

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIO BOOKS ON THE READING
COMPREHENSION OF SELECTED TEXTS BY UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS
AT DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY LEVELS

A Master's Thesis

by

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Ankara

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In Loving Memory of My Dear Cousin,

Selim Bingöl

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIO BOOK ON THE READING
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AT DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY LEVELS

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This study mainly investigated the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students. This study also aimed to find out whether a difference in students' reading comprehension as a result of exposure to audio books emerges based on their proficiency levels. Lastly, students' attitudes toward audio books were also investigated in the study.

This study was conducted over three weeks, with the participation of 82 students from four classes at elementary and intermediate levels at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages. One of the classes at each level was selected as the control group and the other class was designated as the experimental group. The control group students were assigned to read three graded readers, one book per-week, while the experimental group students were assigned to read the same books and listen to the accompanying audio CDs outside the classroom.

In order to investigate the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of university EFL students, reading comprehension tests, which were prepared for each book separately, were administered to the control and the experimental group students after each one-week reading period. In order to address the first research question, the mean values and standard deviations were calculated and compared between the control and experimental groups. The test results of the elementary and the intermediate level students were compared to explore any difference in the effectiveness of audio books on reading comprehension according to their proficiency levels. Following each reading comprehension test, the experimental group students were administered a questionnaire with the intent to find out their attitudes toward using audio books.

Analysis of the test data revealed that audio books are effective in the text comprehension of university EFL students, and they appeared to have a greater effect on students at intermediate level than they did at elementary level. The results from the questionnaire showed that the experimental group students had positive attitudes toward their experience with audio books. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of audio books, suggesting that teachers can incorporate them as an alternative approach to traditional extensive reading implementation.

Key Words: Audio book, reading comprehension, extensive reading, attitude, proficiency level, effectiveness

ÖZET

SESLİ KİTAPLARIN YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENEN
FARKLI YETERLİK SEVİYESİNDEKİ ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN
OKUDUKLARI METİNLERİ ANLAMALARINA OLAN ETKİSİ

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Bu çalışma genel olarak sesli kitapların yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen üniversite öğrencilerinin okudukları metinleri anlamalarına olan etkisini araştırmıştır. Çalışma ayrıca, sesli kitapların öğrencilerin yeterlik seviyelerine göre okudukları metinleri anlamalarına olan etkisini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. Son olarak, öğrencilerin sesli kitaplara karşı olan tutumları bu çalışma kapsamında incelenmiştir.

Çalışma üç hafta boyunca, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu temel ve orta seviyelerdeki dört sınıftan 82 öğrencinin katılımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Her seviyede bir sınıf kontrol diğer sınıf deney grubu olarak belirlenmiştir. Kontrol grubundaki öğrencilerin her hafta bir kitap olmak üzere toplam üç adet basamaklı öykü kitaplarını okul dışında okumaları istenmiştir. Deney grubundaki öğrencilerin ise aynı öykü kitaplarını beraberinde gelen ses kayıtlarını dinleyerek okul dışında okumaları istenmiştir.

Sesli kitapların yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen üniversite öğrencilerinin okudukları metinleri anlamalarına olan etkisini araştırmak amacıyla, her bir öykü kitabı için ayrı olarak hazırlanmış okuma anlama testleri birer haftalık okuma süreçlerinin ardından kontrol ve deney grubundaki öğrencilere uygulanmıştır. Bu testlerden elde edilen ortalama değerler ve standart sapmalar hesaplanmış ve kontrol ve deney grupları arasında karşılaştırılmıştır. Temel ve orta seviyelerdeki öğrencilerin test sonuçları, sesli kitapların öğrencilerin yeterlik seviyelerine göre okudukları metinleri anlamalarına olan etkisindeki olası farkları ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla karşılaştırılmıştır. Her bir okuma anlama testinin ardından, deney grubundaki öğrencilere sesli kitaplara karşı olan tutumlarını belirlemek amacıyla bir anket uygulanmıştır.

Testler üzerinde yapılan araştırmalar, sesli kitapların yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen üniversite öğrencilerinin okudukları metinleri anlamalarında etkili olduğunu, öte yandan, sesli kitapların orta seviyede, temel seviyede olduğundan daha etkili olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Anket sonuçları, deney grubundaki öğrencilerin sesli kitaplara karşı olumlu tutumlara sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Son olarak bu çalışma, öğretmenlere sesli kitapları geleneksel ders dışı okuma uygulamasıyla birleştirme önerisi sunmaktadır ve sesli kitapların önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sesli kitaplar, okuduğunu anlama, ders dışı okuma, tutum, yeterlik seviyesi, etkililik

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As can be deduced from a number of definitions by researchers, reading is not a simple issue but rather a complex process. Some researchers describe reading as constructing meaning from the written or printed message (Day & Bamford, 1998) while others use the term “interactive” for the reading process, either in the mother tongue or in foreign language contexts (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984). In second or foreign language learning contexts, reading can be said to be the most important academic skill (Carrell, 1988; Celce-Murcia, 2001; Grabe & Stoller, 2001).

Since reading has an important role in academic contexts, there have been various implementations by language teachers to foster reading comprehension. Audio books are one of the technological innovations that teachers use to advance reading comprehension of language learners. Locke (2002) explains that audio books are effective because they involve multiple senses in reading and increase learners’ retention skills and improve learning. The inclusion of speech into the reading process helps learners improve their reading comprehension. Marchionda (2001) states that audio books provide learners opportunities to increase active listening and critical thinking skills, which are vital for reading comprehension.

There have been some studies which indicate that audio books are effective in developing English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ reading comprehension. However, understanding the effectiveness of audio books for learners of varying proficiency levels will help reading teachers design courses that are more responsive to the students’ needs and abilities. This research seeks to find out the extent to

which audio books are effective in the text comprehension of university EFL students at different proficiency levels. The current preparatory school students at Anadolu University will serve as participants of the study.

Background of the Study

Reading, one of the four crucial elements in language learning, is described as a process involving recognition of words and making meaning to comprehend what we read (Grabe, 1991, cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001). Hedge (2000) describes reading as a dynamic relationship between a text and the reader as the reader struggles to make sense of the text. According to Short and Harste (1996, p. 506), reading is “an active process in which the reader constructs meaning from a text. Because readers bring differing experiences and knowledge to a reading experience, each reader will construct a different interpretation of a text”. Although there have been many descriptions of reading, it is generally accepted that reading is not passive but is an active process that requires readers to predict and understand what is written. The key term in this point of view is ‘understand’ because reading without understanding cannot be counted as reading (Ur, 1996).

There have been several studies so far focusing on the importance of reading and the role of reading comprehension while learning a foreign language. Carrell (1988) states that reading is by far the most important skill in learning a second or foreign language. Lewis and Reinders (2003) report in their study that there is a significant correlation between reading performance and general language competency. Since reading is such an important skill, it is necessary to investigate the factors that affect reading comprehension.

There are various factors that affect reading comprehension, such as the background knowledge of students about the text, their interests, motivation and purposes, and their attitudes toward reading. In his study, Smith (1991) states that there is a direct correlation between learners' attitudes toward reading and their actual reading behaviors, which are the key to comprehension. In other words, attitudes have the power to affect reading comprehension (Gül, 2008). Learners with positive attitudes toward reading will accordingly comprehend the text better than learners with negative attitudes. As there is such a correlation between reading comprehension and love of reading, it is vital that teachers should think about encouraging learners to gain positive attitudes toward reading.

Teachers and educators have been paying attention to extensive reading as a potential way of improving attitudes toward reading. Extensive reading can be defined as the out-of-class reading that the students do for general understanding at their own paces (Powell, 2005). Davis (1995) provides a similar description of extensive reading: "Pupils are given the time, encouragement, and materials to read pleurably, at their own level, as many books as they can, without the pressures of testing or marks" (p. 329). Extensive reading increases all four language skills, and helps students develop more effective reading strategies and enjoy reading (Jacobs, Davis, & Renandya, 1997).

One recent and popular way of implementing extensive reading is to use audio books. Audio books can be considered as a technical support for reading aloud to students, many benefits of which have been suggested in language learning (Amer, 1997; Day, 1993; Day & Bamford, 1998; Pegolo, 1985; Yong, Idamban, & Jacobs,

1997). In order to explore the benefits of audio books in language learning, researchers have conducted several recent studies (Blum, et al., 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder & Elley, 2003; O'Day, 2002; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, & Gorsuch, 2004). One significant benefit of audio books is that they are sources of pleasure for most students as they incorporate print and audio elements into traditional reading enjoyment (Taguchi, et al., 2004). The findings of another study, which was carried out by Nalder and Elley (2003), provide support for the idea that audio books foster a love of reading, and they encourage learners to have positive attitudes toward reading. Having more positive attitudes, then learners become better readers. Another major benefit of audio books is to have a positive impact on students and help them understand materials that are more difficult than their proficiency levels (Carbo, 1996; Koskinen, et al., 2000). By providing learners with correct phrasing and expression at a correct pace, audio books consequently help them minimize their errors and maximize their understanding. In brief, audio books develop reading comprehension, motivation to read, and fluency by providing learners with additional input (Koskinen, et al., 2000).

The studies stated above serve as scaffolding for the use of audio books in reading instruction. Since most of the studies conducted so far have focused on L1 or K-12 learners, the effectiveness of audio books on teaching reading in university EFL contexts still remains to be discovered. Although previous studies have shown that audio books are effective in improving reading comprehension in the foreign language learning context, there is a need for further research that compares the effectiveness of audio books on university EFL students' reading comprehension of selected texts at different proficiency levels.

Statement of the Problem

Audio books have long been claimed to be beneficial learning aids both for native speakers in L1 contexts (Littleton, Wood, & Chera, 2006) as well as in foreign language teaching contexts (Goldsmith, 2002; Montgomery, 2009). Another side benefit of the inclusion of audio books into language learning contexts is believed to be with respect to listening skills, pronunciation, critical thinking skills (Marchionda, 2001), and reading skills (Beers, 1998; Grover & Hannegan, 2005; Montgomery, 2009). In terms of reading in particular, most research has generally focused on K-12 learners (Donnelly, 2005; Lo & Chan, 2008; Sheaffer & Kinney, 2003). The field lacks however, research that focuses on the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of university EFL students at different proficiency levels.

The reading comprehension difficulties of learners studying in a foreign language classroom are one of the main problems of foreign language teachers. Despite teachers' great efforts to encourage learners to read and comprehend what they read, some students may still be uninterested in reading for various reasons. There are some students in almost every class who may find reading in a foreign language challenging even though they are critical readers in their native language, or there may be others who have never liked reading. The problem is the same at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages, where some students have difficulties in reading despite the teachers' great efforts to teach reading strategies using different techniques in order to help students become better readers. In this study, the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected

texts by students studying at different proficiency levels of preparatory schools in Turkey will be explored.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. Do EFL students demonstrate better comprehension of selected texts when those texts are accompanied by audio?
2. Does any observed effect on reading comprehension differ according to their proficiency levels?
3. What are students' attitudes toward the use of audio books as a supplement to reading texts?

Significance of the Study

The positive effects of audio books on foreign or second language learners' reading comprehension have been evidenced by several recent studies (Blum, et al., 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder & Elley, 2003; Taguchi, et al., 2004). However, there is a gap in the literature on the effectiveness of audio books on EFL students at different proficiency levels. This study, which investigates the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected texts by university preparatory school students at different proficiency levels, may contribute to the field by providing information about this issue. The findings may reveal that audio books contribute to different proficiency level students' text comprehension in varying degrees.

At the local level, this study may guide reading teachers, in EFL contexts in general and at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages Preparatory School in particular, to design reading courses more effectively. Depending on the findings of the study, teachers may decide whether and to what extent they should integrate audio books into their syllabus according to students' proficiency levels. As a result, the teachers may have both more successful learners as well as more motivated ones who have positive attitudes toward reading courses and tasks.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an introduction to the study covering the background, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and the significance of the study were presented. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature on the importance of reading, the reading process, reading comprehension, extensive reading, reading aloud, and audio books in language learning. In the third chapter, the research methodology including the participants, materials and instruments, and data collection and data analysis procedures are described. In the fourth chapter, data analysis procedures and the findings of the study are presented. Lastly, the fifth chapter discusses the findings of the study in the light of the relevant literature, and the pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research are also presented.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The first aim of this study is to investigate how well university EFL students comprehend selected texts when those texts are accompanied by audio. This study further explores the differences, if any, according to university EFL students' different proficiency levels in comprehending the texts. Students' attitudes toward audio books are also explored throughout the study.

In this chapter, the effects of audio assistance in language learning will be the major reference points to explore the effectiveness of audio books on reading comprehension. The importance of reading in language learning will be presented first and the reading process will be defined and discussed. Within the process, the importance of reading comprehension will be discussed to provide background information on ways to improve reading comprehension. Factors that affect comprehension, especially attitudes toward reading, which is a crucial factor, will be described. To provide a basis for the implementation of audio books, the extensive reading process and its benefits in language learning will be illustrated. As an initial stage to introduce students to extensive reading, reading aloud to students will be discussed. Similar to the implementation of extensive reading, audio books, as a technical support to reading aloud to students, will be described, and finally, the role of audio books in improving reading comprehension will be identified.

Importance of reading in language learning

According to Day (1993), there are a number of benefits of becoming a fluent reader in another language. First, it may help to consolidate what has been learnt in that language. Second, it increases new vocabulary and knowledge of grammar, and it increases knowledge of the target language as a result. In addition, reading in another language is important to learn about the target culture. Richards and Renandya (2002) state two reasons for the influence that reading has in foreign language teaching. The first reason is language learners' perceptions as they think reading is one of the most important goals to learn a language, and the other reason is that the materials used in language teaching are mostly written, and so reading is important to be able to access them.

Nowadays, educated people are expected to have the ability to function well in more than one language. Therefore, L2 reading ability, especially in English, has been argued to be the most important academic language skill (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Day, 1993; Grabe, 1991; Grabe & Stoller, 2001; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Wallace, 1992). The reason is that English is becoming more and more common globally as the medium of science, technology and advanced research (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). For students who use academic materials written in English extensively, especially in English-medium universities, reading is of great importance (Carrell, 1988). Quite simply, students cannot perform well at school unless they become proficient readers of English. In order to be able to have a solid proficiency in reading with good comprehension, it is necessary to understand the reading process well, and this will be discussed in the next section.

Describing the reading process

There have been many definitions so far by the researchers in the field to describe the reading process. As a general description of reading, Alderson and Urquhart (1984) describe three elements included in the reading process: the reader, the text and the writer. Reading was regarded as a passive skill in the 1980s and 1990s, and was described as simply decoding the written text. However, more recently reading has started to be perceived as an active rather than a passive skill in which the reader extracts meaning in an ongoing interaction with the text. These days, the notion of reading as an active skill has shifted to a more interactive view. The meaning is constructed as readers negotiate with the text, and so the readers' interpretations may differ from the writers' intentions (Wallace, 1992). So, the term 'reading' can be interpreted as a dynamic relationship between the text and the reader struggling to comprehend it (Hedge, 2000). Bernhardt (1991) gives the description of the reading process as interactive and socio-cognitive, involving a text, a reader, and a social context. Grabe and Stoller (2002) define reading as the ability to construct meaning from a written text according to self interpretation. However, they point out that this definition is perhaps too simple to describe the general notion of reading. Grabe (2009) provides a more comprehensive description of reading from the fluent readers' perspective, as a combination of multiple processes.

The first process characterizes reading as a 'rapid' and 'efficient'. It is rapid in that a fluent reader reads 250-300 words per minute while reading most materials. Reading is efficient both in the sense of overall reading rate and in terms of the ways that various processing skills such as rapid and automatic word recognition, syntactic

parsing, meaning formation, text comprehension building, inferencing, critical evaluation and linkages to prior knowledge resources work together.

The second process is ‘comprehending’ what is being read, in the sense that the central goal to reading is comprehension and all cognitive processing involved in reading aims at this central goal. The function of reading is to understand even while reading a newspaper or a magazine. Reading is also an ‘interactive’ process, in two ways. First, it combines various processing skills together, which is essential to fluent reading. Second, reading is interactive between the reader and the writer. Each reader constructs meaning from the text and interprets the writer’s intentions with the background knowledge he/she brings to reading.

Grabe (2009) also describes reading as a ‘strategic’ process, in which readers apply a number of skills and processes to predict the general idea in the text, highlight specific information, monitor comprehension, manage difficulties, and interpret the meaning according to their goals. Reading is also ‘flexible’ in the sense that readers include various processes and change goals depending on their interests and purposes in reading or comprehension difficulties. The adjustment of the reading processes and purposes indicates that reading is also a purposeful process.

Another process addressed in Grabe’s (2009) description of reading is the continuous ‘evaluation’ during which the readers are strategic and purposeful; in other words, they can monitor their reading. Evaluation also explains how readers respond to a text in terms of their attitudes toward the text and the topic, and it includes inferencing processes and the background knowledge of the reader. The evaluation process points out that reading is a ‘learning’ process, as the reader

decides to respond to a text in different ways according to his/her purposes, interests, and needs, in order to learn what is expected. Reading also involves a ‘linguistic’ process, in the sense that linguistic knowledge of the language of the text, such as morphology, syntax, and semantics, is required in reading. Reading is not possible without knowing the script, the words and the underlying structural phrases.

The common point highlighted in the definitions of reading is ‘understanding’ what has been read. Understanding is the main goal of reading of any kind. Reading is a process of understanding what has been written. The key term is ‘understanding’ since reading without understanding does not count as reading (Williams, 1984). Ur (1996) supports this idea stating that

“...reading means ‘reading and understanding. A foreign language learner who says, ‘I can read the words but I don’t know what they mean’ is not, therefore, reading... He or she is merely decoding – translating written symbols into corresponding sounds” (p. 138).

As understanding is a crucial component in many definitions of the reading process, and the difficulties that learners have in reading affect learning in a negative way, a better understanding of reading comprehension is needed.

Reading comprehension

Early work in understanding second language reading gave priority to form and the relationship between form and meaning (Wallace, 1992). Reading was viewed as a passive, ‘bottom-up’ process, in which readers decode the intended message in the written text by recognizing the letters first, combining the letters to form words, and conjoining the words to form phrases, clauses, and sentences in a linear fashion (Carrell, 1987; Eskey, 1986). In this process of reading, problems with

reading and reading comprehension were assumed to stem from decoding problems (Carrell, 1987). More recently, since bottom-up processing failed to account for the complete understanding of a text, the 'top-down' approach was advanced and views of reading shifted, from seeing it as a passive process to seeing it as an active process (Carrell, 1988). Second language readers were seen as active participants of the reading process, on which the readers' goals, expectations, prior experience, and background knowledge have a major influence. Within this process readers were assumed to have expectations about the information in a text and affirm or reject their expectations when they read (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). However, as researchers agreed on the need for a more encompassing approach to reading, the 'interactive model' of reading has been advanced. The interactive model, the combination of top-down and bottom-up processes, gives emphasis to the interaction between linguistic knowledge and cognitive processes (Weber, 1984, cited in Grabe, 1988). Reading as an interactive process is viewed as the activation of the readers' prior knowledge in mind by the new information in the text. Reading is therefore an interaction between the reader and the text (Grabe, 1988).

From the 'interactive' perspective, Anderson and Pearson (1984) define reading comprehension as the interaction that allows readers to interpret new information in relation with the knowledge already stored in memory.

Comprehension, in this context, refers to the process in which the reader struggles to find a 'mental home' for new information to interact with old knowledge. According to Blanton (1993), comprehension is a cognitive/intellectual interaction between the reader and the text. The more the reader is involved in the interaction, the better the

comprehension is. As in her example, comprehension does not exist unless the reader finds a participatory balance between the self and the text.

“If, for example, I read a text and find no way to connect it to myself, to my knowledge, to my own experience, then I have ‘understood’ that text in only the most superficial way. I have decoded it, but I haven’t truly comprehended it; the text then means nothing to me, and I can walk away from it without its having made the slightest impact on me. As a consequence, my memory of the text would be short term and I would have gained nothing through the act of reading” (p. 238).

Eskey (1986) reports a relation between comprehension and readers’ needs and purposes, which depends on schemata, in other words background information on the subject. In terms of this relation, a reader cannot comprehend the text if he/she knows nothing about the subject, and therefore can have no real interest in reading. Hence, comprehension is most likely to occur if readers have good reasons to read and when they read materials they want to read. Day and Bamford (1998) also state that comprehension depends on the reader’s prior knowledge. Linguistic knowledge, knowledge of text types, familiarity with the subject, and world knowledge or background knowledge are crucial to comprehension. Kendeou et al. (2007, p. 28, cited in Grabe, 2009) describe comprehension as “not a unitary phenomenon but rather a family of skills and activities.” Applying reading strategies, setting goals, making inferences, activating background knowledge, monitoring comprehension, and interpreting the text are all included in the comprehension process. A general component that many definitions of comprehension share is the interpretation of the information in the text. The key to comprehension is the ability to connect the information in the text to existing knowledge, in other words to build bridges between the new and the known.

Since reading and reading comprehension are crucial to general language competency (Lewis & Reinders, 2003), it is required to investigate the factors that affect reading comprehension. The factors that affect reading comprehension may vary. These are readers' background knowledge about the text, interests, language competency, purpose, needs, motivation, and attitudes toward reading. Among these, learners' attitudes toward reading have a crucial impact on reading comprehension, and they will be discussed in the next section.

Attitudes toward reading

Day and Bamford (1998) define attitude as a complex, hypothetical construction, which includes some notion of evaluation. Inceoğlu (2004) explains attitudes as an individual's tendency to respond to any object around him/her. Ajzen (1988, p. 4) provides a similar definition: "an attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event."

Gül (2008) states that attitudes toward reading, either positive or negative, directly affect reading comprehension. In other words, learners who develop positive attitudes toward reading have better comprehension abilities than learners with negative attitudes. It has been argued that a positive correlation exists between attitudes toward reading and reading proficiency (Dökmen, 1994; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Lipson and Wixson (1992, p. 141) suggested that "the student's attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance." The fact that lies behind this suggestion is reading can be learned through reading, and the more positive attitudes the students have, the more they want to read and accordingly the more their reading comprehension abilities develop.

Balcı (2009) conducted a study to explore the relationship between 8th grade students' attitudes toward reading in their first language and their reading comprehension level. Participants were three hundred ninety students who were from different socio-economic environments in Ankara. The Attitudes Scale Towards Reading Habit, which consisted of twenty-one positive and nine negative attitudinal sentences, was used to reveal the students' attitudes toward reading, and reading comprehension tests which included multiple-choice comprehension questions were used to measure the students' reading comprehension levels. The students answered questions about the main idea in the texts, order of events, cause and effect relationships, characters, vocabulary, paragraph organization, and formation of poems after reading text types such as exposition, narrative, and poem. The results of the study indicated that students with more positive attitudes toward reading had higher reading comprehension test scores.

The existence of this relationship between attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension makes it necessary for the teachers to consider the possibility that attitudes might be the factor that lies behind students' reading achievement. Day and Bamford (1998) state that another important aspect of attitudes in educational settings is that they can be changed. Teachers should therefore understand the source of students' attitudes, positive or negative, and try to change poor attitudes toward reading.

Day and Bamford (1998, p. 23) indicate four sources of student attitudes toward second language reading. One source of second language reading attitudes is students' attitudes toward reading in their native language. That is, students who

have positive reading attitudes in their first language are most likely to have positive attitudes toward reading in a second language. Second, previous experiences with learning to read other languages have an influence on students' attitudes toward learning to read a new language. Prior positive experiences will lead to a new successful experience with learning to read another language. Third, students' attitudes toward the second language, its culture and people will certainly affect their attitudes toward reading in that language. It makes sense that, for example, when two communities share a lot of the same history, people are eager to learn to read that language and to learn its culture. Finally, the second language classroom environment can be a source of students' attitudes, either positive or negative, toward reading in a second language. In other words, students' feelings about their teachers, classmates, materials, activities, procedures, and so on, will directly influence their attitudes.

In recent years, researchers have been seeking more effective ways and strategies to promote positive attitudes to reading and accordingly improve the students' success in foreign or second language learning. It was common to many teaching settings that learning used to take place in a classroom, with insufficient class hours, with a textbook, and many students trying to find any chance to use the target language in a traditional classroom setting. However, there are new conceptions today that researchers believe to be effective, especially in foreign language learning settings. Considering the fact that foreign language learners differ from second language learners in the sense that second language learners have more opportunities to use the target language outside the classroom and in real world situations while foreign language learners are exposed to the target language mainly

at school, the need for providing opportunities for foreign language learners to use the target language out of school arises. One effective way of exposing learners to foreign language input outside the classroom is extensive reading.

Extensive reading in language learning

Nation (2009) suggests that reading is a source of learning and enjoyment. As a goal in its own right, reading is also a way of reaching other goals. However, it is important to note that these gains from reading are only possible with considerable time and large amounts of reading. A possible definition of extensive reading, according to Jacobs, Davis and Renandya (1997, p. ii) is “the reading, without overt instruction, of large amounts of material for pleasure and information... each student choosing a book on their interests and reading level.” Grabe and Stoller (2002) define extensive reading as a way of reading where learners read large amounts of material that are appropriate for their linguistic level.

Hedge (2000) mentions a lack of agreement among writers on what is meant by the term ‘extensive reading’. She states that while some writers focus on the quantity of material, others specify the amount of time spent reading the material. There are also others who describe extensive reading as activities such as skimming and scanning on longer texts during class time. Jacobs, Davis and Renandya (1997, p. iv) describe the ideal characteristics of extensive reading as follows:

- Reading materials are at the proper level of difficulty so that students can read them independently. At the same time, materials should not be too easy.
- Reading materials should appeal to a variety of student interests.

- Reading materials should expose students to a wide range of text types (e.g., fairy tales, mysteries, biographies, instructions, essays).
- Reading materials should be organized in a way that simplifies and attracts students use.
- Extensive reading should be a regular part of the curriculum, not a luxury item to be included only if everything else has been completed.
- Follow-up tasks should encourage, not discourage, further reading, and the use of other language skills.
- Teachers and, to the extent possible, other personnel at educational institutions, as well as family and community members, should be reading too.
- Help should be available to those students whose past experience with reading has left them disinterested in reading.
- Teachers should seek various ways, such as group activities, to motivate students to read more.

Extensive reading can also be defined by contrasting it with intensive reading. Intensive reading in the classroom can be a way of increasing learners' knowledge of language and reading strategies for successful reading with guidance from the teacher. The general implementation of intensive reading in a foreign language classroom is through the grammar-translation approach where the teacher uses the first language to explain the text and the focus is on features of written language (Nation, 2009). This way of teaching, intensive reading, can be more effective and teachers can teach reading strategies better, provided that extensive reading is integrated into the course so that the students can have more substantial

opportunities to practice these strategies independently. The value of extensive reading in L2 settings is based on its role in exposing learners to a large number of meaningful L2 materials of interest, which will, in the long run, improve their L2 proficiency (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989).

Benefits of extensive reading

People learn a second or foreign language for different reasons. Whatever the reasons are, extensive reading, by any means, is useful to anyone who reads in a second or foreign language. One of the benefits of extensive reading is to make reading an enjoyable activity, which in turn will encourage more reading in formal and informal situations (Day & Bamford, 1998). Students will become better readers provided that they read more, and they will enjoy reading accordingly (Jensen, 1986, p. 121). Reading in large amounts is the major benefit of extensive reading as it functions as the key for reading to reach its goals.

Another significant benefit of extensive reading is to promote learner responsibility by providing the students with the opportunity to choose various materials, which they want to read, on their own (Jensen, 1986). The more independent the learners are as they become autonomous learners, the more motivated they are toward reading (Day & Bamford, 1998; Jensen, 1986). Since the learners select materials they want to read which are at levels appropriate to their reading ability, they do not have the frustration of having to read difficult materials, which lowers their motivation (Day & Bamford, 1998). Cox and Guthrie (2001) reported a strong relationship between motivation and the amount of reading. In their study, they included a total of 251 students in Grades 3 and 5, and the students were

administered questionnaires and a reading test. The findings of the study indicated that motivation is the best predictor of the amount of reading for enjoyment.

In addition to choosing their own materials, learners plan their reading process themselves by deciding on where and when to read, and also how much to read at a specific time. This offers the learners chances of working independently and learning by themselves, which in turn makes them autonomous learners (Day & Bamford, 1998; Hedge, 2000).

Once the learners are motivated to read in the target language, they build more positive attitudes toward reading accordingly. Day and Bamford (1998) state that two of the sources of attitudes toward reading, which are ‘attitudes toward the second language, culture, and people’ and ‘the second language environment’, can be substantially influenced by extensive reading. One study, the results of which showed an improvement in students’ attitudes toward reading, was carried out by Mason and Krashen (1997). The study included 20 randomly selected students from two intact EFL/reading classes at a women's university in Osaka, Japan. Both the control group, which consisted of second year students in the general education curriculum, and the experimental group, which consisted of students who had failed EFL classes, were taught by the same teacher once a week for 90 minutes. The comparison group received traditional instruction; however, the experimental group was assigned to read graded readers both in and outside the classroom and keep a diary in their native language to record their opinions, feelings, and progress. A 100-item cloze test was given to both groups as a pre-test and post-test in order to measure the gains in reading comprehension they made through the semester. The

results showed that the experimental group did significantly better on the post-tests than the comparison group did. The findings from the students' diaries also revealed that the experimental group students gained positive attitudes toward reading. Most of them reported in their diaries that they were once reluctant to learn a foreign language but then they became eager readers.

In terms of the development of academic skills, the positive role of extensive reading is undeniable. Grabe (2009) suggests that even reading outside the academic contexts, such as reading newspapers, e-mails, or novels, contributes to the development of academic reading skills. As he points out, fluency in reading, which is a requirement for efficient reading, can be ensured by practice in extensive reading:

“The ability to read extended texts for long periods of time is a hallmark of fluent reading. No other set of reading activities or reading practice can substitute for reading longer texts with reasonable comfort and without needing to stop constantly, and without feeling fatigued or overwhelmed” (p. 311).

Jacobs, Davis and Renandya (1997) point out that extensive reading is beneficial in developing academic skills by providing students with the opportunities to increase world knowledge and knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and text structure. As a result the students' language proficiency in all the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, develops.

One study which supports the idea that extensive reading is beneficial in improving general knowledge and language proficiency was carried out by Renandya, Rajan and Jacobs (1999). One aspect of the study was to investigate the relationship between learning gain and the amount of extensive reading material

read, and the perceptions of the learners toward extensive reading, such as to what extent the material was perceived as interesting, easy or difficult, and comprehensible, and whether or not students perceived extensive reading as a useful and enjoyable activity. Forty-nine senior Vietnamese government officials who were taking an intensive English course in Singapore for two months participated in the study. After the benefits of extensive reading were explained to the students, they were asked to choose the books on their own to read outside the class. As a post-reading activity, the students were asked to write short summaries of the books they read. Then, they worked in pairs in which one told the story and the other listened to and retold it to someone else. The information obtained from a two-part questionnaire and the results of the proficiency test, which consisted of four sections, listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary, and writing, indicated that extensive reading assignments were useful in improving English.

Concern about foreign or second language reading development has mainly centered on individual differences among students in reading interests, attitudes toward reading, reading fluency, comprehension levels, and selecting materials. Extensive reading can be considered as a response to the individual differences in a language classroom by promoting independence for the students to choose materials appropriate to their proficiency levels and their individual interests. However, as Kuan (1997) claims, it can be hard for teachers to motivate slow readers or uninterested students. Therefore, it is necessary to help these students before assigning them to read on their own. As an initial stage to introduce students to extensive reading, teachers can make use of reading aloud to students (Smith, 1997). The next section will discuss the role of reading aloud in reading instruction.

Reading aloud

For most students of all ages, including adults, reading aloud can be said to have several benefits although it is sometimes criticized, in part because nonnative-English-speaking teachers might have difficulties reading at a correct pace with correct pronunciation, and students who silently follow the text read aloud to them do not have to understand or react to it (Day, 1993; Day & Bamford, 1998). For second or foreign language learners, especially beginner level learners, being regularly read aloud to while they silently read the text helps with sound/spelling correspondence (Day, 1993; Day & Bamford, 1998; Griffin, 1992). Yong, Idamban and Jacobs (1997) report an increase in the general language proficiency and listening comprehension of primary students in Singapore. It is also suggested that reading aloud helps learners to chunk or read in phrases and meaningful units, in contrast to the word-for-word learning strategy (Day, 1993; Pegolo, 1985). Amer (1997) also provides support for the idea that the teacher's reading aloud to students helps them to be able to read in phrases instead of reading word by word. When it is done efficiently, the teacher's reading aloud to students with proper production of the punctuation signals, stress, and intonation, students gradually achieve a higher level of comprehension.

In her study, Amer (1997) investigated the effect of the teacher's reading aloud on EFL students' reading comprehension of a narrative text. Seventy-five sixth-grade EFL students who had been studying English for six years in Cairo participated in the study. The students were divided into two groups, the experimental group and the control group. A story, which was divided into four

parts, was used in the study. The students in the experimental group were asked to listen to the texts read aloud by the teacher and follow along in the text, while the students in the control group read the story silently. Two tests, a multiple-choice test including fifteen questions and a story frame test that employed a cloze procedure, were used to measure the effect of reading aloud. Tests were administered three days after the instruction. Students first completed the multiple-choice test, then the story frame test. The results from both tests showed that the students in the experimental group better comprehended the texts they were reading than those in the control group. This study revealed that the teacher's reading aloud to students may have a significantly positive effect on learners' reading comprehension.

As an alternative to reading aloud to students, one recent and popular way of providing auditory input that is of particular interest to teachers is using audio books. The implementation of audio books in language learning can also be counted as extensive reading, by means of which the students can read in large amounts outside the classroom with additional audio input. As a technical support to teachers' reading aloud to students and with their practicality as extensive reading with audio assistance, audio books can be used both in class and outside the classroom. In the next section, the benefits of audio books in language learning will be presented, referring to previous studies in the literature.

Audio books in language learning

There have been several recent studies which indicate that audio books are beneficial in language learning (Blum, et al., 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder & Elley, 2003; O'Day, 2002; Taguchi, et al., 2004). Wolfson (2008) states that audio

books help activate prior knowledge, increase listening and reading comprehension, and improve vocabulary and oral fluency. Wolfson (2008, p. 106) also suggests that “reading audio books supports the development of all four language systems: phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic.”

Some of the many benefits of audio books are discussed by Serafini (2004, p.

6). Audio books serve the classroom by:

- supplementing teachers’ and parents’ ability to read to their children and students
- providing access to new vocabulary, a key to success in reading
- providing demonstrations of fluent reading
- providing readers access to books they are unable to read for themselves
- creating opportunities for discussing stories, in order to better comprehend them
- supporting struggling readers by helping them focus on meaning rather than the decoding of text
- inviting children to enter the magical world of literature
- fostering a love of literature and reading.

One study, the results of which supported the idea that audio books are effective learning tools, was conducted by O’Day (2002). In this study, the effect of audio books in teaching and learning in three fifth grade classrooms in an elementary school was investigated. The participants in the study were twenty-eight students in regular education classrooms and thirteen students in a bilingual classroom. The students were assigned to read audio books, which were selected based on the

student interests, in the classroom. The study included both qualitative data and quantitative data. The qualitative data sources included interviews, observations, and a focus group interview. The quantitative data sources included reading attitude scales, scores from an informal reading inventory, and Lexile measurements from the Scholastic Reading Inventory. The findings of the study indicated that audio books improved students' comprehension of the selected texts, word recognition skills, and vocabulary acquisition, and made a model of fluent reading available to them. Another major benefit of audio books, as derived from the results of the study, was that the students gained the ability to read independently for enjoyment with little supervision from their teachers once they had learned the technique of reading and listening simultaneously.

A similar study was conducted by Nalder and Elley (2003) to explore the advantages of the widely-used tape-assisted Rainbow Reading Program. The study was conducted with a sample of struggling readers of different age groups in their ongoing school programs over two school terms. The students were from eight different schools, which included many different ethnic and language groups and represented a range of socio-economic levels in Auckland, New Zealand. Thirty students, either second language learners or first language users, from grade levels ranging from 2 to 7 participated in the study. The students were making very little progress and at least two years behind their age mates in their reading abilities. They participated in taped reading sessions at least four times a week over eighteen weeks. The students read the book while listening to it on tape, practiced reading without the tape, then had a conference with the tutor and recorded the details about the books they read and the details of the conference they had with the tutors in a personal

handbook. The results from the pre-test and post-test, Rainbow Reading Age Level, Burt Word Reading Test, Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, Peters Spelling Test, Writing Test, and Test of Oral English Language, showed that almost all of the students at each grade level improved their reading considerably. Other significant gains of the students were major improvements in their word recognition, spelling, accuracy in reading aloud, writing, and oral language. Students also claimed to enjoy reading and have positive attitudes toward the program.

Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Phillips, Creamer and Baker (2000) also carried out a similar study to compare the effectiveness of book-rich classroom environments and home rereading, with and without an audio model, on fluency, comprehension, and students' motivation to read. The participants were sixteen teachers and one hundred sixty-two students from sixteen first-grade classrooms. Fifty-seven of the students were native speakers of English and one hundred-five students were studying English as a second language. The students were in one of four literacy conditions, which consisted of three experimental groups and one control group. The conditions were: shared reading in a book-rich classroom environment, shared reading in a book-rich classroom environment and daily rereading of books at home, shared reading in a book-rich classroom environment and daily rereading of books with audiotapes at home, and unmodified reading instruction at school. The instruments included in this study were the Oral Reading Assessment, the Writing Vocabulary Assessment, and the Oral Story Retelling Assessment, and to assess students' motivation, literacy behavior, and attitude, Me and My Reading Scale, Teacher Survey of Child Behavior, Individual Child Interview, Parent Survey, and Teacher Questionnaire/Interview were used. The results indicated that the students in

book-rich classrooms showed great improvement in their comprehension and motivation to read. The results also showed home-based rereading increased students' interest and achievement in reading. Furthermore, use of audio models at home provided additional benefits. The students having access to audio models at home showed higher interest, motivation, and more positive attitudes toward reading.

The previous studies looked at mixed groups of L1 and L2 learners, but there are some studies which have focused on learners of a second or foreign language. One study that focuses on the benefits of audio books in second language learning was conducted by Blum, Koskinen, Tennant, Parker, Straub and Curry (1995). They investigated whether home-based repeated reading with an audio model was a significant supplement to the literacy instructional program of second language learners. The participants of the study consisted of nine first-grade students who were at lower proficiency levels in English. The first language backgrounds of the students were varied: Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Farsi, Laotian, Korean, and Arabic. All students had either limited or no reading ability in their native language. Blum et al. compared the home-based repeated reading of books to home reading that included books with accompanying audiotapes. From the results of the study, it was clear that the students in the home reading with audiotapes group received significant gains from the experience of reading books with audiotape at home. It was also suggested from the results that audiotapes helped students read increasingly more difficult texts fluently and increased their motivation to read.

Another study, the participants of which were university EFL students, was conducted to explore the effectiveness of an auditory reading model. Taguchi,

Takayasu-Maass and Gorsuch (2004) investigated whether and how assisted repeated reading with an auditory reading model enhanced EFL readers' fluency and consequently improved their comprehension. Twenty-nine Japanese EFL students who were studying at a university near Tokyo participated in the study. The students were divided equally into two groups, extensive reading and repeated reading groups. The reading section scores and the total scores of a TOEFL test, which was administered prior to the study, were used to ensure that the students in two groups were not statistically different at the outset. In the extensive reading group, the students read books of their interest progressively from easier to more difficult during class times whereas the students in the repeated reading group were engaged in an assisted repeated reading program, in which they read the books while listening to the audiotaped version. This project was carried out for seventeen weeks during which both groups engaged in sessions at the same time. The results showed that the students in both groups performed similarly on comprehension measures. The comprehension scores of the students in both groups increased as the number of readings increased. In terms of fluency, the repeated reading group had higher word per minute reading rates than the extensive reading group. The findings of the study suggested that assisted repeated reading was effective in developing second and foreign language learners' fluency and comprehension. The auditory model of reading also helped learners become independent readers and have positive attitudes toward reading which in turn promotes language development.

Previous studies have shown that audio books are effective learning tools in first and second/foreign language contexts. The effectiveness of audio books on improving reading comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, word recognition, accuracy

in reading aloud, speaking, writing, motivation to read and positive attitudes towards reading has been investigated so far. The participants in most of these studies were elementary level mixed groups of L1 and L2 learners. In some other studies, first grade L2 learners and beginning-level university EFL learners were also investigated. These studies mostly grouped their participants according to their grade levels or their language learning backgrounds, either first language users or second language learners, but not by their proficiency levels. Although these previous studies showed that audio books are effective in improving reading in foreign language learning contexts, there has been no research on the effectiveness of audio books on university EFL students' reading comprehension at different proficiency levels. This study will attempt to fill the gap in the literature.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature relevant to the study. The importance of reading in language learning was presented and the reading process was described. Next, the reading comprehension and attitudes toward reading, which considerably affect reading comprehension, were discussed. As a way to promote positive attitudes toward reading, extensive reading was described, and as an initial stage to extensive reading, reading aloud to students was explained. Finally, the role of audio books in facilitating language learning and improving reading comprehension was discussed. Previous studies conducted on audio books were presented in order to provide a basis for the present study. In the next chapter, the methodology of the study, information about the setting and participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis will be presented.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of audio books in improving the reading comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students. This study also aimed to explore whether a difference in students' text comprehension as a result of exposure to audio books emerges based on different proficiency levels. Additionally, this study sought to find out information about students' attitudes toward using audio books. In looking at differences in students' involvement with audio books during the study, it was hoped that this study would also shed light on the question of how to make the most of audio books in improving reading comprehension.

The research questions addressed in the study were as follows:

- 1) Do EFL students demonstrate better comprehension of selected texts when those texts are accompanied by audio?
- 2) Does any observed effect on reading comprehension differ according to their proficiency levels?
- 3) What are students' attitudes toward the use of audio books as a supplement to reading texts?

In this chapter, the methodological procedures are outlined. Firstly, the participants and the setting of the study will be described. Then, the materials and the instruments used to collect data will be explained. Last, information on how the data were collected and analyzed will be presented in detail.

Setting

The study was carried out at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in the second semester of the 2009-2010 Academic Year. Anadolu University consists of twelve faculties, some of which use English, and others Turkish as the medium of instruction. AUSFL has two departments: the Department of Foreign Languages, which provides foreign language education for preparatory school students, and the Department of Modern Languages, which provides foreign language education for students in their departments. AUSFL is an intensive language program which aims at providing students with the abilities to comprehend what they read and hear, and to communicate effectively through written and oral language.

English language education is provided to students at different proficiency levels. The School of Foreign Languages administers placement tests at the beginning of each semester, according to the results of which students are placed in appropriate levels. Beginner, Elementary, Lower-intermediate, Intermediate, and Upper-intermediate are the proficiency levels in the first term, and students are placed among five levels, Elementary, Lower-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate and Advanced levels in the second term.

The School of Foreign Languages offers skill-based teaching of English. Reading, writing, speaking-listening, and grammar in context are the courses that students take at each proficiency level. Weekly class hours of these courses vary according to students' proficiency levels, and different assessment techniques are used for each of these courses. The Elementary and Lower-Intermediate level

students take the reading course eight hours per week, while the Intermediate, and Advanced level students take six hours of reading per week. The same assessment techniques are applied for the reading course in each proficiency level. The students take at least ten pop-quizzes, one midterm exam, and a final exam per semester. All the instructors at the School of Foreign Languages work cooperatively to prepare exam papers for each course and to grade them. In order to ensure all the instructors provide consistent instruction, Coordinators for each skill, and Level Responsibles at each level are in charge of facilitating coordination.

Participants

The participants of this study were 82 students from two different proficiency levels and their reading course teachers. The students who participated in the study were volunteers from two elementary-level classes and two intermediate-level classes. Students were placed in these classes according to their scores on the placement test at the beginning of the second semester. The reason for choosing students from a low proficiency level and a higher proficiency level was to be able make a comparison between the effectiveness of audio books at different proficiency levels. The departments of the students in each proficiency level were different and they were taking prep-school education either as a requirement of their departments or by their own choice.

One class from each proficiency level was randomly selected as the control group, and the other class was designated as the experimental group. After assigning the classes to be experimental and control groups at each level, the averages of the students' first term grades from the reading course were calculated and compared in

order to make sure that the reading proficiency levels of the students in both groups were equal to each other prior to the study. The analysis of this data showed that the difference between the control and the experimental groups at elementary level was not significant $t(40) = -.27, p > .05, r = .04$. Similarly, there was not a significant difference between the two groups at intermediate level $t(38) = 1, p > .05, r = .16$. The classes in the elementary level were taught by different teachers, and the classes in the intermediate level were taught by the same teacher. The information about the students who volunteered to participate in the study after signing the consent form is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Information about participant students

	Elementary Level		Intermediate Level	
	Group	Frequency	Group	Frequency
Gender	Female	21	Female	24
	Male	27	Male	20
Age	16-18	15	16-18	11
	19-21	27	19-21	30
	22-24	6	22-24	3
First Term Level	Beginner	48	Beginner	2
			Elementary	8
			Lower-intermediate	34
Number of Students in Groups	Control Group	24	Control Group	22
	Experimental Group	24	Experimental Group	22

Materials and Instruments

Instruments and materials that were included in this study to collect data were: audio books with accompanying CDs, reading comprehension tests, and a questionnaire.

Audio books

Audio books, which were selected from among the graded readers from several publishers appropriate to the proficiency levels of the students, were used in the study to investigate their potential impact on improving the reading comprehension of students. Six classic readers with CDs were used in the study, three for the elementary level students, and three for the intermediate level students. Table 2 illustrates the information about the audio books selected for each level.

Table 2 - The audio books used in the study

	Book Title	Author	Publisher	Level	Number of Pages	Number of Words
Elementary Level	The monkey's paw	W.W. Jacobs	Oxford University Press	Elementary	26	4500
	American horror: Three terrifying tales	E. Allan Poe	Black Cat Publishing	Pre-intermediate	24	4000
	The Canterville ghost	Oscar Wilde	Black Cat Publishing	Pre-intermediate	32	4500
Intermediate Level	Jane Eyre	Charlotte Brontë	Express Publishing	Intermediate	31	6850
	The phantom of the opera	Gaston Leroux	Express Publishing	Upper-intermediate	47	11000
	Kidnapped	R. L. Stevenson	Evans Publishing	Upper-intermediate	41	7500

Reading comprehension tests

In order to measure the students' comprehension of the selected texts, reading comprehension tests were administered to them after they read the books. The tests were developed using the questions from the publishers of the graded readers, which were presented in the activity parts in each book. Some of the questions were revised and adapted to the types of the questions used in the tests, and some were developed by the researcher himself. The reading comprehension tests were piloted with six randomly chosen students in each level prior to the main research. The aim of the piloting was to make sure that the questions in the tests were comprehensible for the students in both proficiency levels, and the answers to the questions could not be predicted without reading or listening to the texts. There were three types of questions in the reading comprehension tests, wh-questions, true/false/not stated questions, and matching questions. Each test included the same number of items and the same question types. These were sixteen questions in each test including four wh-questions, six true/false/not stated questions, and six matching questions. The questions in the tests were of two types according to the information they ask about: Inference questions and detail questions. These questions were included in the tests in the same numbers, four inference questions and twelve detail questions, but they were in different types, wh-questions, true/false/not stated questions, and matching questions. The reading comprehension tests can be found in Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed by the researcher to find out the students' attitudes toward using audio books, and how they used the audio books. The questionnaire items were prepared in Turkish in order for the students to express themselves more effectively, and students' responses were translated into English by the researcher. There were two types of questions in the questionnaire. The first type of questions focused on the students' involvement in the process, such as whether they read the books and/or listened to the CDs, whether they read and listened simultaneously, and how many times they read the books and listened to the CDs. The second type of questions aimed at revealing the students' attitudes toward audio books, such as whether audio books helped them better comprehend the texts, whether they found the music and the sound effects in the recordings useful, and whether they preferred audio books to other kinds of printed materials. The questionnaire was administered to the students after they took the reading comprehension test for each book. The Turkish version and the English translation of the questionnaire can be found in Appendices G and H respectively.

Data collection procedures

The preparation process before conducting the study included the following steps: First, the audio books to be used in the study were selected based on the students' proficiency levels. Then, the reading comprehension tests were prepared for each book. Next, the questionnaire was designed by the researcher in Turkish. On February 15, 2010, permission to conduct the study was granted from the Head of the

Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages, and the data collection procedures started.

Four classes, two for each level, were chosen to participate in the study on February 19, 2010. All the students in each class were given the consent forms before the actual study started. One of the classes in each level was selected as the control group, and the other class participated in the study as the experimental group. The students in the control groups were assigned to read the printed books, while the students in the experimental groups were assigned to read the same books and listen to the CDs simultaneously. Both groups were asked to read the books outside the class. The first set of books was distributed to students on February 22, 2010, and students were instructed to read the books over a one-week period. On March 1, 2010, the first reading comprehension tests were administered to the students in class. The students were asked to complete the test within 20 minutes. After they finished answering the questions in the reading comprehension test, the questionnaire was distributed to the students in the experimental groups. This procedure was repeated over the next two weeks, with different books.

Data analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures were included in this study. The reading comprehension tests were analyzed using quantitative data analysis procedures, and both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures were used for the questionnaire. The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5.

With regard to the first research question, the aim of which was to explore the effectiveness of audio books on the ability of university EFL students to comprehend a selected text, the data obtained from the reading comprehension tests were analyzed using SPSS. First, the students' raw scores from the tests were converted into percentages after each week's implementation. Next, the mean values and the standard deviations from the reading comprehension tests were calculated and compared for both groups in each level. In order to see whether the data were normally distributed, a normality test was conducted. Since the data were found to be not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical procedures were used to see whether the difference in the test scores of both groups was significant. The same procedure was followed for the data obtained from each reading comprehension test. To analyze the second research question, the effect sizes of the differences between the two groups at each proficiency level were compared to explore the effectiveness of audio books on text comprehension based on different proficiency levels.

In order to address the third research question, the questionnaire data obtained from the experimental group students were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data analysis procedures were followed to find out the students' attitudes toward using audio books, and the students' responses to the open-ended questions and their explanations for their answers were analyzed qualitatively. Additional data were also collected from the questionnaire and analyzed quantitatively to explore the students' behaviors while using audio books.

Conclusion

In this chapter, general information about the aim of the study, the setting in which the study was conducted, participants of the study, data collection procedures, and the instruments used in the study were presented. Then, data analysis procedures were described briefly. In the next chapter, the data analysis procedures mentioned in this chapter and the results of the study will be explained in detail.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study was designed in order to investigate the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students. In addition, the study explored whether there was a difference between the effectiveness of audio books on the text comprehension of university EFL students at different proficiency levels. Students' attitudes toward using audio books as an extensive reading activity outside the classroom were also explored.

This study aimed to shed light on the answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Do EFL students demonstrate better comprehension of selected texts when those texts are accompanied by audio?
- 2) Does any observed effect on reading comprehension differ according to their proficiency levels?
- 3) What are students' attitudes toward the use of audio books as a supplement to reading texts?

The study was conducted at Anadolu University, with the participation of 82 students in four classes at the elementary and the intermediate levels at the School of Foreign Languages, in the second semester of the 2009-2010 Academic Year. One of the classes at each level was assigned as the control group and the other class as the experimental group. There were 20 students in each group at elementary level, and 21 students in each group at intermediate level. While the students in each

experimental group were provided with three graded readers with accompanying CDs over three weeks, the control group students were provided with the same books, but without the CDs. The readers selected for the study were chosen based on the students' proficiency levels. In this chapter, an analysis of the data gathered from reading comprehension tests and the questionnaire will be presented.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures were used. Quantitative data were gathered through the reading comprehension tests administered to all the students after each implementation. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through the questionnaire administered to the students in the experimental groups following the reading comprehension tests.

The data gathered from the reading comprehension tests were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. After scoring the reading comprehension tests, the data were entered into SPSS, and then the mean values and the standard deviations were calculated to see the differences between the students' scores in the control group and experimental group at each level separately. Tests of normality were conducted in order to see whether the data were normally distributed. Since the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical procedures were used in order to analyze whether the difference in the test scores of the control groups and experimental groups was significant. Afterwards, the effect sizes between the two groups at each proficiency level were compared in order to explore whether any observed effect of audio books on the text comprehension of students differed according to their proficiency levels.

Finally, data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively in reference to the third research question, in order to find out the students' attitudes toward using audio books. The students' responses to the open-ended questions, which were written in Turkish, were translated into English and examined to explore the students' reasons and explanations for their answers to the questionnaire, by reading and re-reading the responses, looking for key themes and ideas. Hence, the prominent ideas were reported. The questionnaire also included data which were analyzed quantitatively, in order to explore information about how they used the materials.

This chapter is divided into three sections with reference to the three research questions. The first section presents the reading comprehension test scores of the students in all four classes in order to answer the first research question. In the second section, an analysis of the difference between the control and experimental group students at elementary and intermediate levels will be used to answer research question two. The third section analyzes the data from the questionnaire about the students' attitudes toward audio books in reference to research question three, and their behaviors while using the audio books.

Results

The Effects of Audio Books on the Reading Comprehension of Selected Texts

In an attempt to make sure that the reading proficiency levels of the students in both groups within each level were equal to each other prior to the study, the first term grades of the students from the reading course were compared. Mean values and

standard deviations were calculated for each level. The results of the first term reading course grades for both levels are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 - Descriptive statistics, first term reading course grades, all groups

GROUP	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
elementary-control	21	72.48	15.513
elementary-experimental	21	73.76	15.346
intermediate-control	20	82.40	10.399
intermediate-experimental	20	78.95	11.316

In order to find out whether these differences were significant, an independent samples t-test was performed, since the data were normally distributed, on the mean scores between the two groups at each level. The results of the independent samples t-test confirmed that the difference between the control and the experimental groups at elementary level was not significant $t(40) = -.27, p > .05, r = .04$. Likewise, there was no significant difference between the control and the experimental groups at intermediate level $t(38) = 1, p > .05, r = .16$. Consequently, the results from the first term reading course grades revealed that the two groups at both levels were equal to each other prior to the study in terms of their reading proficiency in English.

With respect to the first research question, reading comprehension tests were administered to 82 students following their one-week reading periods. In each of the reading comprehension tests, the students were expected to answer sixteen reading comprehension questions, which included four inference and twelve detail questions. The questions in the tests, either inference questions or detail questions, were of three

types: open-ended reading comprehension questions, true/false/not stated questions, and matching questions. The same number of questions was used for each of these types in all the reading comprehension tests: four open-ended, six true/false/not stated, and six matching questions. As to scoring, answers to the open-ended questions were awarded between 0 and 2 points, and 1 point was awarded to each correct answer to the true/false/not stated questions and the matching questions. In order to ensure that the scoring was reliable, a second, blind rater was asked to grade the reading comprehension tests. The inter-rater reliability rate for the two raters was 95%. After scoring the tests, the raw scores were converted into percentages. Mean values and standard deviations were calculated for each level. The results of the reading comprehension tests for the elementary level are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 - Descriptive statistics, reading comprehension tests, elementary level

	GROUP	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
RCT1	elementary-control	18	45.00	9.852
	elementary-experimental	17	53.82	17.458
RCT2	elementary-control	18	38.06	10.451
	elementary-experimental	20	63.75	14.316
RCT3	elementary-control	17	60.00	10.897
	elementary-experimental	17	68.82	12.315

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean scores of the elementary experimental group were higher than the scores of the elementary control group on all three comprehension tests. It should also be noted that there were some students missing at the time the tests were administered. The number of missing students can also be seen in Table 4.

In order to explore whether the difference observed between the performance of the control and experimental groups on the reading comprehension tests is significant, a Mann-Whitney test was conducted. The results of the Mann-Whitney test revealed that the difference between the reading comprehension test scores of the two groups was statistically significant for the last two implementations. That is to say, the experimental group students who were assigned to read the printed materials and listen to the accompanying CDs ($Mdn = 50.00$) did not score statistically higher than the control group students who were assigned to read only the printed materials ($Mdn = 45.00$) in the first reading comprehension test. However, as the experimental group students became familiar with audio books, they scored significantly higher ($Mdn = 70.00$) than the control group students ($Mdn = 35.00$) in the second reading comprehension test, $U = 30.5$, $p < .001$, $r = -.71$. Similarly, in reading comprehension test three, the experimental group students ($Mdn = 70.00$) did significantly better than the control group students ($Mdn = 65.00$), $U = 66.5$, $p < .01$, $r = -.47$. In other words, it can be concluded that the experimental group students comprehended the books better than the control group students did over the three-week implementation.

As to the intermediate level, mean values and standard deviations from all three of the reading comprehension tests were calculated for the control and experimental group students. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 - Descriptive statistics, reading comprehension tests, intermediate level

	GROUP	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
RCT4	intermediate-control	20	43.50	16.230
	intermediate-experimental	20	64.00	15.355
RCT5	intermediate-control	18	31.39	20.850
	intermediate-experimental	19	59.21	10.835
RCT6	intermediate-control	17	36.18	14.090
	intermediate-experimental	17	61.18	17.368

Table 5 shows that the mean scores of the intermediate experimental group were higher than the means of the intermediate control group. As was the case with the elementary level, the students in the experimental group achieved higher scores from all three of the reading comprehension tests than the students in the control group at intermediate level. It should again be noted that some students were not present when the tests were administered. The number of missing students can also be seen in Table 5.

A Mann-Whitney test was conducted in order to explore whether the difference observed between the performance of the control and experimental groups at intermediate level is significant. The results of the Mann-Whitney test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the reading comprehension test scores of the two groups for all three implementations. In other words, the intermediate level experimental group students ($Mdn = 62.5$) comprehended the book significantly better than the control group students ($Mdn = 40.00$) in the first week, $U = 75.0$, $p < .001$, $r = -.54$. The results also showed that the experimental group students ($Mdn = 55.00$) received significantly higher scores than

the control group students ($Mdn = 25.00$) in the second week's reading comprehension test, $U = 40.0$, $p < .001$, $r = -.66$. Similar to the first two reading comprehension tests, the experimental group students ($Mdn = 60.00$) performed significantly better than the control group students ($Mdn = 30.00$) in the last reading comprehension test, $U = 34.0$, $p < .001$, $r = -.66$. The results indicate that, as was the case with the elementary level, the experimental group students comprehended the books better than the control group students did at the intermediate level on the reading comprehension tests.

Difference in the Effects of Audio Books Based on Proficiency Levels

Since the reading comprehension tests were prepared differently for elementary and intermediate level students based on the graded readers they read, the students' performance on the tests cannot be used as the basis for the comparison of the two levels. Instead, with regard to the second research question, the difference in the effect sizes for the control and experimental groups at both levels were compared in order to explore whether the effectiveness of audio books on the text comprehension of students differed according to their proficiency levels. The bar graph in Figure 1 illustrates information about the difference in the effect sizes for the control and experimental groups at both levels.

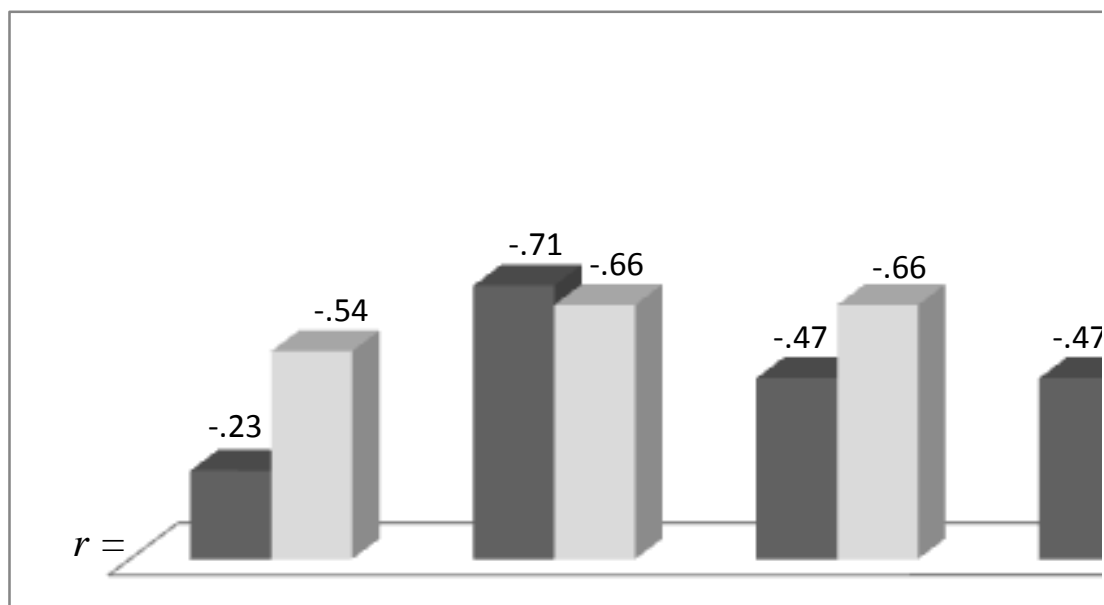


Figure 1 - Effect sizes at elementary and intermediate levels

When comparing the effect sizes for the groups at both levels on a weekly basis, it can clearly be seen in Figure 1 that audio books have a larger effect on students' text comprehension at intermediate level in weeks one and three, although the effect size for the elementary level was larger than it was for the intermediate level in week two. On average, while audio books had a medium effect on the text comprehension of elementary level students over three weeks ($r = -.47$), they had a larger effect on the intermediate level students' text comprehension ($r = -.62$). In other words, audio books had a more positive effect on intermediate level students than they had on elementary level students in general. As a result, the study indicates that the effectiveness of audio books on the ability of university EFL students to comprehend a selected text differed according to their proficiency levels, and intermediate level students appeared to have demonstrated more effects from using audio books.

Students' Attitudes toward Audio Books

To analyze the third research question, which investigates the students' attitudes toward audio books, a questionnaire was distributed to the experimental group students following each reading comprehension test. The questionnaire also included items that sought to explore how they used the materials. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and it was administered to the 41 experimental group students after they took the reading comprehension tests. However, as was the case for the reading comprehension tests, the number of students who completed the questionnaires fluctuated since some students were not present in the class when the questionnaire was administered. The students' behaviors on how they used the materials were investigated through the first part of the questionnaire by three items. In an attempt to reveal the students' attitudes and perceptions toward audio books there were five items in the questionnaire, each of which included two sections: students' responses to the questions as "yes or no", and their explanations for their answers. In this section, the data about the students' behaviors will be presented first.

Students' behaviors during their involvement with audio books

The first question in the first part of the questionnaire focused on the students' involvement in the process, such as whether they read the books or listened to the CDs first, or whether they read and listened simultaneously. The information about how the students used audio books can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6 - Did you read the books or listen to the CDs first, or read and listen simultaneously?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary Level	Read first	6	35.3	4	20.0	4	23.5
	Listen first	2	11.8	2	10.0	-	-
	Read and listen simultaneously	9	52.9	14	70.0	13	76.5
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate Level	Read first	5	25.0	3	15.8	3	17.6
	Listen first	2	10.0	2	10.5	1	5.9
	Read and listen simultaneously	13	65.0	14	73.7	13	76.5
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Read first	11	29.7	7	17.9	7	20.6
	Listen first	4	10.8	4	10.3	1	2.9
	Read and listen simultaneously	22	59.5	28	71.8	26	76.5
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

As shown in Table 6, the majority of the students read the printed books and listened to the audio recordings simultaneously. It is also indicated in the table that an increasing percentage of the students read the books with their accompanying audio CDs at the same time over the three-week period.

The second question addressed in this part of the questionnaire asked how many times the students read the printed books. The information is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7 - How many times did you read the printed books?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary Level	Read once	14	82.4	15	75.0	15	88.2
	Read more than once	3	17.6	5	25.0	2	11.8
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate Level	Read once	19	95.0	18	94.7	16	94.1
	Read more than once	1	5.0	1	5.3	1	5.9
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Read once	33	89.2	33	84.6	31	91.2
	Read more than once	4	10.8	6	15.4	3	8.8
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

Table 7 illustrates that although the students' responses differed depending on the books assigned for each week, most of them read the books only once. On average, the percentage of the students who read the books only once slightly increased by the third week.

The last question in the first part of the questionnaire asked the students how many times they listened to the audio CDs. The results are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8 - How many times did you listen to the audio CDs?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary Level	Listen once	15	88.2	14	70.0	14	82.4
	Listen more than once	2	11.8	6	30.0	3	17.6
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate Level	Listen once	15	75.0	17	89.5	14	82.4
	Listen more than once	5	25.0	2	10.5	3	17.6
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Listen once	30	81.1	31	79.5	28	82.4
	Listen more than once	7	18.9	8	20.5	6	17.6
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

According to the results shown in Table 8, the majority of the students listened to the CDs only once while there were others who used the audio materials more than once. On average, there was a very slight change in the students' responses for each week. To sum up, the results from the first part of the questionnaire showed that the majority of the students used the materials simultaneously, by reading the printed books and listening to the audio CDs only

once. In the next section, the questions about the students' attitudes will be analyzed separately in order to investigate the students' responses and their reactions to each question.

Enjoy reading and listening simultaneously

The first question in this part of the questionnaire asked the experimental group students whether they enjoyed reading and listening at the same time. Table 9 displays information about students' responses.

Table 9 - Did you enjoy reading the books while listening to the audio recordings simultaneously?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary	Yes	16	94.1	18	90.0	17	100.0
	No	1	5.9	2	10.0	-	-
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate	Yes	20	100.0	19	100.0	14	82.4
	No	-	-	-	-	3	17.6
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Yes	36	97.3	37	94.9	31	91.2
	No	1	2.7	2	5.1	3	8.8
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

It can be seen from Table 9 that the majority of the students responded favorably to using audio books. Although there was a slight decrease in the number of students who responded to the question positively in the last two weeks, most of the students agreed that reading and listening simultaneously was enjoyable for them.

The students' responses to the open-ended questions were examined to explore their reasons and explanations, and selected responses have been translated into English to illustrate their attitudes. A prominent idea that emerged from the students' responses was about dubbing in the recordings. One of the students reported that:

"I enjoyed reading and listening at the same time because of the variety of dubbing in the recordings. I felt the story in the book."

Another key theme supported the idea that audio books are more real and interesting.

An intermediate level student reported that:

"They are more interesting than the other books. For example, I liked listening to opera while I was reading a book about opera."

One intermediate level student expressed her feelings in the following way:

"The stories were more real. I felt as if I was one of the characters in the story."

From the responses, it also emerged that the students sometimes had difficulties with the pace of the recordings. Below are the thoughts of a student from the elementary experimental group:

"I liked audio books very much. I followed the lines while it was retold in the recordings; however, I sometimes had difficulties to build up the meaning immediately when I came across with unknown words."

Below are the thoughts of another student:

"At first, I had some difficulty in using audio books since they were beyond my reading pace. However, as I got used to them, I noticed that one complements the other, and I took them as a whole."

Another student explained his thoughts about the audio book *Jane Eyre* assigned for the first week at intermediate level:

“It was sometimes hard to follow the lines because it was beyond my reading pace. I had to stop the CD player several times while I was reading the book.”

The students’ responses show and the great majority of the other students agreed that their experience with audio books was enjoyable in the sense that audio books made the stories more real and interesting although some students reported that they had sometimes difficulties building up the meaning while following the lines.

Reading and listening simultaneously help comprehend better

The second question tried to elicit whether reading and listening simultaneously helped the students comprehend the books better. The results are illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10 - Did reading and listening simultaneously help you comprehend the books better?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary	Yes	16	94.1	17	85.0	17	100.0
	No	1	5.9	3	15.0	-	-
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate	Yes	17	85.0	18	94.7	13	76.5
	No	3	15.0	1	5.3	4	23.5
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Yes	33	89.2	35	89.7	30	88.2
	No	4	10.8	4	10.3	4	11.8
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

It is indicated in Table 10 that a considerable number of the students thought reading books while listening to the accompanying CDs helped them better comprehend the books. Table 10 also indicates that the students' responses varied considerably within each level, from one week to another. However, when the entire group is taken into consideration, the percentages for the three weeks were almost the same, so they mostly agreed that audio books had a positive effect on their reading comprehension. One noticeable idea that appeared from the responses emphasizes that audio books help improve fluency and vocabulary knowledge. As to this idea, one student responded that:

“Yes, it certainly helped me to comprehend the book better. I also learned how to pronounce the words, and by this way, I read the book more fluently and comprehended it better.”

The views of another student are as follows:

“While I was listening to the recordings, especially the pronunciation of the unknown vocabulary, I was able to either remember its meaning, or guess the meaning of the word from its pronunciation.”

The students' responses revealed another key theme, which was about concentration.

An intermediate level student thought that:

“Audio books are much more effective in the issue of concentration, and gathering my attention to the story.”

One student responded against the idea that audio books help comprehend the text better:

“Audio books didn't actually help me comprehend better. They just made the process more interesting.”

It can be inferred from the students' views that audio books are beneficial for reading in several ways. They help learners improve reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge and concentration, thus helping them become better readers.

Music and sound effects help comprehend better while reading

The third and the fourth questions were asked in order to explore the way in which audio books were more effective. The third question asked whether music and sound effects helped them comprehend the books better while they were reading the books. Table 11 reports the results of this question.

Table 11 - Did music and sound effects help you comprehend better while reading the books?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary	Yes	15	88.2	12	60.0	16	94.1
	No	2	11.8	8	40.0	1	5.9
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate	Yes	17	85.0	16	84.2	11	64.7
	No	3	15.0	3	15.8	6	35.3
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Yes	32	86.5	28	71.8	27	79.4
	No	5	13.5	11	28.2	7	20.6
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

As illustrated in Table 11, the students' responses to the third question differed for each week. The main reason for this might be based on the audio books the students were assigned for each week. "American horror: Three terrifying tales", assigned to the elementary level in the second week, and "Kidnapped", assigned to

the intermediate level in week three, do not appear to have the essential music and sound effects to help comprehension while reading the books. However, for the rest of the books, the students mostly agreed that the music and sound effects helped them comprehend the books better while they were reading. The effect of audio books in terms of concentration was one of the key themes that came out from the responses. With reference to the audio book assigned for the first week, one of the students reported that:

“The musical changes according to the plot enabled me to focus my attention onto the events in the story.”

According to another prominent view, music and sound effects make audio books more real. Regarding the audio book for the second week, one elementary level student stated that:

“Absolutely yes! The music and sound effects help me understand the theme better and how the characters felt.”

Against the idea, one intermediate level student explained his thoughts about

“Kidnapped”, the audio book assigned for the third week:

“I don’t think they helped me while I was reading, because I didn’t like the music and sound effects in the recording of this book.”

From the students’ views, it can be seen that the quality of the music and sound effects has a substantial influence on the students’ attitudes toward their ability to comprehend the texts in the reading process.

Music and sound effects help comprehend better while listening

The fourth question asked the students whether music and sound effects helped them comprehend the CDs better while they were listening to the audio recordings. The results can be seen in Table 12 below.

Table 12 - Did music and sound effects help you comprehend better while listening to the CDs?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary	Yes	15	88.2	14	70.0	16	94.1
	No	2	11.8	6	30.0	1	5.9
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate	Yes	18	90.0	15	78.9	11	64.7
	No	2	10.0	4	21.1	6	35.3
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Yes	32	86.5	28	71.8	27	79.4
	No	5	13.5	11	28.2	7	20.6
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

The students answered this question in a similar way to which they answered the third question. Although a considerable number of the students agreed that the music and sound effects helped them comprehend the recordings better while they were listening, they answered differently for each book. The main difference in the students' responses to this question seems to be the same as that of the third question. In other words, the students thought the music and the sound effects in the audio recordings of the same books, "American horror: Three terrifying tales", assigned to the elementary level in week two, and "Kidnapped", assigned to the intermediate level in week three, were not as effective as the others in helping them comprehend the recordings better. One idea from the students' responses was about understanding unknown words while listening to the stories. An intermediate level student explained her reasons:

“The tone in the music and the changing sound effects helped me to guess the meanings of unknown words. For example, I was able to understand the words expressing people’s feelings when they saw the Phantom.”

The other key theme was about understanding the plot of the stories. One of the student’s ideas for this question were:

“Music and sound effects in the CDs helped me understand the characters’ reactions to the events in the story.”

The followings were the thoughts of an intermediate level student:

“I needed to read the book for a second time since the recording of this book was very plain. I don’t think it helped me while listening.”

As was the case for the previous question, it could also be inferred from the responses to this question that students thought their performance improved in parallel with the quality of the music and sound effects while listening to the audio recordings.

Prefer reading audio books to reading other printed materials

The last question sought to reveal the students’ preferences for using audio books. With this question, the students were asked whether they preferred reading audio books to reading any other kinds of printed materials, considering their experiences throughout the study. The students’ responses are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13 - Do you prefer reading audio books to reading other printed materials?

		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elementary	Yes	13	76.5	13	65.0	15	88.2
	No	4	23.5	7	35.0	2	11.8
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0	17	100.0
Intermediate	Yes	16	80.0	16	84.2	15	88.2
	No	4	20.0	3	15.8	2	11.8
	Total	20	100.0	19	100.0	17	100.0
Total	Yes	29	78.4	29	74.4	30	88.2
	No	8	21.6	10	25.6	4	11.8
	Total	37	100.0	39	100.0	34	100.0

According to the percentages that are illustrated in Table 13, the majority of the students reported that they would prefer audio books to other kinds of printed materials. However, it is also obvious from the table that the students responded differently for each week within each level. In much the same vein as for previous questions, the lowest percentage in this table is for “American horror: Three terrifying tales” for the elementary level in week two – which is also reflected in the previous tables. Therefore, it seems that the students’ responses to the questions differed depending on the book they read during that week. The effect of audio books in improving comprehension and retention skills was common in most of the students’ responses. One of these students expressed his opinions in the following way:

“Listening to the CDs while reading books improves my retention skills and helps comprehend the book better.”

The music and sound effects, and dubbing in the recordings were apparently emphasized by most of the students, helping them comprehend the books better. The thoughts of another student were as follows:

“There is no doubt that audio books are very helpful in comprehension. Stress and intonation reflect the emotions of the characters.”

The following is a similar point of view from another student:

“I noticed that I comprehend better when I use audio books. The music and dubbing in the CDs help me feel the story.”

Another prominent theme was about the fact that audio books provide additional input. A favorable response to this question was from an intermediate level student:

“I prefer audio books to other printed materials since audio books appeal to both the eye and the ear while the other books without audio recordings provide only visual input.”

According to the results of the questionnaire, it can be inferred that the majority of the students had positive attitudes toward using audio books, and they believed that audio books were beneficial in improving their reading comprehension. They mostly agreed that the music and sound effects in the recordings had a substantial influence on comprehending the texts they read or listened. Again, the majority reported that audio books were preferable to other kinds of printed materials.

Conclusion

In this study, the data collected through the reading comprehension tests and questionnaires were analyzed and presented in three sections. In the first section, the effects of audio books on the ability of university EFL students to comprehend a

selected text were explored in order to answer the first research question. From the results presented in this section, it could be inferred that audio books have a positive effect on the reading comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students. With respect to the second research question, the results gained from section one were compared in an attempt to find out any difference between the effectiveness of audio books on different proficiency levels. The results of this section revealed that even though both the elementary levels and intermediate levels benefitted from audio books for their text comprehension, the intermediate level students demonstrated more effects from using audio books. The third section analyzed the data from the questionnaire, which aimed to answer the third research question, the students' attitudes toward using audio books. The questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively and samples from students' responses to the open-ended questions were also examined qualitatively to explore the students' reasons and explanations for their answers to the questionnaire. The results from the questionnaire data showed that most of the students responded favorably toward audio books and they were mostly satisfied with the experience they had with audio books.

In the next chapter, the findings and pedagogical implications of the study will be discussed with reference to the previous research in the literature. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research will also be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students at different proficiency levels, and the students' attitudes toward audio books were investigated in this study. The study was conducted over a three-week period with the participation of 82 students from elementary and intermediate levels at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages. The students in the control groups were assigned graded readers each week, and the students in the experimental group were assigned the same graded readers with accompanying audio CDs.

After each one-week reading period, the students in the control and the experimental groups at the same proficiency level were assigned the same reading comprehension tests in order to explore audio books' effects on reading comprehension. Following each reading comprehension test, the experimental group students were given a questionnaire with the aim of investigating their attitudes toward audio books.

In the following sections of this chapter, the findings of the study will be interpreted in relation to the literature, and pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research will be discussed.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the research questions of this study will be answered, and the findings will be discussed in the light of the relevant literature. There are three subsections, each addressing one research question.

The Effects of Audio Books on the Reading Comprehension of Selected Texts

The first research question, which aimed to find out the effectiveness of audio books on the ability of university EFL students to comprehend a selected text, was answered favorably in reference to the quantitative data gathered through the reading comprehension test scores of the students administered after each one-week reading period. The results of the quantitative data analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of the control and the experimental groups, who were shown to be equal in terms of reading proficiency level at the start of the study. It can be inferred from these findings that audio books have a positive effect on the reading comprehension of selected texts, and this result confirms what has been found in previous studies. In their study, Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Phillips, Creamer and Baker (2000) found that the students in book-rich classrooms reading with audiotapes showed great improvement in their comprehension. The findings are also supported by Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass and Gorsuch (2004) in their study, which found that assisted repeated reading with an auditory reading model was effective in developing fluency and comprehension.

Some previous studies of audio books have been carried out with L1 learners (Littleton, et al., 2006) and K-12 learners (Donnelly, 2005; Lo & Chan, 2008; Sheaffer & Kinney, 2003), and the studies that have looked at EFL and ESL learners

(Blum, et al., 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder & Elley, 2003; O'Day, 2002; Taguchi, et al., 2004) employed different methodologies. For instance, these studies mostly grouped their participants according to their language learning backgrounds, either first language users or second language learners, and assigned them to read in the classroom or reread at home with and without an audio model. This study has contributed to the literature by revealing that audio books are effective in enhancing the comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students when they are integrated in the reading course as an extensive reading implementation outside the classroom.

Difference in the Effects of Audio Books Based on Proficiency Levels

In response to the second research question, whether the effectiveness of audio books on text comprehension differs depending on the students' proficiency levels, the findings revealed that the degree of difference between the control and experimental groups at each level varied. The effect sizes for the control and experimental groups at both levels were calculated, and the difference between the two groups at each proficiency level was compared. The results showed that audio books appeared to have a greater effect on the text comprehension at intermediate level than they did at elementary level. In some previous studies, which looked at the effects of audio books on reading comprehension, audio books were discovered to be effective on low-grade students (Blum, et al., 1995; Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder & Elley, 2003; O'Day, 2002). Some other studies also found that audio books were effective with university level students (Taguchi, et al., 2004); however, these studies did not set out to compare the effectiveness of audio books on reading

comprehension in terms of proficiency levels. Therefore, it is not possible to compare these results with the results of previous research.

The reason behind the difference observed between the levels might be based on the fact that intermediate level students might be more comfortable with the continuing process of reading and listening at the same time than elementary level students, who might have comprehension problems processing the continuing input. Audio books might force elementary level students to read/listen at a faster pace, beyond their proficiency levels, whereas intermediate level students might be more comfortable in keeping up with the process of reading/listening. Wolfson (2008) mentions the importance of adjusting the narration rate in audio books according to students' own reading rates, and suggests that gifted students can listen to the text more comfortably by processing the continuing input quickly and complete the task successfully than poor readers, who have difficulty in decoding the unfamiliar words and following the standard narration.

Students' Attitudes toward Audio Books

Regarding the third research question, the students' attitudes toward audio books were reflected through the questionnaire distributed to the experimental group students. Apart from the attitudinal questions, the questionnaire also included questions to explore how the students behaved while using audio books. The results of this part of the questionnaire showed that a large number of the students read the books and listened to the audio CDs at the same time, whereas there were others who read the books or listened to the CDs first. Those students who read the books first before listening to the CD did so when there were too many unknown words in the

books, and they needed to look them up in a dictionary. The students who preferred to listen to the CDs first reported that it helped them get the general idea of the book before the actual reading when the books seemed long and difficult to understand. The responses of the rest of the students indicated that aural input and print goes hand in hand, one complementing the other.

It was also found that the majority of the students read the books and listened to the audio CDs only once, while others read or listened more than once. It was indicated from the students' responses that the main reason that the students read or listened more than once was the quality of the audio recordings. The students reported that they read or listened for the second or the third time so as to comprehend better when they had difficulties understanding or following the audio recordings, because they were either too fast or uninteresting, lacking music and sound effects. Surprisingly, two of the students reported that they listened to the CDs more than once not because they did not understand but because they liked the stories retold in the CDs. In conclusion, the findings indicate that the load of the text and the quality of the recordings seem to play a role in the students' behaviors in the process of using audio books.

In an attempt to explore the students' attitudes toward using audio books, the quantitative data gathered from the second part of the questionnaire were analyzed, and students responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. It was revealed from the questionnaire that the students enjoyed themselves while using audio books. The great majority of the students agreed that they liked audio books in terms of dubbing in the recordings and the way audio books made the stories more

real and interesting. This finding supports earlier research in L1 and L2 reading, which claimed that audio books arouse interest and motivation to read. In their study, Nalder and Elley (2003) explored the advantages of a tape-assisted reading program with a sample of struggling readers of different age groups from different L1 and L2 backgrounds. The results showed that the students enjoyed reading and had positive attitudes toward the program. Another study conducted by Koskinen et al. (2000) reported similar results, finding that the students provided with audio models at home showed higher interest, motivation, and more positive attitudes toward reading.

The results of the questionnaire also suggested that students felt that audio books helped their comprehension. A considerable number of the students declared that audio books improved their reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge, and helped them in terms of concentration, improving reading comprehension accordingly, and this was reflected in their reading comprehension scores. The results from the quantitative data and the students' responses support the findings of earlier research (Koskinen, et al., 2000; Nalder & Elley, 2003; O'Day, 2002; Taguchi, et al., 2004). Despite the wide range of profiles of the participants and different procedures applied, audio books were claimed to improve reading comprehension in all these studies.

In addition, the findings revealed that most of the students had positive attitudes about the music and sound effects in the audio recordings, which they thought helped them comprehend better while reading the books and listening to the CDs. The students' explanations for their answers provided support for the aforementioned research in the sense that audio books increase concentration, and

stimulate a more real and interesting reading process. The findings from the students' responses also emphasized the impact of the music and sound effects on improving vocabulary knowledge, helping them understand the meaning of unknown words and improving their retention skills. It is stated in the literature that audio books in language learning provide access to new vocabulary and improves vocabulary acquisition, facilitating the reading process accordingly (Beers, 1998; Grover & Hannegan, 2005; Marchionda, 2001; Nalder & Elley, 2003; O'Day, 2002; Serafini, 2004; Wolfson, 2008).

Regarding the preferences for using audio books over other printed materials, the results showed that most of the students answered favorably for audio books. Music and sound effects, as mentioned earlier, had a great impact on students' preference. Students also explained their preference by reporting that audio books increased their retention skills by providing additional input, and helped them replace memorization with meaning. This finding supports Locke's (2002) claim that involving multiple senses in the reading process increases retention skills and improves learning (p. 14).

In conclusion, the third research question can be answered in the light of the results from the questionnaire, that the students who were provided with audio assistance in the reading process had positive attitudes toward audio books.

Pedagogical Implications

Since understanding is the major concern in reading (Ur, 1996; Williams, 1984), many researchers have attempted to explore various ways to foster comprehension. The impact of audio assistance on foreign language teaching, as a

recent and popular way of supporting reading comprehension, has been investigated in the literature; however, L1 learners and K-12 learners were the focus of most of this research. In addition, there has been no research in the literature comparing the effectiveness of audio books according to proficiency levels in university EFL contexts. Therefore, the results of this study are of significance, establishing that higher-level students appear to benefit more from audio books than lower-level students do in a university EFL context.

As stated in the literature, audio books provide students with a more enjoyable reading experience, and the students will read more when they are enjoying reading (Lo & Chan, 2008). However, as Wolfson (2008) states, merely listening to audio books cannot be considered as a substitute for reading. Listening should be accompanied by reading instead, as an alternative approach to traditional reading. Providing students with a different dimension of understanding the written texts can promote a more effective and enjoyable reading practice.

In order to make the best use of audio books, first of all, teachers should decide on a criterion for selecting audio books. As the findings of the study showed, the students' involvement was directly related to the audio books they were assigned, and their responses differed from one book to another. The quality of the book itself and the audio recordings should be taken into consideration. The students lost interest when they felt the books or the CDs were not interesting, or the audio recordings were too fast, and they had to read the books or listen to the CDs several times. Therefore, the books should be selected according to the students' needs and

interests, and the audio CDs should include music and sound effects, with different voices retelling different characters.

Another pedagogical implication of this study concerns the vocabulary load of the books. Although the students believed that audio books improved their vocabulary knowledge and retention skills, they reported having had difficulties understanding the stories when there were too many unknown words in the books. From this point of view, teachers should carefully consider the number of unknown words in the books they select.

In order for the students to benefit more from their experience with audio books, they can be provided with access to a reading centre in the classroom, where they can choose their own materials according to their interests and take turns using them. Teachers can include activities with these materials, so that students can monitor comprehension before, during, or after using them. Teachers should also provide the audio recordings in different formats to make it possible for the students to be able to listen to them in their computers, CD players, iPods, and similar audio devices. It may even be possible to provide an online library of the collection of audio books where they can sign in and download the audios.

Yet another implication might be sharing experiences in the classroom. In this way, students can share their ideas in groups and discuss the book with classmates. This might deepen their interest as they can interpret the book better with the help of the others in the classroom. This will certainly help the struggling students, offering them numerous insights into the stories and enabling them to look into the books from different points of view. Alternatively, in order to motivate the students to read

and arouse their curiosity about the books they have not read yet, the students can act out a part of the book they read. This may be done either individually or in small groups, by the students who read the same book. In doing so, students become active participants in the process and learn cooperatively, rather than simply reading outside the classroom on their own. In brief, teachers might consider incorporating audio books into the classroom as an extensive reading activity, many benefits of which are stated in the literature. Audio books in the classroom motivate students to read and help them become better readers by giving them the opportunity to share their experiences with classmates, which in turn deepens their interpretation and improves their ability to comprehend and analyze the literature (Serafini, 2004; Wolfson, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

Although the study revealed significant results for the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected texts at different proficiency levels, there are certain limitations to be considered while discussing the findings. First of all, the duration of the study can be considered as a limitation. Due to time limitations, the treatment period lasted only for three weeks. The results would have been more reliable if the study had lasted longer.

Moreover, only elementary and intermediate levels were included in the study, which may be considered as another main limitation of the study. The reason for choosing two proficiency levels for the study was that there was only one advanced level class in the second semester, which made it impossible to include, as two classes were needed, one as the control and the other as the experimental group.

Since the study mainly focuses on the difference in the effectiveness of audio books depending on the proficiency levels, having the advanced level included in the study would have offered different insights.

The difference in the amount of input that the control and the experimental group students received throughout the study might be another limitation. Since the experimental group students used audio books, they naturally received additional audio input, which the control group students did not have. In addition, although there was a small number of the experimental group students who read the books or listened to the CDs more than once, those students might have contributed to the difference in scores.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study necessitates further research on the basis of its findings and the limitations. To begin with, investigating the impact of audio books on reading comprehension with a larger number of students over a longer period of time could be the concern of a future research. In this way, the effectiveness of audio books on developing the general reading comprehension skills of university EFL students rather than the comprehension of selected texts can be explored. Additionally, in order to gain more insights into how proficiency levels differ in utilizing audio books, advanced level students could also be included.

Another concern of further research could be investigating the relationship between students' behaviors while using audio books and their comprehension levels. The current study asked the ways the students used the audio books, but no conclusions were drawn about the relationship between the ways they used the

materials and how well they comprehended the texts, since the great majority of the students used the materials in the same way. Looking at this relationship would provide information about the conditions under which students get better comprehension results.

It is also worth further research with a similar research design to the current study, which investigates the impact of audio books on reading comprehension, not as an extensive reading activity supplementing the reading course, but more as an in-class application. In this principle, the same procedure could be followed in a classroom environment, for example, setting shared reading sessions. One outcome of this type of a future study would be to find out in which setting, in-class or outside the class, audio books can be used more effectively.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of selected texts by university EFL students. The findings of this study revealed that students in the experimental groups, who used audio books, did significantly better on reading comprehension tests than the control group students, who used only the printed books. In other words, it was found that audio books have a positive effect on the ability of university EFL students to comprehend a selected text.

The study further explored the effectiveness of audio books at different proficiency levels. The results revealed that although both the elementary and the intermediate level students who were exposed to audio books made significant gains,

the impact of audio books varied with respect to students' proficiency levels, with the intermediate level students gaining more benefit from using audio books.

Students' attitudes toward audio books were also investigated in the study. The quantitative results from the questionnaire and students' responses to the open-ended questions showed that they had positive attitudes toward their experience with audio books. The students agreed that audio books made the reading process more enjoyable, and they comprehended the books better with the help of the music and sound effects in the recordings. In addition, the students reported that they would hereafter prefer audio books to other printed materials. The findings of this study have once again confirmed that incorporating audio into traditional reading approaches improves text comprehension and helps promote positive attitudes, as stated in the literature. These findings could also be of significant importance to teachers and curriculum designers at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages in particular and foreign language teachers in general, giving them new insights into extensive reading implementation and the integration of audio books in the reading course.

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APPENDIX A: READING COMPREHENSION TEST 1 FOR
ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDENTS

THE MONKEY'S PAW

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. Who lived at number 12 Castle Road?
2. How long was Tom Morris in India?
3. How did the monkey's paw bring unhappiness to Tom Morris?
4. Why did Mrs. White want the monkey's paw again?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. __Mr. White gave Tom Morris some money for the monkey's paw.
2. __The Whites took the story of the paw very seriously.
3. __After the postman came, Mrs. White lost hope that the wish would come true.
4. __ Mrs. White did not want the thirty thousand pounds.
5. __Mr. White took the monkey's paw in his left hand and made his third wish.
6. __Mr. and Mrs. White spent the thirty thousand pounds to buy a new house.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable endings in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. __The little family listened with interest | a. he first got the monkey's paw. |
| 2. __This paw is magic | b. because Mr. White drank a lot of whisky. |
| 3. __Mr. White felt afraid | c. because he saw a face at the window. |
| 4. __Morris joined the army and went to India where | d. he wanted the paw back. |
| 5. __Mrs. white did not believe that the monkey's paw moved | e. the paw brings unhappiness. |
| 6. __When Morris visited the Whites | f. because it can give three wishes. |
| | g. he brought the paw with him. |
| | h. to this visitor from far away. |

APPENDIX B: READING COMPREHENSION TEST 2 FOR
ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDENTS

THE OVAL PORTRAIT

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. What did the narrator do when he first saw the painting of the young girl?
2. What did the painter see after he finished his painting?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. ___ Pedro took the narrator into the abandoned castle because he had been hurt and had a fever.
2. ___ The only thing that the girl hated was the painter.
3. ___ The secret of the painting's effect on the narrator was the beauty of the girl in the painting.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable endings in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. ___ The narrator was moved by the portrait because | a. capturing every shade and color of life on her face. |
| 2. ___ The narrator read the story about the girl in the portrait because | b. the fact that she was becoming more and more ill. |
| 3. ___ While painting his wife, the painter became obsessed with | c. the expression on the girl's face looked so real. |
| | d. he remembers the girl from somewhere else. |
| | e. the portrait had charmed him. |

THE TELL-TALE HEART

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. Why did the narrator decide to kill the old man?
2. How long did the narrator watch the old man before the night he killed him?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. ___ The narrator started to desire the old man's money when he saw the old man's vulture eye.
2. ___ The narrator was so calm when the policemen arrived because he was a policeman in the past, too.
3. ___ When the policemen smiled at him, the narrator thought they knew he had killed the old man.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable endings in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. ___ His careful preparations to kill the old man show that | a. he heard the sound of the old man's heart. |
| 2. ___ For seven days | b. he decided to kill the old man. |
| 3. ___ The police smiled uncomfortably at the narrator because | c. the narrator was not mad. |
| | d. he did not like his vulture eye. |
| | e. they were shocked by his strange actions. |

APPENDIX C: READING COMPREHENSION TEST 3 FOR
ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDENTS

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. How many years did the ghost in Canterville Chase live there?
2. Who saw the Canterville ghost first in the Otis family?
3. Why was the bloodstain in the library in different colors?
4. Where did the ghost want to go so that he could sleep?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. __ Lord Canterville did not believe in the ghost.
2. __ Mrs. Umney believed the stain was the blood of a murdered woman.
3. __ Mr. Otis was always angry with the twins for their rude behaviors.
4. __ The ghost made a noise because he had stomach-ache.
5. __ Mr. Otis wanted to refuse the gift of the jewels.
6. __ Virginia told Cecil the details of her meeting the ghost.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable endings in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. __When the Otis family bought the
Canterville Chase, Lord Canterville | a. had seen another ghost. |
| 2. __Mrs. Umney | b. rode to the station to ask about
Virginia. |
| 3. __The Angel of Death | c. was sorry for Sir Simon. |
| 4. __ Mr. and Mrs. Otis | d. forgave Sir Simon. |
| 5. __Mr. Otis and Cecil | e. replaced the old painting with a
photograph of themselves. |
| 6. __Washington and others | f. told them about the murder. |
| | g. warned them about the ghost. |
| | h. found the skeleton of Sir Simon. |

APPENDIX D: READING COMPREHENSION TEST 1 FOR
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL STUDENTS

JANE EYRE

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. What did Aunt Reed ask Mr. Brocklehurst to do with Jane?
2. What happened in Lowood School proving that Jane was innocent?
3. What did Jane find out from Aunt Reed?
4. Why was the wedding between Mr. Rochester and Blanche Ingram cancelled?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. __The Reeds family visited Jane only once at Lowood School.
2. __Many of the pupils at school were coming from poor families.
3. __ Mr. Rochester was sure that Jane would follow his orders.
4. __Mr. Rochester happily watched Adele as she put on her new dress.
5. __Jane decided to leave Thornfield straight after the wedding was cancelled.
6. __An old woman who saw Jane thought that she was just a beggar.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable endings in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. __Jane thought she would | a. had been through a lot in his life. |
| 2. __Jane advertised in a newspaper for a job and | b. received a reply from Mrs. Fairfax. |
| 3. __Mrs. Fairfax explained to Jane that Mr. Rochester | c. had set the house on fire. |
| 4. __Mr. Mason told Jane that Mr. Rochester | d. like her new life at Thornfield Hall. |
| 5. __Jane found another job as a teacher and she | e. asked her to become his wife. |
| 6. __The old woman said that Mrs. Rochester | f. was already married to someone else. |
| | g. saved the servants from the fire. |
| | h. started yet another life. |

APPENDIX E: READING COMPREHENSION TEST 2 FOR
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL STUDENTS

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. What was Christine's reaction when she first heard the voice?
2. When did Christine and Raoul first meet?
3. Why did Christine reject Raoul in her dressing room at the Opera?
4. Where did the Phantom watch the performances at the Opera?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. __The Paris Opera House was built in less than a decade.
2. __Mme Giry knew what the Phantom did and didn't like, because he left her notes.
3. __Famous opera singers and hundreds of people from different parts of the country were invited to the costume party in the Grand Foyer of the Opera.
4. __Monsieur Mifroid, the inspector did not trust Raoul and take them into consideration because he thought Raoul was a liar.
5. __When the Persian met Erik for the first time in France, he was a brilliant architect.
6. __Erik's cloak, mask, and ring were found in the dressing room.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable endings in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. __ Christine sang the lead in the evening's performance because | a. he was getting involved in something very dangerous. |
| 2. __ When Moncharmin and Richard received the first note from the Phantom, they thought | b. she could not leave Paris with Raoul. |
| 3. __ Mme Giry told the managers | c. the Phantom wouldn't harm anyone as long as they follow his instructions. |
| 4. __ Mme Valerius warned Raoul that | d. Carlotta was ill. |
| 5. __ When Christine and Raoul reached Christine's dressing room, | e. Raoul asked her to be his wife. |
| 6. __ Christine promised the Phantom that | f. he disappeared without a trace. |
| | g. Carlotta was killed by the Phantom. |
| | h. the previous managers must have a strange sense of humor. |

APPENDIX F: READING COMPREHENSION TEST 3 FOR
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL STUDENTS

KIDNAPPED

A. Write down the answers to these questions.

1. What did David notice while he was climbing the tower in the house of Shaws?
2. How did David escape from the ship?
3. Why didn't David understand the people on the fishing boat?
4. What did Alan give David to help him?

B. Are these sentences true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS) in the story?

1. __David Balfour's father came from an old and respected family.
2. __Alan was penniless and had scars on his face when he was saved.
3. __The Jacobites were people who worked for King George.
4. __After Alan spent 5 years in France, he came back to Scotland to collect money for the Jacobite chief, Ardshiel.
5. __ Colin Campbell was murdered by Alan Breck.
6. __ Colin Campbell was known as the Red Fox.

C. Match the beginnings of the sentences in the left column with suitable ending in the right. Be careful there are two extra endings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. __ When David asked the way to the house of Shaws, people | a. had intended him to fall from the tower and die. |
| 2. __ While he was walking along the path, he | b. came across an old man. |
| 3. __ David cried in horror when he | c. laughed at him in surprise. |
| 4. __ David's uncle | d. found the staircase came to an end high in the air. |
| 5. __ Alan whispered to the four man in Gaelic and they | e. made an agreement about his future. |
| 6. __ David's father and uncle | f. tried to kidnap him. |
| | g. leave them free. |
| | h. put away their weapons. |

APPENDIX G: ANKET

Bölüm I. Öğrencilerin uygulama sırasındaki davranışları

1. *Size uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyin.*

() Önce ses kaydını dinledim, sonra kitabı okudum. Lütfen açıklayın.

() Önce kitabı okudum, sonra ses kaydını dinledim. Lütfen açıklayın.

() Sesli kitapları okurken aynı zamanda dinledim.

2. *Size verilen sesli kitapları;*

() Bir defa okudum.

() Bir defadan fazla okudum. Lütfen açıklayın.

3. *Size verilen ses kayıtlarını;*

() Bir defa dinledim.

() Bir defadan fazla dinledim. Lütfen açıklayın.

Bölüm II. Örgencilerin sesli kitaplara karşı tutumları

1. Kitapları okurken aynı zamanda dinlemek hoşunuza gitti mi? Lütfen açıklayın.

evet () hayır ()

2. Kitapları okurken aynı zamanda dinlemek kitapları daha iyi anlamanıza yardımcı oldu mu? Lütfen açıklayın.

evet () hayır ()

3. Ses kayıtlarında yer alan müzik ve ses efektleri kitabı okurken anlamanızı kolaylaştırdı mı? Lütfen açıklayın.

evet () hayır ()

4. Ses kayıtlarında yer alan müzik ve ses efektleri kitabı dinlerken anlamanızı kolaylaştırdı mı? Lütfen açıklayın.

evet () hayır ()

5. Sesli kitapları okumayı ses kayıtları bulunmayan kitapları okumaya tercih eder misiniz? Lütfen açıklayın.

evet () hayır ()

Katılımınız için teşekkürler!

APPENDIX H: QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I. Students' involvement with audio books during the study

1. *Please mark the option that corresponds to your answer.*

I listened to the audio recording first, and I read the story later. Why?

I read the story first, and I listened to the audio recording later. Why?

I read the books and listened to the stories simultaneously. Why?

2. I read the story once.

I read the story more than once. Why?

3. I listened to the audio recording once.

I listened to the audio recording more than once. Why?

Part II. Students' attitudes towards audio books

1. Did you like to read the story while listening to the audio recording simultaneously? Please explain.

yes () no ()

2. Did listening to the audio recording while reading the printed text make it easier for you to understand the story? Please explain.

yes () no ()

3. Did the music and sound effects make it easier for you to understand the text while you were reading it? Please explain.

yes () no ()

4. Did the music and sound effects make it easier for you to understand the text while you were listening to it? Please explain.

yes () no ()

5. Do you prefer reading audio books to reading other printed materials? Please explain.

yes () no ()

Thank you for your contribution!

APPENDIX I: BİLGİ VE KABUL FORMU

Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Bu araştırma, Bilkent Üniversitesi Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programı'nda yürütülen bir tez çalışmasına veri toplamak için hazırlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın üç amacı vardır. Birinci amaç, sesli kitapların yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen üniversite öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama becerilerini geliştirmedeki olası etkisini araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın ikinci amacı, sesli kitapların yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen **farklı yeterlik seviyelerindeki** üniversite öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama becerilerini geliştirmede ne derece etkili olabileceğini araştırmaktır. Çalışma son olarak, öğrencilerin sesli kitaplara karşı tutumları hakkında veri toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada kapsamında, sizden elde edilen bütün cevaplar gizli kalacaktır ve kişisel gizliliğiniz bu çalışmanın yayınlanacağı tüm sunularda ve raporlarda korunacaktır.

Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorsanız, lütfen bu formu imzalayınız.

Sami Türker
MA TEFL Programı
Bilkent Üniversitesi, Ankara

İsim : _____
Sınıf : _____
Cinsiyet : _____
Yaş : _____
Birinci dönem dil düzeyi: _____
Tarih : _____
İmza : _____

APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear students,

This study has been designed to collect data for a master's thesis conducted in MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. There are three aims of this study. The first aim is to investigate the effectiveness of audio books on the reading comprehension of university EFL students. The second aim of this study is to explore the difference in the effects of audio books on the reading comprehension of university EFL students **according to their proficiency levels**. Finally, this study aims at collecting data about students' attitudes toward using audio books. All the data obtained from your responses throughout the study will be kept completely confidential, and your identity will not be revealed in any report or presentation derived from this study.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign this form.

Sami Türker
MA TEFL Program
Bilkent University, Ankara

Name : _____
Class : _____
Gender : _____
Age : _____
First term level : _____
Date : _____
Signature : _____