory, or kinesthetic channels" (p. 30). As implied in the previous statement, perceptual learning styles are determined by the senses of sight, hearing or touch (Kottler, Kottler, & Street, 2008), and according to their level of dependence on these senses, we may label students as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Visual Learners

Sprenger (2008) states that visual learners prefer learning by seeing the information and "learning is real to them if they can see it" (p. 39). They can easily visualize the spelling of words or math problems. These kinds of learners easily understand through charts, graphs, maps, field trips, movies, or simply print, which indicates that they like reading. Visual learning preferences may lead them to take notes while listening to lessons, even if they may not need to look back at these notes. In the absence of some kind of visuals, it may be confusing for them to learn the information (Oxford, 2001). Sprenger (2008) mentions the following as features of a visual learner:

- Rolls eyes

- Follows you around the room with his/her eyes
- Is distracted by movement
- Loves handouts, work on the board, overheads, and any visual presentations
- Often speaks rapidly
- Will usually retrieve information by looking up and to the left
- Says things like "I see what you mean" or "I get the picture. (p. 37)

Auditory learners

Since the auditory and speech areas are closely located to each other in the brain, auditory learners like listening to others, as well as speaking to others (Sprenger, 2008). Sprenger describes auditory learners as sound sensitive. This means that while they may learn information by just listening to it, they may also get easily distracted by the sounds they do not like. They enjoy listening to lectures or conversations and they prefer having interactions with others in role plays and group discussions (Oxford, 2001; Sprenger, 2008). However, they may have difficulty in writing words. Sprenger mentions these as auditory learner behaviors:

- Talks a lot; may talk to self
- Distracted by sound
- Enjoys cassette tape work and listening to you speak
- Likes to have material read aloud
- May answer rhetorical questions
- Usually speaks distinctly
- Will usually retrieve information by looking from side to side while listening to his/her internal tape recorder
- Says things like "sounds good to me" or "I hear what you are saying". (p. 37)

Kinesthetic learners

It is hard to keep kinesthetic learners sitting on a chair for a long time since kinesthetic learners prefer to be physically active, and they like working with tangible objects, collages, and flashcards (Oxford, 2001; Oxford & Anderson, 1995). Sprenger (2008) mentions three types of kinesthetic learners: hands on learners, whole body learners, and doodlers. Hands on learners learn through manipulating objects; whole body learners get information by becoming bodily involved in learning; doodlers learn through drawing something while listening to information at the same time. Sprenger mentions the following as the common behaviors of a kinesthetic learner:

- Sits very comfortably, usually slouched or lots of movement, leans back in chair, taps pencil
- Often speaks very slowly, feeling each word
- Distracted by comfort variations, i.e., temperature, light
- Needs hands on experiences
- Distracted by movement-often his/her own
- Will usually retrieve information by looking down to feel the movement when he/she learned it
- Says things like "I need a concrete example" or "that feels right". (p. 39)

Identifying Learning Styles

When teachers and students enter the classroom, all of them bring their own different learning styles to the classroom. The problem is that teachers tend to teach in the way they learn, which may not match their students' learning styles (Wentz, 2001), and in this setting, it is the duty of teachers to detect students' learning styles and adjust their instruction according to students' learning styles. Students' learning styles may be detected in different ways. Wentz provides a guideline in order to help teachers tackle

the different learning styles in the classrooms. In this guideline, the following are suggested:

- Adopt a repertory of teaching styles to accommodate a variety of learning styles
- Try out new ideas and teaching techniques for different learning styles
- Make careful note of which learning styles seem to be preferred by different students.
- Develop a portfolio on learning styles and the accommodating teaching techniques
- Become their own expert on learning styles. (p. 147)

Reid (1998), who describes teachers as researchers who regularly collect data related to their students in order to improve the quality of the education, advises teachers to use different learning style surveys, as well as collecting data related to students' background, to raise awareness in students and to adapt their teaching styles. Defining students' learning styles is useful not only for teachers but also for students (Sprenger, 2008). It will enable teachers to enhance their instruction according to students' learning styles and assist in teaching students with learning difficulties. It will help students to notice and use their strengths effectively. Sprenger (2008) states that "the more your students know about themselves, the better learners they will be" (p. 42). However, it should be stated that it is not possible for teachers to adjust their instruction according to each individual in the classroom and this may force students to use or combine their less preferred modes, which is something inevitable and useful for them (Brown, 1994; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Felder & Henriques, 1995). It is known that learning styles operate on a continuum and there is not a sharp distinction between them, which makes it possible for learners to improve their ability to deal with information by using different sensory channels when needed (Oxford, 2001). Teachers may succeed in this

by providing students with various learning situations and letting them notice their ability to use other styles also.

In order to increase their awareness, students may be administered different learning style instruments by their instructors or they can apply these instruments themselves at different times. However, it is important to note that teachers should be careful about learning style instruments and not portray them as infallible to students. Students should be informed that these instruments may be interpreted differently by the students in different cultures and that students' perceptions related to their best learning style may be different from what they do and are able to do in reality. In addition, students should be made aware that learning styles can not be categorized as appropriate to specific professions and that regardless of their learning styles students can be successful in any profession they want (Felder & Spurlin, 2005).

The Relationship between Learning Styles and Listening Comprehension Problems

Learning styles is a field that has been searched from different aspects in order to meet the learning needs of students more appropriately. Kratzig and Arbuthnott (2006) tested the hypothesis that students recall better the information they take in through ways appropriate to their learning styles. In other words, they checked whether visual students remember best the visual materials, auditory learners the audio materials, and the kinesthetic learners the tactual materials. They found that this was not the case for the majority of the participants and concluded that students use different modalities to acquire information in different situations. Cheng and Banya (1998) conducted a study to compare the learning style differences between teachers and students. They found teachers to be more auditory than students and students to be more visual than teachers

and they emphasized the importance for both teachers and students to be aware of their learning styles. In another study, Rossi-Le (1989) looked at the relationship between the perceptual learning styles and language learning strategies of 147 adult immigrant students and found learning styles to be an important factor affecting students' language learning strategy choices. He found that some strategy types were particularly related to some perceptual learning style preferences, i.e. tactile learners preferred self management strategies, auditory learners used memory strategies, and visual learners employed visualization strategies.

Braxton (1999) also conducted a study looking at the relationship between students' learning styles and strategy employment. The study showed that the learning style preferences of students affected their strategy choice in academic listening while taking notes. In his study, there were four participants' whose learning styles were either visual or auditory. He found that students who preferred an auditory learning style chose the strategy of memorizing. They took notes of new words and repeated them over and over until memorizing and this helped them to understand listening texts more. Students who preferred a visual learning style chose the strategy of writing main points and new words and underlining them during listening because they could not learn those words before seeing in written form. He concluded that these perceptual learning style preferences led these students to improve their listening skills through using cognitive, compensation and memory strategies.

As stated in the previous paragraph, perceptual learning styles of students were observed from different aspects, such as the differences between students' and teachers' styles, the effect of these styles on language strategy choices and on note taking

strategies during listening and they were found to be effecting students' strategy choices also for listening skill. However, they have not yet been studied from a perspective looking directly at whether there is a relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems.

Conclusion

The research in the area clearly shows that listening occurs as a result of an unknown process in the mind and this mystery makes it hard for teachers to understand and deal with their students' listening comprehension difficulties adequately. However, it is also widely agreed that listening is an essential skill for language learning and we need to develop this skill in students. Although the already detected factors, such as learning strategies, listening tasks, characteristics of listeners, and speech rate are highly valuable in explaining and dealing with the listening comprehension problems, the ongoing failure of students in this skill highlights the need to look at the situation more closely. It is commonly accepted that it is important for teachers to determine students' learning styles and adjust their lessons according to these styles in order to improve their success. This study aims to explore students' perceptual learning styles, their listening comprehension problems, and these problems from the perspectives of gender, proficiency level, and perceptual learning styles, which will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' L2 listening comprehension problems and their auditory, kinesthetic, and visual perceptual learning styles. Listening is a problematic skill for many language learners and learning styles is an important aspect in students' educational success. It is expected that the exploration of students' listening comprehension problems and their perceptual learning styles will be useful for both teachers and students in dealing with listening comprehension problems and improving students' success in language learning. The research questions addressed by this study are:

1) What are the problems that Turkish university preparatory school students report having in listening comprehension?

a) What are the most frequently reported problems?

b) What are the least frequently reported problems?

2) Do listening comprehension problems vary in terms of the following variables?

a) Proficiency levels

b) Gender

3) What perceptual learning styles are common among Turkish university preparatory school students?

4) What is the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems?

In this chapter, the methodological procedures to be followed are explained. First, the information about the setting and the participants are given. Then, the instruments and the data analysis are presented.

Setting and Participants

This study, which was a quantitative one, was conducted at Foreign Languages School of Gazi University because Gazi university students have the diversity that may reflect the Turkish students' general features. They come from different regions and they have different family and education backgrounds. They were assumed to have listening comprehension problems, since their course books involved listening activities and their teachers reported that listening was a problematic area for their students.

Gazi University Preparatory School students are administered a proficiency exam at the beginning of each education year and according to this exam, students whose scores are under 60 are grouped into different proficiency levels: elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate levels. However, it is important to state that since language proficiency level of students is rather low, intermediate level students appear rarely and there was no intermediate level class during the first semester. Because of this, there was no upper-intermediate class in the second term, during which the data were gathered for this study. Students of English Language Teaching department take a different proficiency exam than other students since they come to this program according to the high scores they get from the English part of the university entrance exam (OSS) and they are grouped according to their proficiency scores only under the upper intermediate level. As a result, in the first semester, upper intermediate group includes students only from English Language Teaching department. In the second term,

each proficiency group moves up one level, and the upper intermediate students move up to advanced.

The participants of this study were 295 students in total from three different proficiency levels, which are pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced. The students were from six randomly chosen classes- two from each of three proficiency levels (see Table 1). The participants, who were from different majors, were young adults whose ages ranged between 19 and 24.

Table 1 -Distribution of participants by proficiency level

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Pre-intermediate	95	32.2
	Intermediate	100	33.9
	Advanced	100	33.9
	Total	295	100.0

Table 2 - Distribution of participants by gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	139	47.1
	Female	156	52.9
	Total	295	100.0

Instruments

As the research instruments, two Likert scale questionnaires were used in this study. The first questionnaire explored students' perceptual learning styles and was adapted from Rebecca Oxford's (1998) Style Analysis Survey, a widely accepted means of detecting students' perceptual learning styles. The perceptual learning styles questionnaire had two sections. In the first section, personal information about the participants' gender, age, and proficiency level was sought (Appendix A). The second section of the questionnaire included 30 items categorized under three scales, each one involving 10 items. The items of the first scale were related to the visual learners, the second scale was related to the auditory learners, and the third one was related to the kinesthetic learners. While in the original version of the questionnaire, the items for each scale were grouped together, during this study, these 30 items were randomized in order to increase the reliability of the questionnaire. The results of this section were expected to answer the third research question: "What perceptual learning styles are common among Turkish university preparatory school students?" (Appendix A).

In the studies related to listening comprehension problems, different instruments have been used such as listening comprehension tests, interviews, learner diaries, immediate retrospective verbalization, and open ended questionnaires on learners' self assessments (Graham, 2006; Goh, 2000; Yousif, 2006). In this study a Likert scale questionnaire, which was adapted from a study by Ali S. Hasan (2000), was used because this questionnaire had sufficient variety to cover most of the problems mentioned in the literature. The questionnaire had two sections as can be seen in Appendix A. The first section of this questionnaire included 26 items, which were

grouped under five different scales, in the original. These scales were labeled as listener, speaker, message, task, and strategy (Appendix B). The researcher reviewed the literature on listening comprehension problems and added another 5 items, all of which were related to factors that were covered by the studies mentioned in the previous chapter but did not exist in this questionnaire. These items that were added by the researcher can be seen in Appendix B. The new items were added to the listener and strategy scales. The items added to the listener scale were related to students' quickly forgetting of the words they hear, the difficulty of concentrating on the rest of a listening text after missing a few words, and listener fatigue. The items added to the strategy scale were related to predicting the words that are associated with the topic and paying attention to the topic markers, which are cognitive and metacognitive strategies, respectively. In addition, some changes were made in the task-related items, since some of them did not match the listening tasks presented in the course books used in Turkey. In the original version of the questionnaire, two items were related to listening activities done in pair and group work. However, the researcher changed these two activities to note taking and filling a chart during listening because, based on the observations and experiences of herself, she thought these were among the most common types of listening activities students are involved in Turkey.

It should be noted that unlike the other scales, the strategy scale did not include listening comprehension problems as such. It involved some effective pre- and while-listening strategies, i.e. predicting the words, using background knowledge, and paying attention to topic markers. In addition, an ineffective strategy, i.e. listening to every detail, was also included in this questionnaire to observe whether students are aware of

the effective listening strategies and can discriminate them from the ineffective ones. This scale was included since underuse of effective strategies or overuse of the ineffective strategy can be interpreted as listening comprehension problems. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of a single open ended question asking participants if any other variables affected their listening comprehension negatively.

The questionnaires, which were originally in English, were translated into Turkish by the researcher. As the next step, the researcher asked another colleague to translate these Turkish versions into English. These back translations were compared with the original questionnaires by a native speaker of English in order to detect any problems in the Turkish translation and necessary changes were made to present the items with the exact meanings. The Turkish version of the questionnaires can be seen in Appendix C.

Before these questionnaires were administered on a large scale, they were piloted at Gazi University Foreign Languages School. Forty students from two different proficiency levels, i.e. pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate, completed these questionnaires. During the piloting, the students were asked to indicate any questions that were not clear.

In the pilot study, the internal consistency of the questionnaires was checked. The Cronbach alpha coefficients were .65 and .71 for the perceptual learning style questionnaire and listening comprehension problems questionnaire, respectively. The reliability scores of the separate scales in perceptual learning style questionnaire and listening comprehension problems questionnaire are presented in Table 3 and 4, respectively. Some of the scales - i.e., the visual and auditory scales from the perceptual

learning styles questionnaire and the strategy scale from the listening comprehension problems questionnaire- were not found to have satisfactory reliability scores as scales. However, the original grouping of the items under any of the scales was not changed because it was thought that the reliability of some scales may change depending on the research population and higher scores may be acquired for these scales in the actual study with a larger research population.

Table 3 -Reliability of the scales in perceptual learning styles questionnaire in the pilot study

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Visual	.25
Auditory	.39
Kinesthetic	.59

Table 4 -Reliability of the scales in listening comprehension problems questionnaire in the pilot study

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Strategy	.31
Task	.51
Listener	.62
Speaker	.65
Message	.80

Procedure

After piloting, the questionnaires were administered in the classes that were randomly selected from three proficiency levels (pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced). In order to give information about the study and answer any questions by the participants, the questionnaires were handed out by the researcher in all classes. Before students started to answer the questions, they were asked to read the instructions and give the background information asked on the first page. The participants were allowed 20 minutes in total to complete the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

In this study, the quantitative data were analyzed in different ways to answer the research questions. Tests of normality showed that the data obtained from both of the questionnaires were not normally distributed. Descriptive statistics were used to find out the most and the least frequently reported listening comprehension problems and what learning styles are common among Turkish university students.

In order to check which listening comprehension problems were reported in different frequencies by different proficiency levels, the combined frequencies of the *always* and *often* options were found individually for each item and chi-square values were calculated to see whether there were significant differences in terms of these combined frequencies across the levels and genders. In order to find out perceptual learning style preferences of the students and whether these preferences change according to gender and proficiency level, ANOVA tests were used. Finally, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated to see whether there is a

relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems.

Conclusion

In this chapter, information about the setting and participants, the instruments, and data collection procedure was presented along with a short explanation of the data analysis. In the following chapter, the data analysis and results will be explained in detail.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study was designed to find out the learners' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems. The study also aimed to explore the whether learners' listening comprehension problems change according to different proficiency levels, genders, or perceptual learning styles. The research questions were:

1) What are the problems that Turkish university preparatory school students report having in listening comprehension?

a) What are the most frequently reported problems?

b) What are the least frequently reported problems?

2) Do listening comprehension problems vary in terms of the following variables?

a) Proficiency levels

b) Gender

3) What perceptual learning styles are common among Turkish university preparatory school students?

4) What is the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems?

Data Analysis Procedure

In order to address the research questions of this study, two separate questionnaires, each of which consisted of 30 items, were used. The perceptual learning styles questionnaire was comprised of two sections. The first section looked for

background information about the participants and the second section explored students' perceptual learning styles by using a four-point Likert-scale (1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=very often, 4=always). The data obtained from the perceptual learning styles questionnaire were entered into the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS-version 11.5) and the reliability of the questionnaire was checked; the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the perceptual learning styles questionnaire was 0.69. The reliability scores of the scales in the perceptual learning styles questionnaire are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 -Reliability of the scales in perceptual learning styles questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Visual	.57
Auditory	.49
Kinesthetic	.52

The listening comprehension problems questionnaire was comprised of two sections. While the first section included the listening comprehension problems, the second section asked for any other variables that the participants would like to mention as affecting their listening comprehension negatively. The answers to this part will be presented as a part of the answer to the first research question. The answers related to listening comprehension problems were gathered by using a five-point Likert-scale (1=never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always). The reliability score of the data obtained from the listening comprehension problems questionnaire was found to be 0.85.

In response to the feedback from an examiner after the survey had been conducted, two items from the speaker scale, which were related to the contribution of visuals to the listening comprehension of the students and which were not worded as problems, were excluded from the data analysis, since they were not listening problems. In addition, one item from the strategy scale, which was related to the contribution of pre-listening information to listening comprehension, was not included in the data analysis, since it was not a listening strategy. As a result, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be .84 for the listening comprehension problems questionnaire and the reliability of the scales can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6 -Reliability of the scales in listening comprehension problems questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Task	.67
Listener	.72
Speaker	.63
Message	.47
Strategy	.38

It is important to note here that the strategy scale had a low reliability score of .38. This replicated the low reliability found for this scale in the pilot study. Because it appeared to have such a low reliability and it did not have enough variety of the items that allow making generalizations, it will not be considered as a unified scale. The items under this scale will therefore be analyzed individually.

Results

What are the problems that Turkish university preparatory school students report having in listening comprehension?

The answers obtained from the first section of the listening comprehension problems questionnaire and the five-point Likert scale were entered into SPSS. Tests of normality showed that the data collected in this study were not normally distributed. So, the median scores of the four separate scales in the listening comprehension problems questionnaire were calculated. The scales are presented in descending order according to their scores from the highest to the lowest. This order can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7 - Median scores of the scales in listening comprehension problems questionnaire

Listening Comprehension Problems Scale	Median
Listener	3.50
Speaker	3.40
Message	3.33
Task	2.80

The median score of the listener scale appeared higher than that of the other scales while the median of the task scale appeared the lowest, which suggests that the problems under the listener scale would be the most frequently reported problems while the problems under the task scale would be the least frequently reported problems.

The differences among the scales of listening comprehension problems questionnaire were checked to see whether they were significant. A Friedman's ANOVA showed the difference among the scales to be statistically significant (χ^2=182.9, $p < .001$).

What are the most frequently reported problems?

Although the listener scale appeared to have the highest median score and was expected to include the items with the highest frequencies, there is a need for a detailed look at this scale because it appeared that some items in this scale had rather low frequencies in comparison to the others.

Table 8 - Problems under the listener scale

Item No	Item	M	Alw %	Ofn %	Sms %	Sdm %	Nvr %
23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.	4.00	43.4	28.8	18.6	6.8	2.4
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.	4.00	35.0	34.7	21.4	6.5	2.4
8	I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud	4.00	27.8	27.1	24.4	12.9	7.8
2	I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.	4.00	20.7	32.2	28.1	14.9	4.1
9	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	4.00	18.3	33.2	29.5	14.6	4.4
22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	4.00	16.6	34.9	29.2	15.9	3.4
20	I spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes me tired.	3.00	12.5	25.4	38.6	19.3	4.1
25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	3.00	9.2	31.2	32.5	21.4	5.8
21	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.	3.00	7.5	20.3	38.3	27.1	6.8
7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions).	3.00	4.7	23.7	40.3	20.7	10.5

Note: M= Median, Alw= Always, Ofn= Often, Sms= Sometimes, Sdm= Seldom, Nvr= Never

As can be seen in Table 8, the frequencies of the items in the listener scale show that six of these ten items have a frequency of higher than 50% for the combined *always* and *often* options. Items 23 and 26, which have rates of 72.2% and 69.7% (for the

combined *always* and *often* options), are both related to unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorders and poor classroom conditions, which indicates that there is a certain need for improving the conditions of language classes, which may be achieved by renewing the technological equipment and building the classes in a way that does not allow the sounds to echo. In addition, outside noises can also be prevented by thicker walls and doors. Another frequently reported item, with a rate of 54.9%, shows that students are not comfortable while listening to recorded texts and they prefer to listen to their teacher speaking English. This may be interpreted as showing that students feel uncomfortable with recorded listening texts because they may not be familiar with the accents, they may have problems with the speech rate, they can not ask clarification questions, or they can ask for repetition while they listen to their teacher during live listening while they can not ask many times while listening to a recorded text because it is not practical. In addition, the preference for listening to a teacher may be related to the need for renewing technological equipment which is old and may hinder comprehension, as stated above. Other frequently reported problems under this scale were related to the listener's own characteristics. They reported feeling nervous and worried when they do not understand a listening text (52.9%), and having concentration problems when they miss some parts (51.5%) or listen to uninteresting topics (51.5%). Other items related to listener fatigue, understanding the general message from the first listening and short term memory have the highest rates for the *sometimes* option, which may be interpreted as showing that the frequency of these problems may increase or decrease according to some other factors, such as students' motivation or whether what they listen to is appropriate to their interests or not.

Items of the speaker and message scale will also be analyzed under this part, since they have items whose frequency for the *always* and *often* options are higher than 50% and so can be seen as 'high frequency problems. Table 9 shows that items 18 and 28 under the speaker scale, with frequencies of 66.1% and 61.0%, respectively, have high rates similar to the items in the listener scale. In addition, item 1 has a rate of 53.9%. These three items with higher frequencies than 50% for the combined *always* and *often* options appear among the most frequently reported problems and suggest that speakers may cause serious listening comprehension problems due to their fast speech rate, varied accents, and unclear pronunciation.

Table 9 - Speaker scale

Item No	Item	N	M	Aws %	Ofn %	Sms %	Sdm %	Nvr %
18	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast	295	4.00	33.2	32.9	19.3	11.5	3.1
28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.	295	4.00	22.0	39.0	23.1	10.8	5.1
1	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	295	4.00	16.6	37.3	29.5	14.6	2.0
29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language	295	3.00	6.4	20.0	31.5	31.5	10.5
16	I find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	295	3.00	5.4	26.8	42.4	21.4	4.1

Note: M= Median, Alw= Always, Ofn= Often, Sms= Sometimes, Sdm= Seldom, Nvr= Never

Regarding the message scale, it appeared that unfamiliar words are among the factors that were frequently reported to cause listening comprehension problems (53.6%). Another important result Table 10 shows is that difficult grammatical structures and long listening texts have the highest frequencies for the sometimes option, indicating that the appearance of these problems may depend on other factors. For instance, difficult grammatical structures may cause problems if students are presented with listening texts inappropriate to their levels, or long listening texts may cause problems because students can not concentrate if the topic is not interesting or the text includes many difficult grammatical structures.

Table 10 - Message scale

Item No	Item	N	M	Aws%	Ofn%	Sms%	Sdm%	Nvr%
15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.	295	4.00	21.4	32.2	33.2	11.2	2.0
27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.	295	3.00	13.9	31.9	35.9	15.9	2.4
6	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text	294	3.00	11.2	22.1	37.8	22.1	6.8

Note: M= Median, Alw= Always, Ofn= Often, Sms= Sometimes, Sdm= Seldom, Nvr= Never

What are the least frequently reported problems?

The median of the task scale appeared as the lowest, which may suggest that students do not have frequent listening comprehension problems related to the listening tasks they are involved in. However, none of the items in this scale has the highest frequency for either the *seldom* and *never* options, but for all of them the most frequent response is the *sometimes* option, as can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11 - Task scale

Item No	Item	N	M	Aws %	Ofn %	Sms %	Sdm %	Nvr %
11	I find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.	295	3.00	9.8	24.1	38.3	18.6	9.2
17	I find it difficult to take notes while listening.	295	3.00	8.5	22.7	33.9	26.8	8.1
14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	295	3.00	6.1	20.3	39.0	28.5	6.1
3	I find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.	293	3.00	5.5	24.6	39.2	20.8	9.9
4	I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.	294	3.00	5.1	13.6	33.0	37.4	10.9

Note: M= Median, Alw= Always, Ofn= Often, Sms= Sometimes, Sdm= Seldom, Nvr= Never

This may be interpreted as showing that the participants' problems related to listening tasks such as filling a chart/graphic or taking notes during listening and holding a discussion or writing a summary after listening may increase or decrease in combination with other factors such as the length of the passage, their interests, or background knowledge and experience about the topic of the listening text. In addition, item 4 has a rate of 48.3% for the seldom and never options, indicating that listening

texts are titled appropriately and students mostly have some kind of experience or background knowledge about the listening texts.

Order of the problems according to their frequencies

In order to have a clearer picture of the most and the least frequently reported problems, the most and the least frequently reported problems are presented in ranked order in Table 12. While the items with a rate of higher than 50% for the combined *always* and *often* options were presented as the most frequently reported ones and the top ten problems of Table 12 represent the most frequent problems, the items with a frequency of lower than 30% for the combined *always* and *often* options were presented as the least frequently reported problems and the bottom five problems of Table 12 represent the least frequently reported problems.

Table 12 - Frequency of the problems

Item No	Item	Scale	Mdn	Agreement rate % (Always & Often)
23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.	Listener	4.00	72.2
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.	Listener	4.00	69.7
18	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	Speaker	4.00	66.1
28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.	Speaker	4.00	61.0
8	I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud.	Listener	4.00	54.9
1	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	Speaker	4.00	53.9
15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.	Message	4.00	53.6
2	I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.	Listener	4.00	52.9
9	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	Listener	4.00	51.5
22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	Listener	4.00	51.5
7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions).	Listener	3.00	28.4
21	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.	Listener	3.00	27.8
29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	Speaker	3.00	26.4
14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	Task	3.00	26.4
4	I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.	Task	3.00	18.7

Overall, this table shows that items from the listener and (to a lesser extent) speaker scales are prominent amongst the most frequently reported problems, while items from the task scale are prominent in the least frequently reported problems. This

finding confirms the analysis of the scales above which found that the listener and speaker scales cover the majority of the most frequently reported problems and the task scale covers the least frequently reported problems.

Table 12 shows that in spite of the prevalence of listener and speaker related items in the most frequently reported problems, a few items from these scales also feature in the bottom five least frequently reported problems. Problems related to the listeners' memory capacities from the listener scale and the problem of having difficulty in comprehension in the absence of speaker's body language from the speaker scales were among the least frequently reported problems unlike the other items in these scales. This suggests that there is a need to avoid making too strong generalizations about how problematic scales as a whole are, since the overall median of the scales may mask the fact that some individual items on these scales are clearly much more problematic than others.

It is important to point out that the problems with poor quality sound (Items23 and 26) are not only the most common problems in their scale, but the most common problems overall. Especially, when we combine this result with the related point that students also frequently reported preferring to listen to the teacher than to a tape, it appears that this problem really needs special attention.

This table clearly shows that the differences between the highest and lowest agreement rates is very large in spite of the fact that the differences between the median scores of the scales are rather small, as can be seen in Table 7. Moreover, as stated above, it appeared that a single scale can include items with rather high and low frequencies. For this reason, when we come to analyse how listening comprehension

problems vary across levels of proficiency (see below), items will be analysed individually, taking account of their frequencies for the combined *always* and *often* options, rather than the median scores for the scales as a whole.

Although it is not comprised of listening comprehension problems, the strategy scale was included in this questionnaire in order to find out to what degree the participants report using these strategies and show being aware of the effective and ineffective strategies. However, due to the low reliability score of the scale, these four items will be analyzed individually, as can be seen in Table 13.

Table 13 - Four Listening Strategies

Item No	Item	N	M	Aws %	Ofn %	Sms %	Sdm %	Nvr %
19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	295	4.00	14.9	36.6	26.8	15.9	5.8
10	I try to predict the words that I associate with the topic.	295	3.00	6.4	27.8	33.2	25.1	7.5
24	I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.	295	3.00	18.6	25.8	28.1	20.7	6.8
30	I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text (RC).	295	3.00	13.6	29.5	32.5	17.6	6.8

Note: RC= Reverse Coded, M= Median, Alw= Always, Ofn= Often, Sms= Sometimes, Sdm= Seldom, Nvr= Never

It appeared that students do not report using listening strategies frequently because none of the strategies has a higher rate than 50% for the combined *always* and *often* options except the strategy of using background knowledge to understand the topic

(Item 19), which has a rate of 51.5%. 'Paying attention to topic markers during listening' has a frequency of 44.4%, indicating that students also reported using this effective strategy. In addition, the strategy of predicting the topic related words has a rather low score of 34.2% for the combined *always* and *often* options, indicating that students reported employing this strategy rarely. Item 30 was intended to represent an ineffective strategy – that of listening to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text. It has a frequency of 43.1% for the combined *always* and *often* options, indicating that students are not aware of this strategy as ineffective and reported employing it in similar frequencies with the effective strategies. Overall, these results show that students did not report employing the effective strategies in high frequencies and the similar frequency rates of the ineffective strategy may indicate that the participants are not able to discriminate between the effective and ineffective strategies.

Regarding the second section of the listening comprehension questionnaire, which asked for any other variables affecting students' listening comprehension negatively, there were a few answers that are different from the already given problems (Appendix D). These were about the environmental factors such as crowded or cold classrooms, existence of more than two speakers, the anxiety due to being tested from listening, and not understanding even the words they know the meaning of due to not knowing their correct pronunciation.

Do listening comprehension problems vary in terms of the proficiency levels?

The analysis of the most and the least frequently reported problems showed that the median scores of the scales did not give satisfactory information about the frequency of all the items under those scales. The high or low median scores for the scales did not

guarantee that all the items under those scales would appear among the most or the least frequently reported problems. In addition, large differences were found between the highest and lowest agreement rates among the items despite the fact that the median scores of these items were rather similar to each other. So, while looking for whether these problems change according to proficiency levels, these items will be analyzed individually in terms of their frequencies for the combined *always* and *often* options and chi-square values.

Table 14 - Chi-square figures for the listener scale in terms of proficiency levels

Item No	Items	Pre-int Very often/always %	Int Very often/always %	Adv Very often/always %	chi-square
2	**I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.**	**44.2**	**37.0**	**77.0**	**χ^2=36.33, p < .001**
7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions)	29.5	24.0	32.0	χ^2=1.64, p > .05
8	**I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud.**	**70.6**	**47.0**	**48.0**	**χ^2=13.81, p < .005**
9	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	55.8	46.0	53.0	χ^2=2.00, p > .05
20	**I spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes me tired.**	**34.8**	**27.0**	**52**	**χ^2=13.89, p < .005**
21	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.	29.5	29.0	25.0	χ^2=0.59, p > .05
22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	51.6	50.0	53.0	χ^2=0.18, p > .05
23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.	68.4	66.0	82.0	χ^2=7.38, p < .06
25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	41.1	39.0	41.0	χ^2=0.11, p > .05
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.	73.3	60.0	77.0	χ^2=7.29, p < .06

Regarding the listener scale, after finding the frequencies of the items for the combined *always* and *often* options, Chi-square statistics were calculated to find the items whose difference in frequency across levels were statistically significant. The results are shown in Table 14. It appeared that the problems of feeling nervous as a result of not understanding and listener's fatigue were more frequently reported by advanced level students than less advanced level students (Items 2 and 20). In addition, it appeared that pre-intermediate students reported having the problem of having difficulty while listening to a recorded text rather than listening to it their teachers reading (Item 8). The problems of unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise and poor tape recorders (Items 23 and 26) were reported less frequently by intermediate than by pre-intermediate or advanced level students, though this difference fell slightly short of statistical significance.

Table 15 - Chi square figures for the speaker scale in terms of proficiency levels

Item No	Items	Pre-int Very often/always %	Int Very often/always %	Adv Very often/always %	chi-square
1	**I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.**	**53.6**	**44.0**	**64.0**	**χ^2=8.05, p < .05**
16	I find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	35.8	31.0	30.0	χ^2=0.85, p > .05
18	**I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.**	**59.0**	**58.0**	**81.0**	**χ^2=15.00, p < .005**
28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.	61.0	54.0	68.0	χ^2=4.12, p > .05
29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	29.5	25.0	25.0	χ^2=0.66, p > .05

Table 15 shows the results of a similar analysis for the speaker scale. Two problems were found to be reported in higher frequencies just by advanced level students. The problem of fast speech rate (Item 18) and not understanding due to unclearly pronounced words (Item 1) were identified as more frequently reported by advanced level students than the students in the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.

Table 16 - Chi-square figures for the message scale in terms of proficiency levels

Item No	**Items**	**Pre-int Very often/always %**	**Int Very often/always %**	**Adv Very often/always %**	**chi-square**
6	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	32.6	34.0	33.3	χ^2=0.04, $p > .05$
15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.	55.8	51.0	54.0	χ^2=0.46, $p > .05$
27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.	50.5	40.0	47.0	χ^2=2.27, $p > .05$

Table 17 - Chi-square figures for the task scale in terms of proficiency levels

Item No	Items	Pre-int Very often/always %	Int Very often/always %	Adv Very often/always %	chi-square
3	I find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.	33.0	29.0	28.3	χ^2=0.58, $p > .05$
4	I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.	23.4	18.0	15.0	χ^2=2.30, $p > .05$
11	I find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.	35.8	32.0	34.0	χ^2=0.31, $p > .05$
14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	27.4	25.0	27.0	χ^2=0.16, $p > .05$
17	I find it difficult to take notes while listening.	38.9	27.0	28.0	χ^2=3.96, $p > .05$

None of the items in the message scale (Table 16) or the task scale (Table 17) showed any significant difference across levels in terms of the frequencies of the items for the always and often options.

Overall, it is essential to state that some frequency differences that were found between the different proficiency levels were rather high. While some problems were more frequently reported by pre-intermediate level students, some problems were more frequently reported by advanced level students. However, none of the items were more frequently reported by intermediate level students than the other two proficiency levels.

Regarding the strategy scale, items were again analyzed individually across these proficiency levels because this scale did not have enough variety of the strategies that would allow us to make generalizations either about the frequency of students' strategy employment or the types of these strategies. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 18.

Table 18 - Chi-square figures for the listening strategies in terms of proficiency levels

Item No	**Items**	**Pre-int Very often/always %**	**Int Very often/always %**	**Adv Very often/always %**	**chi-square**
10	I try to predict the words that I associate with the topic.	40.0	27.0	36.0	χ^2=3.87, $p > .05$
19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	61.1	48.0	46.0	χ^2=5.17, $p > .05$
24	**I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.**	**32.6**	**33.0**	**67.0**	**χ^2=31.28, $p < .001$**
30	I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.	49.4	38.0	42.0	χ^2=2.68, $p > .05$

Among the four listening comprehension strategies, only one strategy was found to have a significant difference in terms of the frequency of the combined *always* and *often* options across the proficiency levels. The strategy of paying attention to topic markers was more frequently reported by advanced level students than less advanced level students.

Do listening comprehension problems vary according to gender?

Similar to the comparison of proficiency levels, it was thought that the median scores of the scales did not allow making generalizations about all the items in the scales. So, in order to answer this question, it was thought that the combined frequency scores of the *always* and *often* options and chi-square values would yield more detailed results.

Table 19 - Chi square values for the listener scale in terms of gender

Item No	Items	Female Very often/always %	Male Very often/always %	chi-square
2	**I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.**	**61.5**	**43.2**	**χ^2=9.96, $p < .05$**
7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions)	25.6	31.6	χ^2=1.31, $p > .05$
8	**I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud.**	**47.5**	**63.4**	**χ^2=7.48, $p < .01$**
9	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	53.8	49.0	χ^2=0.71, $p > .05$
20	I spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes me tired.	39.1	36.7	χ^2=0.18, $p > .05$
21	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.	26.3	29.5	χ^2=0.38, $p > .05$
22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	52.5	50.4	χ^2=0.14, $p > .05$
23	**Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.**	**79.4**	**64.1**	**χ^2=8.75, $p < .05$**
25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	42.3	38.1	χ^2=0.53, $p > .05$
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.	73.3	60.0	χ^2=3.10, $p > .05$

When the combined frequencies of the always and often options and chi square values for the listener related problems were calculated individually, several differences

were found between genders. Table 19 shows that females more frequently reported the problems of feeling nervous and worried as a result of not understanding and unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorders (Item 2 and 23). On the other hand, males more frequently reported having difficulty in listening to recorded texts rather than their teacher reading (Item 8).

Table 20 - Chi square values for the speaker scale in terms of gender

Item No	**Items**	**Female Very often/always %**	**Male Very often/always %**	**chi-square**
1	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	58.4	48.9	χ^2=2.62, $p > .05$
16	I find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	30.7	33.8	χ^2=0.31, $p > .05$
18	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	69.2	62.6	χ^2=1.45, $p > .05$
28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.	64.8	56.9	χ^2=1.93, $p > .05$
29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	25.6	27.3	χ^2=0.11, $p > .05$

Items under the speaker scale were compared individually according to gender. Table 20 also shows that no difference was detected as a result of the comparison of the speaker related problems individually in terms of the gender.

Table 21 - Chi square values for the task scale in terms of gender

Item No	Items	Female Very often/always %	Male Very often/always %	chi-square
3	I find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.	30.1	29.5	χ^2=0.04, $p > .05$
4	**I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.**	**12.3**	**25.9**	**χ^2=8.97, $p < .05$**
11	I find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.	36.5	30.9	χ^2=1.03, $p > .05$
14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	25.7	27.4	χ^2=0.11, $p > .05$
17	I find it difficult to take notes while listening.	28.9	33.8	χ^2=0.84, $p > .05$

Regarding the task scale, only one problem was detected to be reported in significantly different frequencies by genders. It was a pre-listening task, namely having difficulty in predicting the content of the listening text from the title (Item 4). Table 21 shows that males reported having this problem more frequently than females.

Table 22 - Chi square values for the message scale in terms of gender

Item No	Items	Female Very often/always %	Male Very often/always %	chi-square
6	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	31.7	35.3	χ^2=0.44, $p > .05$
15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.	51.3	56.1	χ^2=0.69, $p > .05$
27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.	44.9	46.8	χ^2=0.60, $p > .05$

Table 23 - Chi square values for the listening strategies in terms of gender

Item No	Items	Female often/always %	Male often/always %	chi-square
10	I try to predict the words that I associate with the topic.	30.8	38.1	χ^2=1.77, $p > .05$
19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	50.6	52.5	χ^2=0.10, $p > .05$
24	I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.	49.4	38.8	χ^2=3.29, $p >.05$
30	I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text	23.0	25.9	χ^2=0.00, $p > .05$

Individual analysis of the items under the message scale yielded no significant difference in terms of any of the message related problems, as can be seen in Table 22. In addition, Table 23 shows that listening strategies were also reported in similar frequencies by both genders.

What perceptual learning styles are common among Turkish university preparatory school students?

To answer this question, the style analysis survey by Oxford (1998) was used. This survey was comprised of three separate scales: auditory, kinesthetic, and visual, with ten items on the questionnaire being related to each item. On the basis of the data collected, each participant was assigned a score from 1 (low) to 4 (high) for each scale by taking the average of their scores for the ten items on that scale. The most preferred learning style for these students was the visual style ($M = 2.57$, $sd = 0.39$), followed by auditory ($M = 2.52$, $sd = 0.36$) and then kinesthetic ($M = 2.50$, $sd = 0.38$). In a repeated-measures ANOVA, Mauchly's test showed that the assumption of sphericity had been violated ($\chi^2=15.8$, $p < .001$, so degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon = .95$). The results showed that differences between styles were statistically significant, $F(1.90,558.66) = 4.13$, $p < .05$.

As a further analysis it was checked whether students from different proficiency levels and genders reported preferring different perceptual learning styles. Figures 1 and 2, together with Table 24 and 25, reveal important differences between students of different genders and levels of proficiency.

Table 24 - Mean scores of learning styles across levels for females

Learning Style	pre-intermediate	intermediate	advanced
visual	2.49 (0.37)	2.52 (0.33)	2.77 (0.35)
auditory	2.40 (0.41)	2.44 (0.31)	2.59 (0.34)
kinesthetic	2.43 (0.42)	2.36 (0.36)	2.54 (0.36)

(Standard deviations are in brackets)

Figure 1 -Change in learning styles across levels for females

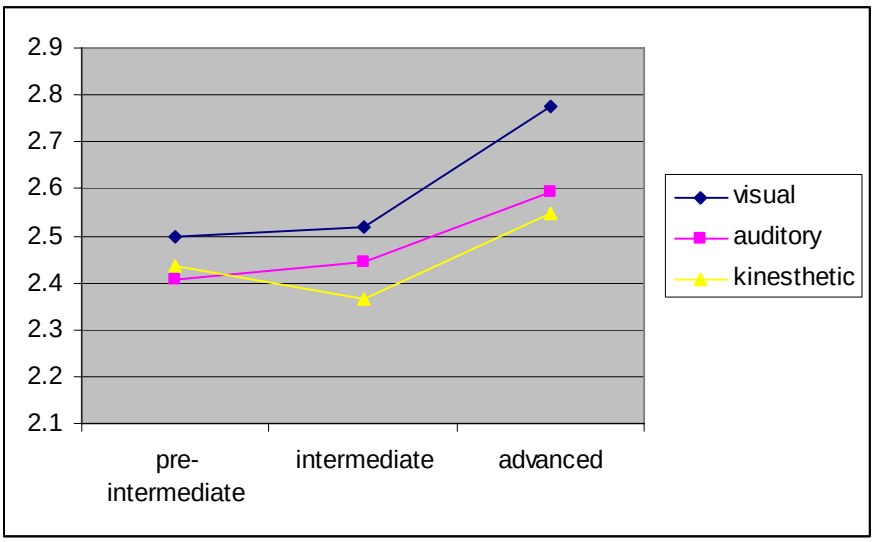


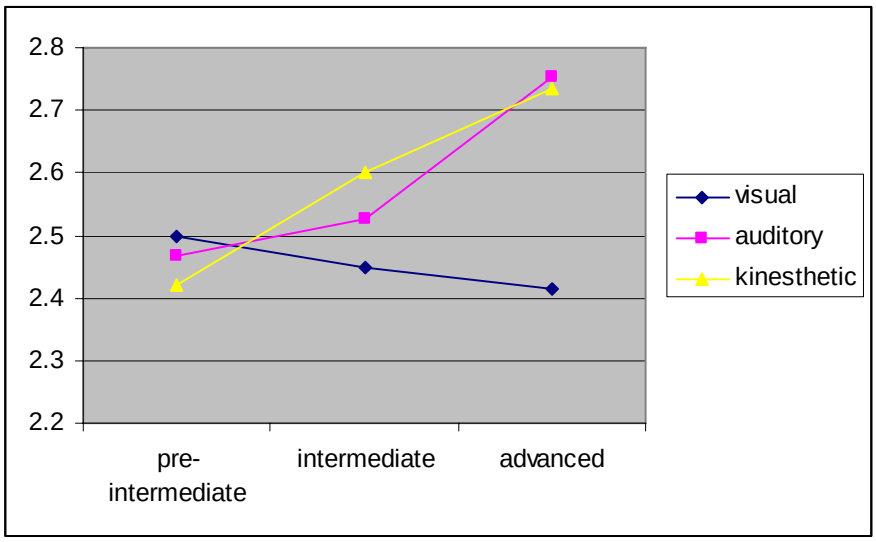
Table 24 and Figure 1 show that female students report preferring visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles, in this order, at intermediate and advanced levels. For pre-intermediate females, the visual style was again the most preferred, but auditory and kinesthetic styles were roughly equal. The learning style preference order of females therefore follows the same pattern as that for the group as a whole. But, males' preferences do not match this overall pattern.

Table 25 - Mean scores of learning styles across levels for males

Learning Style	pre-intermediate	intermediate	advanced
visual	2.49 (0.40)	2.44 (0.39)	2.41 (0.33)
auditory	2.46 (0.35)	2.52 (0.35)	2.75 (0.26)
kinesthetic	2.42 (0.37)	2.59 (0.36)	2.73 (0.26)

(Standard deviations are in brackets)

Figure 2 - Change in learning styles across levels for males



Males display different preferences for learning styles at different proficiency levels, as can be seen in Table 25 and Figure 2. At the pre-intermediate level, males report preferring these learning styles in an order similar to that reported by females. However, as their level increases, male students' preference for kinesthetic and auditory learning styles increases sharply and their preference for visual learning style decreases. These data suggest that we need to look more closely at the relationship between learning style, proficiency level and gender. The following analysis will look at how each of the three styles varies according to gender and level.

Table 26 - Mean scores on the visual style scale

	Female	Male	Total
Pre-intermediate	2.50 (0.37)	2.50 (0.40)	2.50 (0.39)
Intermediate	2.52 (0.34)	2.45 (0.39)	2.49 (0.37)
Advanced	2.78 (0.35)	2.41 (0.33)	2.73 (0.37)
Total	2.66 (0.37)	2.47 (3.91)	2.57 (0.39)

(Standard deviations are in brackets)

Figure 3 - Mean scores on the visual style scale

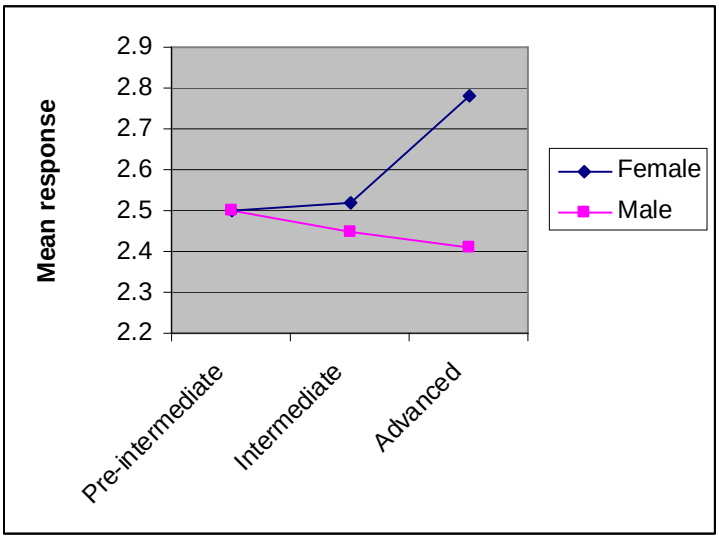


Table 26 and Figure 3 show the average scores on the visual learning style scale for male and female students at each level. A factorial ANOVA showed a significant main effect of gender on use of visual learning style, $F(1,289) = 7.38$, $p < .001$, with females using the style more than males at all levels other than pre-intermediate. There was no significant main effect of level on use of visual learning style, $F(2,289) = 1.489$, $p > .05$. However, there was a significant interaction between the two independent variables, $F(2,289) = 3.55$, $p < .05$. This indicates that males and females change in different ways as they progressed through the levels. Specifically, as Figure 3 shows, as females progressed, their tendency towards visual learning style increased, particularly at the advanced level. In contrast, as males progressed through the levels, their preference for this learning style decreased.

Table 27 - Mean scores on the auditory style scale

	Female	Male	Total
Pre-intermediate	2.41 (0.42)	2.47 (0.36)	2.45 (0.37)
Intermediate	2.44 (0.31)	2.53 (0.36)	2.49 (0.34)
Advanced	2.59 (0.34)	2.75 (0.26)	2.62 (0.34)
Total	2.52 (0.36)	2.52 (0.37)	2.52 (0.36)

(Standard deviations are in brackets)

Figure 4 - Mean scores on the auditory style scale

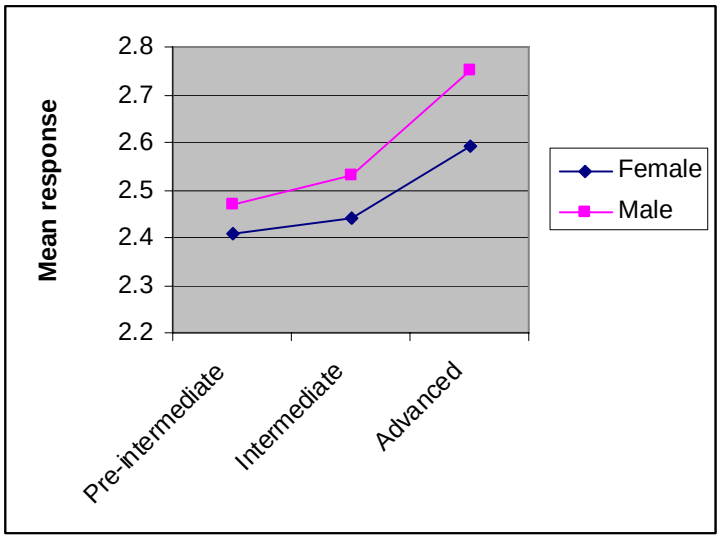


Table 27 and Figure 4 show the average scores on the auditory learning style scale for male and female students at each level. A factorial ANOVA showed a significant main effect of gender on use of auditory learning style, $F(1,289) = 4.10$, $p < .05$, with males at each level of confidence being slightly more inclined towards this learning style than females. There was also a main effect of level, $F(2,289) = 6.85$, $p < .001$, with both genders being more inclined towards an auditory style as they

progressed through the levels. There was no significant interaction between the two independent variables, $F(2,289) = 0.293$, $p > .05$.

Table 28 - Mean scores on the kinesthetic style scale

	Female	Male	Total
Pre-intermediate	2.44 (0.43)	2.42 (0.38)	2.42 (0.39)
Intermediate	2.37 (0.36)	2.60 (0.37)	2.50 (0.38)
Advanced	2.55 (0.37)	2.74 (0.27)	2.57 (0.36)
Total	2.48 (0.38)	2.52 (0.38)	2.50 (0.38)

(Standard deviations are in brackets)

Figure 5 - Mean scores on the kinesthetic style scale

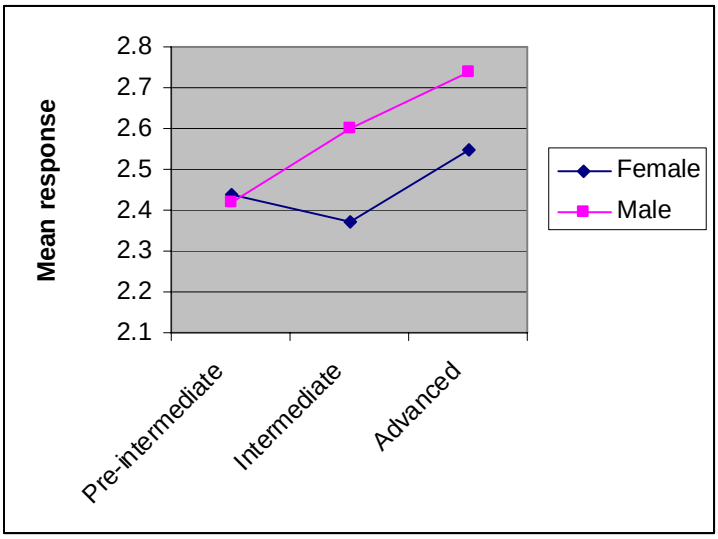


Table 28 and Figure 5 show the average scores on the kinesthetic learning style scale for male and female students at each level. A factorial ANOVA showed a significant main effect of gender on use of kinesthetic learning style, $F(1,289) = 6.59$, $p < .05$, with males being slightly more inclined towards this learning style than females at all levels other than pre-intermediate. There was also a main effect of level, $F(2,289) = 4.74$, $p < .01$, with both genders being more inclined towards the kinesthetic style as they progressed through the levels, though females demonstrate a slight 'dip' at the

intermediate level. There was no significant interaction between the two independent variables, $F(2,289) = 2.488$, $p > .05$.

What is the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems?

In order to explore the relationship between students' learning styles and listening comprehension problems, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated between the scales of the perceptual learning style questionnaire and the listening comprehension problems questionnaire. Table 29 shows that all of the correlations which appeared between the perceptual learning styles and different listening comprehension problems scales are quite small.

Table 29 - Non parametric Correlations

	Message	Task	Speaker	Listener
Visual	.078	.067	.230(**)	.248(**)
Auditory	-.043	-.043	.070	.068
Kinesthetic	.044	.096	.104	.128

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen from the table above, there is no correlation between the kinesthetic learning style and any of the scales in the listening comprehension problems questionnaire. In addition, Table 29 shows that there is a small positive correlation between the visual learning style and listener and speaker scales (r_s =248, p=<.001; r_s =230, p=<.001, respectively). This may indicate that learners who mostly prefer the visual learning style tend to have more frequent listening comprehension problems under the categories of speaker related and listener related problems. Finally, it is

important to note here that correlation analysis was not made between perceptual learning styles and the four listening strategies in the listening comprehension problems questionnaire because these strategies were not accepted as a unified scale since the beginning of the analysis. Three of these four strategies belong to different types such as cognitive and metacognitive and they are not in enough variety to make generalizations. In addition, one strategy is an ineffective one. Because of these factors, it is thought that a possible correlation between any of these strategies and perceptual learning styles would not yield reliable results.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the data obtained from the participants using the perceptual learning styles questionnaire (Oxford, 1998) and listening comprehension problems questionnaire (Hasan, 2000). The results reveal that listener related problems are the most frequently reported ones while the task related problems are the least frequently reported ones. The results showed that some listening comprehension problems may change according to proficiency levels and gender. Another result that is obtained from the analysis is that there was a significant difference among overall preferences for the three perceptual learning styles. In addition, a complex relationship was found between learning styles and language proficiency and gender. Finally, no strong correlation was found between students' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems.

The next chapter will explain these results in detail and discuss the pedagogical implications. Chapter 5 will also present the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study investigated students' listening comprehension problems and their perceptual learning styles. It also aimed to find out whether students' listening comprehension problems change according to their perceptual learning styles, proficiency levels, and gender.

In this chapter, the findings of this study will be presented and discussed with reference to the relevant literature. Then, the pedagogical implications of the study will be presented. In the final part, limitations of the study will be discussed and suggestions will be made for further research.

Findings and Results

What are the problems that Turkish university preparatory school students report having in listening comprehension?

What are the most frequently reported problems?

The items of the listening comprehension problems questionnaire were categorized under different scales. However, it was seen that individual items' frequency rates often varied widely from the median score of the scales to which they belonged. For this reason, the items were also ordered individually according to their frequency rates from the most frequently reported problems to the least frequently reported problems. Six of the ten items under the listener scale appeared among the ten most frequently reported problems when all the items were rank ordered according to their frequency rates for the combined *always* and *often* options.

Regarding the listener scale, unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorders and poor classroom conditions or outside noise were the most frequently reported problems by the participants (72.2% and 69.7% for the combined *always* and *often* options, respectively). This result is in accordance with the findings of Yousafi's study (2006) in which he mentioned inside and outside noise as hindering students' listening comprehension. This could be taken to indicate that the physical conditions of language classrooms should be improved to prevent these kinds of problems, which should be the first step to be taken. It would be equally possible to conclude, however, that since school administrators may not have enough financial sources for improving classroom conditions and imperfect listening conditions are part of everyday life, learners should be trained to deal with this problem.

Another listener related problem reported by the students was that of listening to tape recorders rather than their teacher. This item shows that students reported having a preference for listening to their teacher rather than recorded texts (with a rate of 54.9%). This result may be related to the problem of unclear sounds. Students may have reported having difficulty in listening to tape recorders because of the poor quality tape recorders that do not produce clear sounds, poor quality classroom conditions that result in echoes, or outside noise which makes it difficult to hear the recordings. In addition, students may have reported preferring listening to their teacher because they can ask clarification questions or they can use their teachers' body movements or facial expressions as clues about the message while they do not have these options during recorded listening (Underwood, 1989).

The problem of feeling nervous and worried as a result of not understanding the spoken text and having concentration problems after missing a few words had rates of 52.9% and 51.5%, respectively. Underwood (1989) states that students feel unsuccessful as a result of not understanding the spoken text or after missing even a word because their teachers encourage them to understand all the words in the text. This result highlights the fact that teachers should not force their students to understand every word in the text, but they should lead them to have specific purposes for listening to specific information (Wolvin & Coakley, 1979). The other frequently reported problem under the listener scale was of not understanding the uninteresting texts (with a rate of 51.5%). This is an expected result because it is known that topics that are appropriate to students' interests are important in contributing to their motivation and concentration (Ur, 1984; Underwood, 1989).

The results related to the speaker scale showed that three of the five problems were among the 10 most frequently reported problems overall. The problem of having difficulty in understanding due to fast speech rate had the highest frequency among the items under this scale (66.1%). Speech rate is a debatable factor in the literature because slow speech does not always improve students' listening comprehension of the students (Underwood, 1989). In some studies it was found that fast speech rate does not have an important effect for impeding or deteriorating listening comprehension (Aiken, Thomas & Shennum, 1975). However, in some other studies, fast speech rate was found to impede listeners' comprehension (Graham, 2006; Yousafi, 2006). This study did not directly measure the effect of fast speech rate in listening comprehension but it has shown that students believe fast speech rate to be a factor deteriorating their listening

comprehension. It is important to note here that this study also found that hesitations and pauses were not reported as causing listening comprehension problems by the participants. This finding, in combination with the previous result concerning speech rate, suggests that the participants preferred frequent pauses or hesitations to the fast delivery of speech and this supports the claim that the existence of pauses in enough length is a crucial factor for improving listening comprehension (Goss, 1982). In addition, varied accents and unclearly pronounced words that were frequently reported by the participants are mentioned widely as factors influencing listening comprehension (Zhao, 1997).

Finally, the problem of not understanding due to unknown words under the message scale appeared among the most frequently reported problems (53.6%). This result confirms the other studies looking at listening comprehension problems and pointing out the unknown words among the widely accepted factors interfering with listening comprehension (Hasan, 2000; Yousafi, 2006). Teachers should guide their students regarding how to improve their word knowledge to improve their listening comprehension because it is claimed that to understand listening texts effectively, students need to know more than 98.00% of the words in the listening text (Nation, 2006). Although word knowledge is crucial for understanding listening texts, this problem needs deeper investigation because knowing the meaning of words is not enough for satisfactory listening comprehension. Students need to know the exact pronunciation and identify these words in a stream of speech (Graham, 2006; Yousafi, 2006), which is a point mentioned also by some of the participants, comments included:

"They speak too fast and do not produce the words exactly" (A part in Appendix D)

"The speaker speaks with varied accents and intonation" (B part in Appendix D)

"I can not understand the words I know because I do not know their exact pronunciation" (C part in Appendix D).

What are the least frequently reported problems?

As a result of the ordering of the scales in listening comprehension questionnaire, the task scale appeared to have the lowest median score, indicating that it covered the least frequently reported problems. But, when the items were rank ordered according to their frequency rates for the *always* and *often* options, it appeared that there were also items from other scales among the least frequently reported problems.

Only two of the five task scale related items appeared among the five least frequently reported problems. These items were the problems of having difficulty in filling in a chart or graphic during listening and predicting the content of the listening text from the title, with rates of 26.4% and 18.7%, respectively. This may indicate that students have enough practice of completing charts or graphics and predicting the content from the title and they feel confident about these activities. In addition, it may be interpreted that these kinds of activities are designed carefully to let students feel successful. It is known that students feel more confident when the tasks are graded carefully from easy to complex by providing enough chance for students to feel successful (Nikolic, 2008). Another possible explanation for the low frequency rates of these items is that since students only do these kinds of listening tasks rarely, these activities do not cause listening problems for students. However, considering the

common listening activities presented in the course books, which often include exercises of this sort, this possibility seems rather unlikely.

Among the least frequently reported problems, there were two items from the listener scale. These were the problems of answering questions requiring detailed answers and forgetting what is heard quickly, both of which are related to the students' memory capacities. The low frequencies of these problems suggest that students can make connection between their short and long term memories. It is stated that in order to make this connection, topics should attract students' interests or should be related to their experiences (Goh, 2000). So, if students did not frequently report listening problems related to short term memory, it suggests that students can connect the information in their short term memory to long term memory while listening. This may be interpreted as showing that listening texts are appropriate to students' interests and experiences. Alternatively, the low frequency of these problems may be the result of the possibility that detailed answers are not frequently required in the listening tasks presented or that teachers replay the recordings a few times and students do not feel they have to learn everything in their first listening and catch the necessary details after listening to texts a few times. Another possible explanation is that students may be good at remembering details because their educational background may have prepared them for these kinds of tasks. Especially, considering the university entrance exam (OSS) which tests students' four years' knowledge in nearly three hours, it is possible to think that students may be good at remembering the details regardless of how interested they are in the topic.

One item from the speaker scale, the problem of having difficulty in understanding without seeing the speaker's body language, also appeared among the least frequently reported problems. The participants did not report being in need of seeing the speakers, which is a contradictory result with the literature because it is stated that facial expressions, body movements, and gestures are important contributors to listening comprehension (Underwood, 1989). Moreover, this is an unexpected result because listening is a difficult skill also for Turkish learners and they were expected to notice the importance of body language as an important factor facilitating their listening comprehension. What may be expected from teachers is to inform their students about how to utilize this factor for improving their listening comprehension.

Regarding the four listening strategies in the questionnaire, it appeared that only the strategy of using experience and background knowledge had a relatively high rate of participants answering *always* and *often* (51.5%). The other strategies were reported in low frequencies and the ineffective strategy had a frequency rate similar to the effective ones. These results may be interpreted as showing that students are not satisfactorily aware of listening strategies. It is important to conclude that whatever the reason behind the lack of students' listening strategy knowledge, there is a certain need for training our students about listening comprehension strategies, since strategies are important steps that should be taken to be successful in any language skill (Chamot, 1995).

Do listening comprehension problems vary in terms of the proficiency levels?

The analysis of the problems in terms of the proficiency levels revealed statistically significant differences in the frequencies of only five problems throughout the listening comprehension problems questionnaire. Four of these five problems were reported in higher frequencies by the advanced level students.

Advanced students reported more frequently than less advanced students the problems of feeing nervous and worried as a result of not understanding (Item 2), spending great effort and feeling tired while listening (Item 20), having difficulty in understanding unclearly pronounced words (Item 1), and having difficulty in understanding due to fast speech rate (item 18). These results may be interpreted in different ways. They may be attributed to the fact that advanced students have more practice of listening exercises as their level increases and this may have raised consciousness in these students about their problems, as Goh (1999) claims. Two of the problems reported by advanced students are related to feeling nervous and tired while listening. This may indicate that as students' levels increase the difficulty and length of the listening texts also increase and students feel less confident because they do not know enough strategies to deal with these difficult exercises.

Pre-intermediate students reported in higher frequency than more advanced students that they had difficulty in listening to recorded texts rather than listening to their teacher. This preference for listening to the teacher by the pre-intermediate students may be interpreted as showing that pre-intermediate students may not be used to listening to native speakers and their accents, they may not know the correct

pronunciation of the words, or their teacher may be reading more slowly and clearly in comparison to the recorded texts.

Regarding the four listening strategies, advanced students reported employing only one strategy in higher frequencies than the other two proficiency levels. This was the strategy of paying attention to topic markers such as firstly and as a conclusion. Since this difference between the levels is restricted to just one strategy, it is not possible to conclude that students from any of these levels are more aware of the strategies overall than the others. In addition, the result that there is no difference in terms of the frequency of the ineffective strategy across the proficiency levels point out that the participants are not able to discriminate between the effective and ineffective strategies. Overall, these results related to these listening strategies once more highlight the need for training students about listening strategies.

Do listening comprehension problems vary according to gender?

Results of the analysis of the 156 female and 139 male students' answers for the listening comprehension problems revealed that the frequency of several problems varied according to gender. Females reported the problems of feeling nervous and worried as a result of not understanding and being distracted by unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorders more frequently than males. Males reported the problems of having difficulty in listening to recorded texts rather than their teachers and having difficulty in predicting the content of the text from the title more frequently than females. The common point of the problems being reported by genders show that females reported problems related to concentration while males reported problems related to outside factors such as unclear sounds and a pre-listening activity. This may

be interpreted as showing that females are more conscious of the steps they take personally and can observe their own characteristics as possible reasons for their listening comprehension problems. This claim is supported by Goh and Foong's (1997) study in which they explored the types of language strategies employed by both genders and stated that "female students tended to pay more attention to their feelings" (p. 50) because they found that females employed more affective strategies to deal with their negative feelings. So, also in this study, due to the types of the problems reported by females, it may be concluded that females are more open about reporting the problems that are related to their own characteristics.

What perceptual learning styles are common among Turkish university preparatory school students?

This study is a preliminary step towards discovering particularly Turkish students' preferences for perceptual learning styles, something which no study has specifically investigated before (although Asian students' perceptual learning style preferences were sought before (Reid, 1998)). When the participants were compared as a whole in terms of their preference for the perceptual learning styles, the overall pattern is that visual is the most preferred style, then auditory, then kinesthetic.

However, further analysis of the data showed that the overall preference pattern for perceptual learning styles of the participants' was misleading because it appeared that participants' learning style preferences change according to their gender and proficiency level. The analysis showed that women are more inclined to a visual style than men. This difference is not seen at pre-intermediate levels, but as women progress through the levels their preference for a visual learning style increases, whereas men's

decreases. Although men are more inclined to auditory and kinesthetic styles than women overall, both genders show an increased tendency towards these styles as they progress through levels.

These findings point out that genders have different learning style preferences and these preferences are not stable and can change according to their proficiency levels. This variety in learning style preferences by genders and across proficiency levels emphasizes that teachers should research their students' learning style preferences periodically and be aware of their students' most preferred learning styles. In addition, the existence of different learning style preferences in a class should lead teachers to inform their students about the different choices they can use for acquiring information and they should enrich their training by employing these different channels for presenting information (Wehrwein et al., 2007). Moreover, if students are informed about these different choices for acquiring information, this awareness of learning styles by students will allow them to take responsibility for enhancing their learning by employing different styles and deciding on how to learn best in different situations (Reid, 1998). Finally, it is important to note that this study found a complex interaction between gender and language proficiency levels with regard to perceptual learning styles. Although there are studies looking at perceptual learning styles in relation to students' gender (Wehrwein et al., 2007) and proficiency levels (Reid, 1998) separately, the researcher is not aware of any previous research exploring the relationship between students' learning styles and gender and proficiency level at the same time. So, the result of this study which found a kind of interaction between gender and language proficiency levels with regard to perceptual learning styles point out that this aspect needs deeper

investigation and may yield useful results related to how to look at students' learning styles from different aspects.

What is the relationship between students' perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems?

Results of the correlations between the scales of listening comprehension problems questionnaire and perceptual learning styles questionnaire revealed positive but small correlations between the visual learning style and listener and speaker scales of listening comprehension problems questionnaire. This means that the students who reported preferring a visual learning style more than other styles reported having speaker and listener related problems more frequently. The items under these scales are mainly related to the speech characteristics of the speakers such as speech rate, accents, and pronunciation, as well as while-listening performance of the students. When we consider the correlation between the visual learning style and speaker related items, this result seems logical because visual learners may get easily distracted while listening due to fast speech rate, frequent hesitations, varied accents, and unclearly pronounced words, because visual learners mainly prefer to learn through written input rather than verbal input. Regarding the correlation between the visual learning style and the listener scale, it is possible to comment that listening is not a tool for acquiring information that visual learners mostly prefer. So, it is natural that they tend to spend more effort to understand and concentrate and get more easily distracted by unclear sounds. I believe in the importance of teachers' guidance to lead students to notice their potentials for also employing the auditory learning style effectively because it is mentioned that students

have the capacity to activate all these learning styles for more effective learning (Wehrwein, Lujan & DiCarlo, 2007).

Pedagogical Implications

This study has yielded useful information about the listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles of Turkish EFL learners. First of all, the study has once more emphasized that listening is a skill that EFL students have various problems with. A detailed look into the types of these problems has also proved to be useful by highlighting the points that need more attention. As a result of this study, it has appeared that the participants reported having listener related problems the most frequently and the task related problems the least frequently, with the other scales ranged between these two. The most frequently reported problems list confirmed that several problems reported frequently in previous studies (Goh, 1999) were also mentioned frequently by the Turkish students. These common problems that also Turkish teachers should give priority to are related to unknown vocabulary, speech rate, feeling nervous and having concentration problems. As a conclusion, to deal with these problems, particularly listener related ones, teachers should take conscious steps and have preliminary objectives for their lessons. Teachers should help their students to understand how they can approach their listening problems consciously and improve themselves. Teachers can achieve this by exposing their students to various listening experiences, planning listening lessons carefully, establishing purposes for listening, and enabling students to feel successful before they present highly challenging activities and test their listening abilities (Underwood, 1989; Rixon, 1986). Furthermore, course designers should notice the importance of listening in language classrooms and plan

carefully how much time will be allocated to listening and what kind of listening materials will be used (Underwood, 1989).

Goh's (1999) claim that high ability listeners have more metacognitive knowledge about the factors affecting their listening comprehension. So, the fact that in this study advanced students reported having more problems than less advanced students may be attributed to the possibility that they are more aware of their problems. However, this result also indicates that despite their awareness, they do not seem to have satisfactory solutions to their listening comprehension problems. Teachers should help their students to find solutions to their listening comprehension problems, as well as raising awareness about these problems.

Although the strategies in this study are not enough to form a scale and were analyzed individually, the result that advanced students reported employing just one strategy more frequently than students at other levels is enough to show the need for effective strategy training in order to improve students' listening abilities. It is known that strategies are important in helping students to be successful listeners (Yukselci, 2003) and effective strategy training in listening comprehension will result in improvement of students' success and self-confidence in listening comprehension (Chamot, 1995). Overall, I believe that my study has also been useful in showing the variety of the listening comprehension problems for the EFL students, as well as the most difficult aspects.

This study showed that Turkish students reported preferring mainly visual learning style, then auditory, and then kinesthetic. However, it was also found that learning style preferences of students changed according to students' gender and

language proficiency. This diversity in learning style preferences emphasizes the need for teachers to know their students' dominant preferences in order to address their students' needs because it is stated that more effective learning occurs if students are presented information through their preferred channels (Ramburuth, 1998). In addition, teachers should inform their students about the different learning modalities and provide students with various opportunities to notice and use different learning styles because as students use more learning styles, they will discover more about themselves and be more successful in their learning (Kratzig & Arbuthnott, 2006; Sprenger, 2008).

Limitations

In order to find out listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles of the students, two questionnaires were used in this study. This provided satisfactory information about students' perceptual learning style preferences and different listening comprehension problems. However, because the questionnaires were administered in a limited time period, it was not enough in revealing the underlying reasons behind these problems, which may be due to students' educational background, inadequate strategy training, or limited amount of listening exercises in the language classrooms. In addition to the time restriction, the participants may have misunderstood the questions, which is a possible restriction for all questionnaires (Dörnyei, 2002). Moreover, in this study, the listening comprehension problems were observed just from the students' perspectives. We could have reached more detailed results if we had also included the teachers.

Another limitation is that participants were chosen from only one educational institution, which was thought to have enough variety of the students' profiles around

the country. Although the results and implications can be generalized to the other institutions, a larger scale study that would gather data from the different institutions around the country would give more reliable results.

The listening comprehension problems questionnaire included only a limited number of listening comprehension strategies. Since these strategies were not in enough variety to represent the different types of listening strategies and form a unique scale, they were analyzed individually. So, the results of this section are not enough to make a generalization about the participants' awareness and use of the listening comprehension strategies.

Regarding the questionnaires used in this study, some scales had rather low values for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the pilot study and actual study. This problem can be overcome if the number and variety of the items under these scales can be increased.

Suggestions for Further Research

The variety of the listening comprehension problems clearly shows the need for further studies. In order to get a general picture of the prevailing listening comprehension problems, a larger scale study may be conducted around the country. In addition, teachers' awareness of these problems and underlying reasons may be explored and this may help in suggesting more realistic solutions. In addition, students' awareness of the listening comprehension strategies may be studied in detail in order to see to what extent they know and employ these strategies.

Further research into different learning style preferences of Turkish university students also would be useful in helping teachers to know their students and adapt their

teaching styles, as well as in helping students to notice their weaknesses and strengths. A qualitative study that observes students' perceptual learning styles over a period and in different learning situations using different instruments, such as think aloud protocols, would yield more reliable results.

Conclusion

This study revealed that Turkish university preparatory class students reported having many listening comprehension problems that need to be dealt with carefully. These listening comprehension problems vary from speaker related problems to listener related problems. In addition, the study showed that students are not sufficiently aware of how to employ listening comprehension strategies effectively. Students should be trained about how to improve their listening comprehension by employing different listening strategies. Turkish university preparatory class students reported preferring mainly visual learning style. In addition, students' learning style preferences were found to be influenced by gender and proficiency level.

Finally, it is important to note that this study aimed to find out strong correlations between the students' listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles. The result of the analysis showed that there were only low correlation coefficient values between just the visual learning style and the listener and speaker scales. This result did not allow us to make judgments about the existence of strong connections between students' perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems. However, even the small positive correlation between visual learners and listener and speaker related problems allows us to conclude that teachers should pay

more attention to the students' learning styles in order to address their needs more effectively and help them notice their strengths.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRES (ENGLISH VERSION)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This study is being conducted by Tuba Demirkol, who is currently enrolled in Bilkent University MATEFL program. The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between students' listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles. The participation to the study is completely voluntary and the answers will be used only for scientific purposes. If you would like to get further information about the study, please, get into contact with Tuba Demirkol (tuba@bilkent.edu.tr). Thanks for your participation in the study.

Questionnaire 1: This questionnaire is designed to assess your general approach to learning and working.

Instructions: For each item, put a tick √ to the item that represents your approach.

1-Never 2- Sometimes 3- Very often 4-Always

Please, answer all the items.

Questionnaire 2: This questionnaire is designed to detect problems you have in listening comprehension in English.

Instructions: For each item, put a tick √ to the item that represents your approach.

1-Never 2- Seldom 3- Sometimes 4- Very often 5-Always

Please, answer all the items.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The proficiency level:_____
Age:_____
Gender (please, circle): Female Male

Instructions: The questionnaires below aim to explore your perceptual learning styles and listening comprehension problems, respectively. There is not a correct or incorrect answer for any of the items. The first item that comes to your mind will reflect your approach best. Put a tick √ to the item that represents your approach. Please answer all the items.

Questionnaire 1: How I use my physical senses to study or work

No	Item	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I avoid sitting at a desk when I don't have to.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	I prefer to learn with video or TV more than any other media.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
3	Manipulating objects help me to remember.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
4	I like to listen to music when I study or work.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5	I can easily understand what people say even if I can't see them.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
6	I take lots of notes.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
7	I enjoy collecting cards, stamps, coins, or other things.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
8	I have to look at people to understand what they say.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
9	I remember things better if I discuss them out loud.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
10	I use color-coding to help me as I learn or work.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
11	I easily remember jokes that I hear.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
12	I need frequent breaks when I work or study.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
13	I get nervous when I sit still too long.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
14	I can visualize pictures, numbers,	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

	or words in my head.				
15	I need written directions for tasks.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16	I enjoy building or making things.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	I need oral directions for tasks.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	When I turn on the TV, I listen to the sound more then watching the screen.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
19	I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture or a tape, rather than by reading.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
20	I remember something better if I write it down.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
21	I like a lot of physical activities.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	I think better when I can move around.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	I am more comfortable when the walls where I study or work have posters and pictures.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
24	I move my lips when I read silently.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
25	I remember better what people say then what they look like.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
26	Background sounds help me think.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
27	I get distracted by background noises.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
28	I underline or highlight the important parts as I read.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
29	I can identify people by their voices.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
30	I would rather just start doing things rather than pay attention to directions.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

Questionnaire 2: Listening Comprehension Problems Questionnaire

Item No	Items	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2	I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3	I find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4	I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5	Visual clues help me understand the spoken text (pictures, diagrams, charts, video, etc.)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8	I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10	I try to predict the words that I associate with the	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

	topic.					
11	I find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12	Pre-listening information about the text improves my listening comprehension.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13	Tape scripts provided before listening exercises help me understand the text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16	I find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17	I find it difficult to take notes while listening.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20	I spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes me tired.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
24	I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
30	,I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Are there any other variables that affect your listening comprehension negatively?

……
……
……
……
……
……

Thanks for your participation.

APPENDIX B: SCALES OF THE ITEMS IN THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS QUESTIONNAIRE

Scale	No	Item
Message	27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.
	15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my listening comprehension.
	6	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.
Task	4	I find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.
	3	I find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.
	11	I find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.
	14	I find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.
	17	I find it difficult to take notes while listening.
Speaker	1	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.
	5	Visual clues help me understand the spoken text (pictures, diagrams, and charts.)
	16	I find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.
	29	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.
	13	Tape scripts provided before listening exercises help me understand the text.
	28	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents.
	18	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.
Listener	26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my listening comprehension.
	23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my listening comprehension.
	25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.
	20*	I spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes me tired.
	2	I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.
	21*	I quickly forget the words I hear while listening.
	7	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a

		short answer (e.g. why or how questions).
	9*	When I miss a few words, I find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.
	22	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.
	8	I find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my teacher reading aloud.
Strategy	10*	I try to predict the words that I associate with the topic.
	24*	I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.
	19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.
	12	Pre-listening information about the text improves my listening comprehension.
	30	I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.

* Items added by the researcher after reviewing the relevant literature

APPENDIX C : QUESTIONNAIRES (TURKISH VERSION)

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM

Bu çalışma Bilkent Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi programında yüksek lisans yamakta olan Tuba Demirkol tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmamın amacı öğrencilerin İngilizce derslerinde yaşadıkları dinleme problemleriyle algısal öğrenme stilleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasındadır ve elde edilen sonuçlar sadece bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek isterseniz, lütfen,Tuba Demirkol (tuba@bilkent.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurunuz. Çalışmaya katıldığınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Anket 1: Bu anket sizin öğrenme ve çalışma konularına dair genel yaklaşımınızı değerlendirmek için dizayn edildi.
Yönergeler: Her bir madde için yaklaşımınızı temsil eden cevaba √ işareti yapınız.
1= Asla 2= Bazen 3= Sıklıkla 4= Her zaman
Lütfen tüm maddeleri cevaplandırınız.

Anket 2: Bu anket sizin İngilizce dersinde dilde dinleme yaparken karşılaştığınız problemleri belirlemek için dizayn edildi.
Yönergeler: Her bir madde için yaklaşımınızı temsil eden cevaba √ işareti yapınız.
1= Asla 2= Nadiren 3= Bazen 4= Sıklıkla 5= Her zaman
Lütfen tüm maddeleri cevaplandırınız.

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ANKET

Devam ettiğiniz sınıf ve kur (seviye):_____
Yaşınız:_____
Cinsiyetiniz (daire içine alınız): Erkek Kız

Yönergeler: Aşağıdaki iki anket sırasıyla öğrenme stilinizi ve yabancı dilde dinleme yaparken karşılaştığınız problemleri belirlemeye yöneliktir. Soruların doğru yada yanlış cevabı yoktur. Aklınıza gelen ilk cevap sizin tutumunuzu en iyi yansıtan olacaktır.
Her bir madde için yaklaşımınızı temsil eden cevaba √ işareti yapınız.
Lütfen tüm maddeleri cevaplandırınız.

Anket 1: Fiziksel Duyularımı İşte veya Ders Çalışırken Nasıl Kullanırım?

Soru No	Soru	Asla	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Her zaman
1	Mecbur olmadıkça sırada oturmaktan kaçınırım.	1	2	3	4
2	Diğer medya araçlarındansa televizyon veya videoyla öğrenmeyi tercih ederim	1	2	3	4
3	Nesnelerle oynamak: uğraşmak hatırlamama yardımcı olur.	1	2	3	4
4	İş yaparken veya ders çalışırken müzik dinlemekten hoşlanırım	1	2	3	4
5	İnsanların ne söylediğini onları göremesem bile anlarım.	1	2	3	4
6	Bir sürü not alırım.	1	2	3	4
7	Kartlar, pullar, metal paralar ve diğer şeyleri toplamaktan hoşlanırım.	1	2	3	4
8	Ne söylediklerini anlamak için insanlara bakmak zorundayım.	1	2	3	4
9	Bir şeyleri sesli olarak tartıştığımda onları daha iyi hatırlarım.	1	2	3	4
10	İşte yada ders çalışırken renkli kodlamaları yardımcı olarak kullanırım.	1	2	3	4
11	Duyduğum şakaları kolaylıkla hatırlarım.	1	2	3	4
12	İşte yada ders çalışırken sık molalara ihtiyaç duyarım.	1	2	3	4
13	Hareketsiz olarak çok uzun süre oturduğumda gerginleşirim.	1	2	3	4

14	Resimleri, sayıları yada kelimeleri zihnimde görselleştirebilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15	Tasklar için yazılı direktiflere/yönergelere ihtiyaç duyarım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16	Bir şeyler inşa etmekten veya yapmaktan zevk alırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	Tasklar için sözlü direktiflere/yönergelere ihtiyaç duyarım	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	Televizyonu açtığım zaman ekranı izlemekten çok sesi dinlerim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
19	Bir dersi yada teybi dinleyerek öğrenmeyi okuyarak öğrenmekten daha çok tercih ederim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
20	Eğer bir şeyleri yazarsam onları daha iyi hatırlarım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
21	Bir sürü fiziksel aktiviteden hoşlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	Etrafta dolaşabildiğim zaman daha iyi düşünürüm.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	İşte yada ders çalıştığım yerdeki duvarlarda resimler ve posterler olduğu zaman daha rahat olurum.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
24	Sessiz okuma yaptığım zamanlarda dudaklarımı kıpırdatırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
25	İnsanların ne söylediklerini nasıl göründüklerinden daha iyi hatırlarım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
26	Arka plandaki sesler düşünmeme yardımcı olur.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
27	Arka plandaki seslerden dikkatim dağılır.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
28	Okuduğum zaman önemli bölümleri renklendirir yada altını çizerim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
29	İnsanları seslerinden tanıyabilirim/ayırt edebilirim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
30	Yönergelere dikkat etmektense bir şeyleri hemen yapmaya başlamayı tercih ederim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

Anket 2: Yabancı Dilde Dinleme Yaparken Karşılaşılan Problemler Anketi

Soru	Sorular	Asla	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Her zaman
1	Anlaşılır şekilde telaffuz edilmeyen kelimelerin anlamlarını anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2	Dinleme pasajını anlamadığımda gergin ve üzgün hissederim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3	Sözlü parçayı dinledikten sonra konuyla ilgili tartışma yapmakta zorlanırım	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4	Bir dinleme pasajının başlığından konuşmacıların ne söyleyeceğini tahmin etmekte zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5	Görsel ipuçları sözlü bir pasajı anlamamda yardımcı olur (resimler, diyagramlar, tablolar, video vs.)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6	Uzun bir dinleme metninin anlamını yorumlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7	Kısa cevaptan başka türlü cevaplar gerektiren soruları cevaplamakta zorlanırım (nasıl ve niçin li sorular)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8	Bir dinleme metnini kasetten dinlemektense öğretmenim okurken dinlemeyi tercih ederim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9	Birkaç kelimeyi kaçırdığım.anlamadığım zaman parçanın geri kalanına konsantre olmakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10	Dinleme metninin konusuyla ilgili kelimeleri dinleme öncesinde tahmin etmeye çalışırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11	Sözlü parçanın özetini yazmakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12	Dinleme metniyle ilgili dinleme öncesi bilgileri anlamama yardımcı olur.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13	Dinleyeceğim metni önceden görmek anlamama yardımcı olur.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14	Dinleme esnasında tablo yada grafik doldurmakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

15	Bilinmeyen kelimeler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16	Tereddütlerle ve duraksamalarla dolu olan doğal konuşmaları anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17	Dinleme esnasında not almakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18	Konuşmacılar çok hızlı konuştukları zaman iyi anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
19	Konuşulan pasajı anlamak için konuyla ilgili tecrübelerimi ve geçmiş bilgilerimi kullanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20	Bir dinleme pasajını anlamak için çok fazla çaba sarf ederim ve bu beni yorar.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21	Dinlerken duyduğum kelimeleri çabucak unuturum.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
22	İlgimi çekmeyen dinleme parçalarını anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23	Kalitesiz kasetlerden kaynaklı belirsiz sesler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
24	Dinlerken "firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand" gibi belirteçlere dikkat ederim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25	Bir dinleme parçasının genel anlamını ilk dinlemede anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
26	Kalitesiz sınıf şartlarından kaynaklı yada dışardan gelen sesler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
27	Zor gramatik yapılar dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28	Konuşmacılar farklı şivelerle/aksanlarla konuştukları zaman iyi anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
29	Konuşmacının vücut dilini görmeden sözlü bir pasajı anlamakta zorlanırım.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
30	Konuşulan pasajın ana fikrini anlamak için her detayı dinlerim.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Yabancı dilde dinleme performansınızı olumsuz etkileyen başka etkenler var mı?

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Katılımınız için teşekkürler.

APPENDIX D: ANSWERS TO THE SECOND SECTION OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS QUESTIONNAIRE

A) Pre-Intermediate

1) The central heating system is broken.

2) I have not attended preparatory classes before the university.

3) I do not know enough vocabulary.

4) Classrooms are very crowded.

5) There are different accents in the listening materials.

6) They speak too fast and do not produce the words exactly.

B) Intermediate

1) The speaker speaks with varied accents and intonation.

2) There is noise outside.

3) The records are in low quality.

4) I do not understand the voice.

5) I want to see the people speaking.

6) Bad physical conditions of the classroom.

7) The class is very cold.

C) Advanced

1) There are other voices in the record.

2) They speak too fast and I do not understand the grammar of some sentences.

3) There are many words that I do not know.

4) The speakers speak with different voices and accents.

5) I can not listen and take notes at the same time.

6) I need to know beforehand what kind of information I will hear.

7) The listening records are too long.

8) They test us after listening and give scores.

9) I can not concentrate.

10) There are words I do not know the meaning of.

11) I do not understand when there are more than two speakers.

12) Listening topics that are not interesting for me.

13) I can not understand the words I know because I do not know their exact pronunciation.