

**TÜRK LİSESİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN VE
ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN DİNLEME-ANLAMA
PROBLEMLERİ ALGILARI VE
ÇÖZÜM ÖNERİLERİ**

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**TURKISH HIGH SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS AND
THEIR SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

TURKISH HIGH SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

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The main goal of this study is to investigate Turkish High School EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of listening comprehension problems and their suggested solutions for dealing with these problems. With this aim, the study was carried out with 553 students and 8 English teachers from three different Anatolian high schools in Turkey. The students were chosen randomly from the 9th (freshman), 10th (sophomore), 11th (junior), and 12th grade (senior) classes. A questionnaire, open-ended questions, and structured interviews were used for data collection. The questionnaire results showed that students mostly have speaker and listener related problems, and 9th graders differ significantly from most of the upper graders in 21 items regarding their mean scores. In addition, qualitative data revealed that most of the factors and suggested solutions reported by the students are common regardless of their grades. Besides, teachers were found to have similar perceptions with their students in 26 out of 30 items. The findings from teachers' interviews yielded that all of the teachers are aware of the significance of listening but most allocate little time for it. In addition, the findings also yielded that there is a mismatch between the students' current and expected levels of English proficiency, which can be the main reason for their experiencing listening comprehension problems.

Key words: Listening comprehension problems, students' perceptions, students' suggested solutions, teachers' perceptions, teachers' classroom practices.

ÖZET

TÜRK LİSESİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN DİNLEME-ANLAMA PROBLEMLERİ ALGILARI VE ÇÖZÜM ÖNERİLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın asıl amacı, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk lisesi öğrencilerinin dinleme-anlama problemleri hakkında öğretmen ve öğrenci algılarını ve onların bu problemler konusundaki çözüm önerilerini araştırmaktır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu çalışma Türkiye’de üç farklı Anadolu Lisesi’ndeki 553 öğrenci ve 8 öğretmen ile yürütülmüştür. Tüm öğrenciler 9., 10., 11. ve 12. sınıflardan random yöntemiyle seçilmişlerdir. Veri toplama aracı olarak anket, açık uçlu sorular ve mülakat kullanılmıştır. Anket sonuçları öğrencilerin çoğunlukla konuşmacı ve dinleyici ile ilişkili dinleme problemleri yaşadığını ve 9. sınıf ve üst sınıf öğrencilerinin büyük bir kısmı arasında, ortalama puanları açısından 21 maddede anlamlı bir fark olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, nitel bulgular, öğrencilerin ifade ettikleri faktörlerin ve bu problemler için sundukları çözüm önerilerin bir çoğunun öğrenim kademelerine bakılmaksızın ortak olduğunu göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, öğretmenlerin 30 maddenin 26 sında, öğrencileriyle benzer algılara sahip olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Öğretmen mülakatlarından elde edilen bulgular, öğretmenlerin dinlemenin önemini farkında olduklarını fakat bir çoğunun dinlemeye çok az vakit ayırdıklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bulgular, öğrencilerin halihazırdaki İngilizce düzeyleri ile onlardan beklenen İngilizce düzeyleri arasında uyumsuzluk olduğunu göstermiştir ki bu durum öğrencilerin dinleme-anlama problemleri yaşamalarının temel sebebi olabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Dinleme-anlama problemleri, öğrencilerin algıları, öğrencilerin çözüm önerileri, öğretmenlerin algıları, öğretmenlerin sınıf içi uygulamaları.

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ETİK İLKE VE KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ

Bu tezin bana ait, özgün bir çalışma olduğunu; çalışmamın hazırlık, veri toplama, analiz ve bilgilerin sunumu olmak üzere tüm aşamalarında bilimsel etik ilke ve kurallara uygun davrandığımı; bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilen tüm veri ve bilgiler için kaynak gösterdiğimi ve bu kaynaklara kaynakçada yer verdiğimi; bu çalışmamın Anadolu Üniversitesi tarafından kullanılan “bilimsel intihal tespit programı”yla tarandığını ve hiçbir şekilde “intihal içermediğini” beyan ederim. Herhangi bir zamanda, çalışmamla ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda, ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçları kabul ettiğimi bildiririm.

Şerife AYGÜN

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I hereby truthfully declare that this thesis is an original work prepared by me; that I have behaved in accordance with the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with “scientific plagiarism detection program” used by Anadolu University, and that “it does not have any plagiarism” whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

Şerife AYGÜN

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- FL : Foreign language
L1 : First language
L2/SL: Second language
EFL : English as a foreign language
ESL : English as a second language
AILA : International Association of Applied Linguistics
ELT : English language teaching (ELT)
TPR : Total Physical Response
CEFR: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

English language has gained a global status with its widespread use in business world, on Internet, in science and technology as well as in sports. Moreover, it is used as “the universal language of communication” in some specific areas (Nunan, 2003). Due to its widespread use, there has been a growing interest among language learners to understand “target language (L2)” speakers and to access aural and visual spoken texts available today via social media, podcasts, and online resources. Therefore, listening comprehension is considered “at the heart of L2 learning”, and improving L2 listening skills were found to be useful in developing other skills in the target language (Vandergrift, 2007). Likewise, Brown (1987) states: “Listening ability lies at the very heart of all growth, from birth through the years of formal education. The better those learning skills are developed, the more productive our learning efforts” (as cited in Feyten, 1991). Besides, Vandergrift (1999) mentioned four main advantages of giving primacy to listening and improvement of listening comprehension in language learning: “cognitive”, “efficiency”, “utility” and “affective”. Improving listening before speaking as in first language acquisition process can prevent cognitive load that might be caused by forcing learners to produce speech which has not yet “assimilated” in their long-term memory. Prevention of cognitive load through placing listening before speaking is the cognitive advantage of improving listening comprehension. The second advantage of primacy of listening is efficiency advantage, which is also related with cognitive advantage. Focusing students’ attention, which is limited due to the capacity of short term memory, on meaning of the spoken text not only provide students with “good models of language” rather than imperfect ones produced by their classmates but also provides more efficient use of time in class since waiting answers coming slowly can take a great deal of time. The third advantage is utility, which refers the “usefulness of the receptive skill”. According to research, adults spend 40- 50% of communication time for listening, 25-30% for speaking, 11-16% for reading, and about 9% for writing (Rivers in Gilman and Moody 1984: 331 as cited in Vandergrift, 1999), which suggests that language learners will make use of comprehension skills more. The fourth advantage is affective. Delaying the oral production for students and not forcing them until they feel ready can eliminate

potential embarrassment caused by difficulty in producing sounds or words. Besides, without pressure on early oral production, learners can feel more relaxed and be more focused on developing their listening skills, “internalizing” the rules of the language which will facilitate their development of other skills. Furthermore, students will also feel a sense of achievement through improving their listening comprehension and be more motivated to learn the target language (Vandergrift, 1999).

With reference to the effect of listening on developing other skills in the target language, it can be concluded that the success or failure in language learning might be closely related with the success or failure in listening comprehension. Therefore, regarding the essential role of listening in language acquisition, more attention should be given to the skills needed for effective listening and the nature of listening process. Besides, it should be explored whether students know “how to listen” (Feyten, 1991). With these aims, investigation of EFL learners’ and teachers’ perceptions of learners’ listening comprehension problems has been the primary focus of this study. In addition, this study also hopes to seek answers for the learners’ and teachers’ opinions about the factors affecting learners’ listening comprehension performance and their suggested solutions for improving it.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

English is considered as “the universal language of communication” (Nunan, 2003). Therefore, it is essential for non-native speakers to gain communicative competence in English (Savignon, 2001). Due to its global status, governments, in which English is non-native language for most people, have started to introduce English as a “compulsory” course in schools at younger ages for the students (Nunan, 2003).

In Turkey, 4+4+4 education system has been implemented as four year primary, four year elementary and four year high school education. English is traditionally started to be taught as a foreign language in early childhood in Turkey. Students take English classes beginning from the second grade of the public primary schools. In addition, English is regarded as an issue of great importance in Turkey, and students are highly encouraged to learn English by their parents (Doğançay- Aktuna and Kızıltepe, 2005). Besides, students were also found to have positive attitudes towards learning English and languages (Kızıltepe, 2000). However, despite the encouragement of parents and positive attitudes of students towards learning English in Turkish EFL context, most of the

students who graduated from high school fail to comprehend and produce speech in English despite learning it beginning from the 2nd grade. This failure can be explained with reference to the exam results which tests students' competence in four skills of English. In the past, students were tested on their competence in reading comprehension and grammar. However, in 2016, the Turkish Ministry of National Education made a change in the exam format of high school English lessons ([http-1](#)). According to this recent regulation, at least one of the English exams in each term has to be designed in a way to assess the students' competence in four skills of English: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. After the implementation of the new testing system, most of the students have been found to get lower scores in listening and speaking when compared to reading and writing. The underlying reasons for this failure might be explained with reference to the status of listening in English classrooms. Among the four skills of language, listening is still considered as the least important skill in many schools (Brown, 1987), and generally referred as the 'neglected', 'overlooked', 'taken for granted', 'passive' skill (Hedge, 2000, p. 227; Rost, 2002, p. 91; Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p.3, Morley, 2001, p. 71) or 'Cinderella skill which has been overlooked by its elder sister-speaking (Nunan, 1997). Despite the "overlooked" status of listening because of speaking (Nunan, 1999, p. 199), listening skills have actually equal importance with speaking skills. "Rehearsed production" has no benefit when we fail to respond to the reply from the interlocutor that we are talking to (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, pp. 3-4). Besides, listening plays a key role in building knowledge on spoken language, providing access to the real-life usage of the language, and even providing a more effective way of acquiring grammar and vocabulary when compared to the teacher-centered traditional classroom teaching lasting about 40 minutes (Field, 2002, pp. 334- 335). Additionally, the significance of listening in learning a language can also be explained with respect to the first language acquisition process. In the first language, a child learns to listening before speaking. Listening to the language talking around him provides him input required for building speaking skills. Due to the fact that first and second languages are similar in that "the brain and nervous system" are innately programmed to acquire a language in a particular order; this order of the first language acquisition process can be transferred to foreign language learning. Similar to L1 acquisition process, it was suggested that listening precedes and helps developing speaking in foreign language learning, and listening comprehension might form a schema for the acquisition of speaking. Taking into

account of this biologically programmed sequence of skills in either first or second language acquisition, in which listening precedes speaking (Asher, 1972), it can be concluded that students' failure in comprehending and producing a speech after years of learning experience in English might be primarily related with their problems in listening comprehension as well as the way they are exposed to language learning from the beginning. In other words, listening precedes speaking, and students need to improve their listening comprehension skills in order to produce speech. Therefore, it is important to investigate learners' problems for listening comprehension as well as learners' suggested solutions and teachers' reported classroom practices for dealing with these problems.

1.3. Objectives of the study

With respect to the role of listening, some applied linguists even argue that listening comprehension is the basis of second language acquisition (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 235) since it provides comprehensible input for the learner without which any learning cannot be realized. Therefore, it might be possible to conclude that improving listening comprehension can be the initial step for any learning happen and development of other skills or components in the target language. The assumption that problems with listening comprehension might be responsible for failure in comprehending and producing speech despite many years of learning English was the main motivation for this study. The main goal of this study is to investigate the perceptions of learners' and teachers' listening comprehension problems of the high school learners in Turkey and to find out students' suggested solutions and teachers' reported practices for dealing with high school learners' listening comprehension problems. This thesis also aims to categorize and analyze the most common listening comprehension problems and suggested solutions for them with respect to the perceptions and opinions of teachers and students attending different grades at high school. To reach this aim, both quantitative and qualitative research instruments were employed. In this study, listening comprehension problems questionnaire for students and teachers were administered. The questionnaire was originally prepared by Hasan (2000) and adapted by Demirkol (2009) for students and by Yıldırım (2013) for teachers. Further, the study also explored students' opinions about the other factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for dealing with these factors. In order to explore their opinions, two open-ended questions, adapted from Demirkol (2009), were used. In

addition, according to the results, semi-structured interview questions adapted from Yıldırım (2013) were used to find out teachers' opinions about students' listening comprehension problems and their reported practices for overcoming them.

1.4. Statement of the Research Questions

In order to reach the aims for this research, the study seeks answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL learners' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in a Turkish Anatolian high school context?
 - Is there any difference among the learners from 9th grade to 12th grade and their teachers about their perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems?
- (2) What are the Turkish Anatolian high school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it?
- (3) What are the high school teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and their reported practices for dealing with these problems?

1.5. Significance of the study

Due to the neglected status of listening in language learning, listening skills of the students are rarely assessed and the listening comprehension problems of language learners are rarely explored. There has been also little research and discussion on how to teach listening (Field, 2008, p.1). In order to explore listening comprehension problems of EFL and ESL learners studying at university, a number of studies were conducted in the world (Hasan, 2000; Goh, 2000; Graham, 2006; Yousif, 2006, Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011; Hamouda, 2012, Williams, 2017). Specifically, in Turkish EFL context, there are a few studies investigating the learners' and teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems (Demirkol, 2009; Yıldırım, 2013; Özyurt, 2014; Solak and Altay, 2014; Yıldırım, 2015). However, all of these studies were carried out with undergraduate students and/ or their teachers. To the knowledge of the writer, there has not been carried out any study aimed at exploring high school students' and their teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems and their suggested solutions

for dealing with these problems in Turkey. After high school, most of the students have to attend English Language Preparatory Programs when they have enrolled to a university since they are unable to approve their English proficiency in English Proficiency Exams administered by the universities. Therefore, the investigation of learners' listening comprehension problems at high school level is of great importance for identifying the problems and suggesting solutions to prevent their failure in undergraduate English Proficiency Exams. In addition, some of the listening comprehension problems that undergraduate students experience might be arising from the learners' listening skills developed at high schools. In other words, early listening practices can have an effect on the later practices. For instance, in the early listening practices, the students are generally provided with shorter spoken texts requiring them to understand all of the sentences because of their being short or including single words. However, in later practices of listening, students are presented with longer spoken texts including slow and clearly pronounced speech in shorter texts, and so they are still expected to understand every word. Hence, learners create unrealistic expectations about trying to hear every word in listening text rather than general comprehension (Ur, 2008, p.14). Thus, the results of this study might be beneficial for digging into the underlying reasons for listening comprehension problems of university prep school students in previous researches by shedding light on the high school EFL learners' listening comprehension problems. In pedagogical terms, students' and teachers' reported problems and suggested solutions might provide a holistic point of view on the listening comprehension process of the students, and might help EFL teachers to pinpoint the needs and problems of their students and implement practices accordingly. If the listening comprehension problems of the EFL learners can be dealt with at high schools, students' failure in comprehending and producing speech despite many years of learning English can also be solved.

1.6. Definitions of the Key Terms

Comprehensible input: Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis refers to the belief that acquisition in language can occur when the learner understands essays that are just beyond their current level (Nunan, 1999, pp. 304).

Listening Comprehension: Listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener actively involves in decoding the meaning of incoming message by relying on contextual clues, and their existing schemata about the content of the message

by applying multiple strategies (O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper, 1989, p.19 cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011).

Comprehension Approach: Comprehension Approach is an approach used in second and foreign language teaching, the main principle of which is based on the belief that “extensive listening comprehension should precede speaking” (Nunan, 1999, pp.303).

Total Physical Response (TPR): Asher's TPR is an approach that uses commands as the main teaching technique. Students experience a “long pre-production phase” in which they listen to and follow the commands and express their comprehension through non-verbal behaviors (Peterson, 2001, p. 88).

Natural Approach: The Natural Approach is a set of principles for language teaching (Nunan, 1999, p. 311) which was originated from the teaching experiences of Terrell and Krashen's view of language acquisition. According to this view Krashen (1992), acquisition can take place as long as we understand the message; in other words, when we get “comprehensible input” (p.4).

Bottom-up Processing: Bottom-up processing in listening refers to a “linear” process of “decoding” in which the listener tries to figure out the meaning of what is heard by working out from “the smallest meaningful units (or phonemes)” to larger units of the language such as words, phrases, utterances in a way to clarify meaning of the heard message (Nunan, 1999, p. 200).

Top- down Processing: Top-down processing in listening refers to the process of “reconstruction” in which the listener “reconstructs” the meaning of what he or she hears by activating the relevant background information in order to analyze the context in which the listening takes place and factors relevant to the context such as getting the gist, recognizing the topic and the relationship among interlocutors and prior events as well as using the smaller parts of the language as “clues” (Nunan, 1999, p. 201).

The schema theory: A theory about remembering which is based on the assumption that people make sense of the new knowledge by relying on the existing knowledge formed in their schemata. In that process, individuals assess whether the new knowledge matches with the ones in existing schemata and if not, they form a new schema for the new knowledge (Rumelhart, 1980).

CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Listening is generally referred as the “neglected”, “overlooked”, “taken for granted”, “passive” (Hedge, 2000, p. 227; Rost, 2002, p. 91; Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p.3; Morley, 2001, p. 71) or ‘Cinderella skill which has been overlooked by its elder sister- speaking (Nunan, 1997). As it is the case, listening skills of the students are rarely assessed and the listening comprehension problems of language learners are rarely explored. There has been also little research and discussion on how to teach listening (Field, 2008, p.1). One of the reasons for this “taken for granted” status of listening is associated with some English language teaching (ELT) methods which assume that listening skills will be acquired automatically through the exposure to the target language and through the practice of other language components, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Another reason is the belief that second language knowledge is generally correlated with the ability to speak and write in that language. That is why, listening and reading are considered as “secondary” skills (Hedge, 2000, pp. 227-228).

In the late 1940s; however, listening started to be considered as a research field thanks to the works of the “fathers of listening”, James Brown, Ralph Nichols and Carl Weaver; as a result, listening research studies and study committees were founded (Feyten, 1991). In addition to these research studies and study committees, the Second AILA (International Association of Applied Linguistics) Conference, which was held in 1969, had also great impact on revealing the primacy of listening. The Conference remarked the changing trends in second/ foreign language (S/FL) theory and practice and pointed out the importance of “(1) individual learners and the individuality of learning,” “(2) listening and reading as non-passive and very complex receptive processes”, “(3) listening comprehension is being recognized as a fundamental skill”, “(4) real language used for a real communication as a viable classroom model”. With these new insights to the S/FL learning and teaching, listening has gained prominence through the emphasis on developing oral language skills in the 1960s, and the neglected status of listening began to undergo a change towards to one of gaining priority (Morley, 2001, p. 69). Since 1970s, with the “communicative and proficiency-oriented” language teaching approaches, listening started to have increasing importance (Feyten, 1991). Further, the emphasis on

listening boosted through the Krashen's ideas about "comprehensible input" and James Asher's "Total Physical Response" (TPR) in the 1980s. Not only changing trends in S/FL, but also the works in the first language field had an effect on changing the "overlooked" status of listening (Nunan, 1997). Gillian Brown, from the field of first language learning, put emphasis on developing the oracy (the ability to listen and speak) in first language speakers rather than taken these skills for granted as automatically acquired skills (Nunan, 1997). Asher (1972) suggested that first and second language learning are similar in that "the brain and nervous system" are innately programmed to acquire a language in a particular order; therefore, this analysis of the first language acquisition process might be a model for second language learning and provide a basis for some ELT methods giving primacy to developing listening skills. By 1990s, listening gained special attention and aural comprehension in S/FL acquisition became a new focus of study (Morley, 2001, p. 69).

Listening often "comes into fashion" in the field of language teaching (Nunan, 1999, p.199). However, Brown (1987) found out that listening is still considered as the least important skill in many schools, which is a fact that provides basis for this thesis. Therefore, it would be vital to review the significance of listening in language teaching at first.

2.2. The Significance of Listening

Although the importance of listening practice is generally underestimated by the teachers, competence in understanding what L2 speakers say is not an "optional extra". On the contrary, listening plays a key role in building knowledge on spoken language, providing access to the real-life usage of the language, and even providing a more effective way of acquiring grammar and vocabulary when compared to the teacher-centered traditional classroom teaching lasting about 40 minutes (Field, 2002, pp. 334-335). Listening is an important skill which provides different benefits of listening at different stages of language learning process. According to Peterson (2001), at the beginning levels of language learning, it is by listening that learners can build the most direct connections with meaning before they gain proficiency in reading, and they can gain insights about how language works and build a basis for productive skills. For the intermediate level students, who are improving their understanding of grammatical structures of the S/FL, listening can help them to raise their awareness on details and

accuracy. Regarding the students with advanced levels, who have improved reading and writing skills, listening should still play an important role in their language use. Moreover, gaining competence in listening has also had a profound effect on the motivation of learners. When L2 learners fail to understand a native speaker or another listening input, they tend to “give up” not only as “listeners” but also as “language learners” (Field, 2002, pp. 334- 335).

Despite the “overlooked” status of listening due to speaking (Nunan, 1999, p. 199), listening skills have actually equal importance with speaking skills. “Rehearsed production” has no benefit when we fail to respond to the reply from the interlocutor that we are talking to (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, pp. 3-4). In other words, communication requires “two- way traffic” and communication will simply not be possible unless the interlocutors have both listening and oral competence (Field, 2008, p. 2). Moreover, in everyday life communication, an individual spends approximately 9 percent of the time to writing, 16 percent to reading, 30 percent to speaking and 45 percent to listening (Oxford, 1993 cited in Hedge, 2008, p. 228). As an example of the place of listening in communication, the experience of travelers who visit foreign language speaking countries can be given. The major difficulty that these travelers face with in foreign language speaking countries is not expressing themselves since they can also do it by gestures or by writing, but their failure in understanding what is being said to them (Rivers, 1981, p. 151). This means that our success in communication mostly depends on our success in listening comprehension. What is more, the current trend of moving from the printed media towards audio have also made essential to improve listening comprehension and proficiency (Hedge, 2000, p. 229). With these changing trends, the language learning goals and materials started to be “communicative” in nature, and improving listening comprehension as well as speaking skills have started to gain greater importance (Macaro, Graham, and Vanderplank, 2007, p.165). Even some applied linguists argue that listening comprehension is the basis of second language acquisition (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 235) since it provides comprehensible input for the learner without which any learning cannot be realized. In other words, through receptive skills, one can acquire and ‘internalize’ linguistic information without which they cannot produce language (Brown, 2007, p. 299).

2.3. Current Approaches to the Role of Listening in Language Learning

Current approaches to the role of listening in foreign or second language learning was primarily derived from the research on the two main characteristics of native language acquisition process. One of these principles is that in the early childhood, children experience “a silent period” during which they are not expected to produce “adult- like” speech in response to an input. The second one is that they can “understand more than they can say” or actually “produce” (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 33) despite the limited linguistic productions and attempts they have made at first. In other words, children firstly listen to the spoken language around him and do not speak until they feel ready although they comprehend the speech around him. These two main features observed in the L1 acquisition process have given new insights to the L2 learning and teaching. One of the most profound effects of these revealed features of L1 acquisition process might be seen on the development of the foreign/ second language teaching methods based on “Comprehension Approach” like TPR. Besides, research on L1 acquisition process also drew attention to the relationship between the learner’s exposure to the language and his own developing “language competence”, the connection of which sheds light on the term of “comprehensible input” (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, pp. 33-34).

2.3.1. Comprehension Approach

In the early days of English language teaching, the main function of listening was to present new grammar through model dialogues (Field, 2008, p. 13). Neither the British Situational Approach to language teaching nor the American Audio-lingual Approach gave much importance to listening except its role in grammar and pronunciation drills and the imitation of dialogues by the learners. Listening was limited to the “sound discrimination” in relation to the pronunciation learning at those times (Morley, 2001, pp. 70-71). The spoken language was at the heart of the language teaching methodology and it was common for students in the language classrooms to perform oral drills without understanding them (Brown, 2007, p. 299). However, the main problem with these oral drills is that “while it is possible to learn to understand without speaking, it is not possible to learn to speak without understanding it” (Peterson, 2001, p. 88).

Contrary to the early days of English language teaching, more attention was

started to be given to listening comprehension with the “Comprehension Approach”. This approach derives insights from the native language acquisition process and assumes that second or foreign language learners first understand and internalize the way language works and then speak spontaneously similar to the first language acquisition process (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 107). Therefore, in Comprehension Approach, it is crucial to provide learners with meaningful input through listening due to its significant role in the processes of comprehension, memory retention of information and developing second language competence (Peterson, 2001, p. 88).

Although there are different forms of Comprehension Approach in practice, they all have similarities in that they focus on activities improving learners’ comprehension and learners are not required to produce L2; instead, they respond in a non-verbal way or in their L1 in the early phases of the language course (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 34). With respect to the similarities among these various practices, Celce- Murcia (2001) listed the main principles of the Comprehension Approach as follows (p. 8):

(a) Listening comprehension is recognized as the primary skill that will promote spontaneous development of speaking, reading and writing skills over time under the right conditions.

(b) Listening to ‘meaningful speech’ and responding to it ‘nonverbally in meaningful ways’ should precede the learners’ production of any language by themselves.

(c) Learners should be allowed to stay silent until they feel ready to do so; in this way, learners can improve better pronunciation than the way they are forced to speak immediately.

(d) Learners show “progress” through exposure to the comprehensible input which is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency.

(e) Rule learning might have a beneficial effect for learners on ‘monitoring (or becoming aware of)’ their progress; however, it will not help their ‘acquisition or spontaneous use’ of the target language.

(f) The focus is on improving learners’ ability to understand and make themselves understood in the target language; hence, error correction is not emphasized.

(g) Learners should be provided with appropriate input through appropriate listening materials such as audio- tapes and video tapes if the teacher is not ‘native (or near-native)’ speaker of the target language.

In line with these main principles, among various practices of Comprehension

Approach in the field of language teaching, Total Physical Response (TPR) and the Natural Approach are just two of the most prominent practices of this approach (Peck, 2001, p. 145). These two practices of Comprehension Approach have great importance in recognition of the primacy of listening comprehension (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 107).

2.3.2. TPR and the Natural Approach

As the significance of the listening skill in language learning and communication have been revealed, teaching listening comprehension has gained focus in language classrooms (Rubin, 1994). In the late 1970s, two novice practices of language teaching, Total Physical Response and the Natural Approach, emerged and gained popularity as an outgrowth of comprehension based approach with reference to the transferred principles of first language learning to foreign language learning (Brown, 1987, p. 163).

The first and second language learning were suggested to be similar in nature in many ways. Thanks to the innately programmed “brain” and “nervous” system, first and second language were assumed to be acquired in a particular order. Considering these similarities between the first and second/foreign language learning process, some principles of first language acquisition were transferred into foreign language learning practices. One of the most significant principles of first language acquisition transferred to foreign language learning is that listening precedes and helps developing speaking, and listening comprehension might form a schema for the acquisition of speaking (Asher, 1972). In other words, a second language learner might gain linguistic input and comprehension through listening although they are not able to produce adult-like speech, just like a child in first language acquisition process. Moreover, in accordance with the similar principles of first and second language learning, Nida (1957) gave an example of language learning process experienced by the people going to Africa to live and work. In that African context, due to the multilingualism and lack of formal instruction in Africa, these people listen to the language without attempting to speak, and soon they realize that they can “hear” the language. That is to say, they do not try to speak until they internalize some part of the language. As a result of the observations gathered from the immigrant people’s language learning process, Nida (p. 53) came to the conclusion that “Learning to speak to a language is a very largely a task of learning to hear it” (cited in Peterson, 2001).

In line with the principles of the first language acquisition process of the children,

Asher suggested an “enjoyable” learner strategy, Total Physical Response (TPR), for second/foreign language learning (Asher, 1972). Asher’s TPR is an approach that uses commands as the main teaching technique. Students experience a “long pre-production phase” in which they listen to and follow to the commands and express their comprehension through non-verbal behaviors (Peterson, 2001, p. 88). In that phase, learners were exposed to a great deal of listening in the target language prior to oral production (Brown, 2007 p. 299). However, the linguistic input that learners receive at that phase should be comprehensible for them (Peck, 2001, p. 145); otherwise, any learning cannot take place (Brown, 2007, p. 299).

Another approach, which emphasizes the primacy of listening and listening comprehension, is Natural Approach. The Natural Approach was originated from the teaching experiences of Terrell and Krashen’s view of language acquisition. According to Krashen (1992), acquisition can take place as long as we understand the message; in other words, when we get “comprehensible input” (p.4). Therefore, the initial task of the teacher in the Natural approach is to provide comprehensible input to the learner. Comprehensible input refers the spoken language which is made understandable to the learner by the context it is used while it may contain structures and grammar that are little beyond the learner’s level (Brown, 1987, p. 164). In a similar way to TPR, learners in Natural Approach were exposed to a great deal of listening, which should be comprehensible to the learner, in the target language at first. Prior to oral production, learners can experience a “silent period” lasting from a few hours with adult learners to six months with children (Peterson, 2001, p. 88). “Silent period” derives its name from the learners’ not being forced to speak until they feel ready to do so while being exposed to a great deal of listening (Brown, 2007 pp. 299-300). One of the underlying reasons for this “silent period” is the belief that speaking does not directly lead to the acquisition of the language (Krashen, 2003, p. 5). Additionally, it is also suggested that learners can improve better pronunciation by experiencing silent period than the way they are forced to speak immediately (Celce-Murcia, p. 8).

TPR and Natural Approach are just two of the most common practices of the Comprehension approach (Peck, 2001, p. 145). In order to find out the effectiveness of comprehension based approaches, a number of studies were carried out and the results of these studies yielded that these approaches foster overall L2 proficiency. Specifically, Asher conducted studies in order to investigate the effectiveness of TPR. The results

revealed that this comprehension based approach facilitates not only better comprehension and production of the language but also fosters motivation and persistence required for language learning when compared with production-based methods such as Audio-lingual methods. In addition to these benefits, Gary (1978) suggested four main advantages of the comprehension-based approaches: Firstly, it has a “cognitive advantage” for leading better L2 learning. Secondly, it provides an “affective advantage” because it avoids stress and embarrassment by allowing students to experience a silent period until they feel ready to speak. In other words, students feel more relaxed when they are not forced to speak. The third advantage of these approaches is an “efficiency advantage” such as addressing both high and low aptitude learners. Lastly, comprehension based approaches also has a “utility advantage” in that teaching listening skills can build learner autonomy in language study and facilitate the learners “functional” usage of L2 (cited in Ellis, 1997, p.150).

All in all, the result of these studies emphasized the significance of listening and listening comprehension in second/ foreign language learning. In order to probe into the role of listening in language learning, it would be beneficial to explore the nature of listening comprehension at first.

2.4. Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener actively involves in decoding the meaning of incoming speech by relying on contextual clues, and their existing schemata about the content of the message by applying multiple strategies (O’Malley, Chamot and Kupper, 1989, p.19 cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 4) defined listening comprehension in a detailed way by referring to the steps involved in simultaneously during listening process in a face-to-face conversation as follows:

- (1) The spoken signals have to be identified from the midst of surrounding sounds.
- (2) The continuous stream of speech has to be segmented into units, which have to be recognized as known words.
- (3) The syntax of the utterance has to be grasped and the speaker’s intended meaning has to be understood.
- (4) We also have to apply our linguistic knowledge to formulate a correct and appropriate response to what has been said.

To sum up these steps, the listener undergoes a number of processes from

identifying the sounds and words during the continuous stream of speech to find out the intended meaning of the utterance by the speaker and to prepare an appropriate response to the interlocutor. Although these steps for listening process are listed separately, all of them are indeed employed simultaneously during listening process, which makes listening even more challenging (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 4). Therefore, it is of great importance to get closer look at the listening process.

2.5. The Process of Listening

Listening can be characterized in a number of different ways according to the different variables such as the listening purpose, the listener role in listening process, the type of the listening text and listening views or processes. Among these different categorizations of listening, it is vital to express listening with reference to the nature of the listening comprehension process in order to find out and interpret the listening comprehension problems of the listeners (Nunan, 1997).

There is a clear distinction between “hearing what is said” which is “speech perception” and “understanding what is meant” which is “interpretation”. However, both perceiving and interpreting the incoming language data are major parts of the comprehension process (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 13). Therefore, listening comprehension is not a passive process that can be achieved just by hearing what a speaker says. On the contrary, it is an active process in which listener plays a crucial role by activating various types of knowledge and applying them to the incoming linguistic data to understand what the speaker says (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 6).

From this point of view, listening comprehension process can be defined as “a multilevel, interactive process of meaning creation”. According to the speech-processing theory, there are two main types of processes that a listener or a reader undergo in both listening and reading comprehension (Brown, 2007, p. 312), which are top-down (higher level) and bottom-up (lower level) processes (Peterson, 2001, p. 88).

2.5.1. Bottom- Up Processing

According to the ‘bottom-up’ processing view, listening involves a “linear” process of “decoding” in which the listener tries to figure out the meaning of what is heard by working out from “the smallest meaningful units (or phonemes)” to larger units of the

language such as words, phrases, utterances in a way to clarify meaning of the heard message (Nunan, 1999, p. 200). In other words, the initial step of the bottom-up process is the recognition of the phonemes while the last step is constructing the meaning. By this way, it was also called as “listener as tape-recorder view” by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p.9) since the listener acts like just like the tape recorder with respect to getting and storing the messages in a linear way (Nunan, 1999, p.200).

Bottom-up processes involves speech perception as well as word recognition (Rost, 2002, p. 96). Even though the learners have the knowledge of all the words being used in linguistic input, they also need to recognize the “assimilation”, “unstressed words” and “the changing speed of the input” for comprehension. In this way, bottom-up refers to the detailed analysis of the “heard” language from “sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meanings” in the aural comprehension process. Hence, in the bottom-up mode of language processing, listener plays an active role and pay attention to every detail of the language input (Morley, 2001, p. 74). Therefore, it can be said that there is a positive correlation between the ability to decode the heard message successfully in that process and listening comprehension (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 235). Therefore, bottom-up processing plays an important role in listening comprehension (Rost, 2002, p. 96).

2.5.2. Top-down Processing

Top-down mode of language process demands listener to bring background knowledge to comprehend what is ‘heard’. Listener relies on his own prior knowledge and “global expectations” to make predictions and inferences in order to make sense of the incoming language data (Morley, 2001, p. 74).

In the top- down processing view, listening is a process of “reconstruction” in which the listener “reconstructs” the meaning of what he or she hears by activating the relevant background information in order to analyze the context in which the listening takes place and factors relevant to the context such as getting the gist, recognizing the topic and the relationship among interlocutors and prior events as well as using the smaller parts of the language as “clues” (Nunan, 1999, p. 201). In general, this view of listening deals with the “activation of the schemata” and background global knowledge depending on the contextual factors to make sense of incoming language data (Brown, 2007, p. 312).

2.6. The Schema Theory

The top-down processing approach has significant theoretical foundations for the schema theory (Nunan, 1999, p. 201). The usage of the term “schema” can be traced back to Bartlett (1932) in his book “Remembering”. According to Bartlett (1932) schema is “an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well adapted organic response” (p. 201). Schemata are “organized mental structures” that help learners figure out the incoming language data and find out the possible relationships between the new data and the existing schemata. A schema can entail not only concrete but also abstract concepts and can be said to serve as a “network” among “associated ideas” (Field, 2008, pp. 216-217). The schema theory assumes that people make sense of the new knowledge by relying on the existing knowledge formed in their schemata. In that process, individuals assess whether the new knowledge matches with the ones in existing schemata, and if not, they form a new schema for the new knowledge (Rumelhart, 1980). This assumption results in two basic modes of information processing, called bottom-up and top-down processing. Schemata is organized in a hierarchical order from the most general at the top to the most specific at the bottom. Bottom-up processing is a “data-driven” process in which the incoming data activates the relevant schemata about the content from the bottom to the higher levels. Top- down processing, on the other hand, is a “conceptually-driven” process in which the listener makes general predictions based on the higher level of schemata and tries to fit the input to the relevant schemata (Carrel and Eisterhold, 1983).

In terms of second/ foreign language listening, schematic knowledge can be useful to the listener in two ways. One is that it can help prediction of the listening input. A listener can activate the matching schema with the context of the listening, and predict the incoming listening input. The other is that schematic knowledge can assist the listener to figure out the meaning of the information that is not directly given. For example, when the listener hears the word “apple”, he can figure out the meaning of it from the sentence in which it is used whether it refers a fruit, a computer or something else thanks to the schematic knowledge (Field, 2008, pp. 216-217). However, in addition to its linguistic system, learning a foreign language also requires the knowledge of the target language culture considering the fact that people use the language for multiple purposes such as conveying opinions, beliefs, ideas etc. (Anderson and Lynch, 1988 p. 35). Therefore,

there might be problems in making sense of the listening input if the L2 listener does not possess relevant schemata for the listening input that fit in the target language culture; in other words, if there is a “cultural” or schematic “mismatch” between the two cultures or languages (Field, 2008, p. 218).

During listening, bottom-up and top down processes occur at the same time (Carrel and Eisterhold, 1983). Proficient listeners benefit from both of these processes interactively in order to fill the gaps in the message by checking the missing information at the other level (Peterson, 2001, p. 88). Therefore, it is important for the teachers to provide practice in both kinds of listening process for the learners (Morley, 2001, p.75).

2.7. Teaching Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a vital part of language learning; however, L2 learners tend to be rarely taught on effective listening (Berne, 2004; Vandergrift, 2007). An appropriate aural comprehension program addressing to learners with different listening levels of instruction is required for second language competence taking into account of the fact that listening comprehension lessons not only serve as a means of teaching grammatical structures but also facilitates retention of new vocabulary items through communicative discourse (Morley, 2001, p.70). Failure in teaching effective listening might be related with “myths” and “half-truths” about listening. Wilson (2008) listed some of these myths as follows (pp. 21-23):

1. “You cannot teach people how to listen”: Although it might be true on the grounds that listening is mostly an “internal skill”, there are so many things that teachers can help students improve their listening skills. They can present their students plenty of appropriate listening materials which can facilitate their listening comprehension and boost their confidence. In addition, teaching listening strategies to the students might improve their effective listening skills.
2. “Listening is a passive skill”: Listening is an active skill in which the mind has an active role. While listening, the listener actively involves in listening process by trying to decode the message, predict the incoming speech, interpret the meaning of the context, activate the background knowledge etc.
3. “It is easier for students to understand native speakers of English than foreign speakers of English.”: It might be true for students whose native languages are different in a class; however, it is less common for students having the same native

language. A student in a multilingual class might find it easy to understand a native speaker as he or she speaks the language that the student mostly exposed. In addition to the exposure to the language, the speech rate of the speaker, the amount of practice and the ability of students to deal with the speaker related listening problems also have an effect on understanding the spoken text.

4. “The skills involved in listening to a foreign language are the same as those that we use for listening to our native language.”: Although this is largely true, there are differences in the way it is applied. For instance, a student can grasp the meaning of the spoken text in his native language without concentrating on fully. On the other hand, he needs to fully concentrate on the spoken text in the target language to decode the meaning of the spoken text.
5. “While listening in class, students should not try to understand every word.”: In speech, some words usually convey the meaning but others are sometimes “redundant” which might be some prepositions, articles, auxiliaries or repetition sentences for speakers’ searching for the right word or clarifying the message. However, a preposition or an article might not be always redundant, omission of it might change the meaning. Therefore, a student needs to reach a “basic level of competence” and “automaticity” in order to identify which parts of speech are more important for comprehension and which parts are redundant and can be used to relax and get ready for the incoming speech. This identification is partly realized through the recognition of stress words in English. The competent listener can “automatically” ignore the unstressed redundant words by focusing on the more stressed, longer and louder content words.
6. “Students should not be allowed to read the scripts of recordings”: It is argued for listening practices that providing students with the tape script might distract their attention, and students might focus on reading the script more than listening. However, providing the script after the students have listened the spoken text at least twice, might help students find out and confirm what they heard as well as solving listening problems. In addition, it helps the students to recognize the difference between the written and spoken form of a word as well as recognition of some grammar points. Therefore, “the script can be a starting point for teaching”.

All of these myths shed light on some of the listening problems of the students and suggest implications for teaching listening. Similar to teaching reading skill, the

general listening procedure in the classrooms are generally made up of three parts as pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening for years (Hedge, 2000, p.47). However, this procedure underwent a change over the years (Field, 2008, p.16). Although the general listening procedure in the classrooms has remained similar over the years, the early and current format for a listening lesson plan differs in some of the goals of each phase (Field, 2008, p.17).

2.7.1. Early format for a listening lesson

In the early days of English language teaching, listening was used as a means of introducing new grammar by using model dialogues. Thanks to the communicative approaches in late 1970s, listening was started to be taught and included in Cambridge First Certificate exam as a skill. However, until 1984, the listening part in the exam was made up of “written prose” which were read aloud. Therefore, the lesson format in those days were quite rigid and different than the current lesson format which reflected “the structuralist orthodoxy of the time”. However, this early format of the listening lesson consisted of three stages as pre-listening, listening and post-listening as in the current one (See Figure 2.1).

Pre-listening
Pre-teach vocabulary ‘to ensure maximum understanding’
Listening
Extensive listening followed by general questions on context
Intensive listening followed by detailed comprehension questions
Post-listening
Teach any new vocabulary
Analyze language (Why did the speaker use Present Perfect here?)
Paused play: Students listen and repeat

Figure 2.1. *Early format for a listening lesson (Field, 2008, p.14)*

At pre-listening stage of this early format of the listening plan, new vocabulary items in the recording were presented students. As for listening stage, it consisted of two levels as extensive and intensive listening. The main purpose of the first listening was to familiarize students with the passage and to help them get the main idea of the spoken

text. This phase is called “extensive listening” which is similar to the skimming strategy in reading. In extensive listening, students created a mental schema about what the topic was, who the interlocutors were and where the spoken text took place. In the second and subsequent plays of the spoken text, students were asked to listen for details and answer more focused questions. This listening exercise was called as intensive listening. At the post-listening stage, students reviewed their listening experience through checking their answers for comprehension questions and examining the language of the spoken text. In addition, students were thought to benefit from multiple plays of the spoken text considering that multiple plays might help students familiarize with the stress, rhythm and intonation patterns as well as helping teachers to focus one form of the language. Although the early format of listening plan as pre-listening, listening, and post-listening served as a basis for the listening lesson, some of the goals of these phases were questioned due to the following facts (Field, 2008, pp.13-17):

- (1) The tendency to think that students were able to comprehend the spoken text only if they knew most of the vocabulary items to be encountered in the spoken text was not correct.
- (2) In intensive listening phase, students were not given the purpose for listening. In order to answer the questions, they had to rely on their memories and listening performances.
- (3) The main aim of the listening was to provide practice for the newly taught grammar point in daily use of English.
- (4) “Paused play” might result in “parroting”, and students might repeat the words without understanding their meanings.

To sum up, in the early format of the listening lesson, there was a “narrowing in” process which starts with getting general idea about the text, goes on with focusing on the “factual details” and ends with the “linguistic analysis” with reference to recently taught grammar. As a result of the misbeliefs and raised questions about the goals of phases in the early listening format, some of these goals have changed through years.

2.7.2. Current format for a listening lesson

Current format of the listening lesson consists the stages of pre-listening, extensive listening, intensive listening and post listening which is similar to the early

format in phases but differs from it in the purposes of each phase (See Figure 2; Field, 2008, p.17).

Pre-listening
Establish context
Create motivation for listening
Pre-teach only critical vocabulary
Extensive Listening
General questions on context and attitude of speakers
Intensive Listening
Pre-set questions
Intensive listening
Checking answers to questions
Post-listening (optional)
Functional language in listening passage
Learners infer the meaning of unknown words from the sentences in which they appear
Final play; learners look at transcript

Figure 2.2. *Current format for a listening lesson (Field, 2008, p.17)*

All of the stages and the reasons for the changing purposes of a listening lesson will be presented in next section.

2.7.2.1. The pre-listening stage

In this recent format for the listening plan, pre-listening stage is considered as the “critical” phase of the listening process. Pre-listening stage has two main goals to be achieved: One of these goals is to activate students’ existing schemata about the spoken text, and the other is to give them purpose for listening. To reach these aims, teachers provide some basic information about the text and guide them to predict the content. In addition, teachers give their students a purpose for listening to help them identify what specific information to focus on (Richards, 1983). Some of the activities that teachers can use at this stage can be listed as building mind-maps, providing vocabulary items, brainstorming for getting their expectations about the spoken text (Graham, 2017).

2.7.2.1.1. *Pre-teaching vocabulary*

At this stage, unknown vocabulary items in the spoken text are taught (Wilson, 2008, p.60). However, it is important not to pre-teach all of the unknown words to the learners for two reasons. One of these reasons is that students will not be able to know all the vocabulary items uttered by the interlocutor in real life listening. The listener needs to guess some of these items during the stream of speech. The other reason is that pre-teaching all of the vocabulary items can unintentionally take the students' attention to those words rather than the general meaning of the text during listening. Therefore, the current trend for unknown vocabulary items is to teach only "critical words" without which the meaning of the spoken text cannot be understood (Field, 2008, p.17).

2.7.2.1.2. *Establishing context*

One of the goals at pre-listening stage is to activate the schemata of the learners about the topic in order to help them predict the content of the spoken text (Wilson, 2018, p. 60). To achieve this goal, students should be provided with general information about the context, interlocutors and the place that communication takes place prior to listening. The "quality" and the "depth" of the listening is generally improved when the listener has right "mental set" for the spoken text (Field, 2008, p. 18). The results of some experimental studies showed that students who have some information about the text are more likely to be successful in decoding the text (Wilson, 2008, p.61). However, the scope of information should match with that of the real life listening, and it should not be too extensive. If listener has too much information about the content of the spoken text before listening, s/he might not be interested in listening the spoken text as s/he has already known most of its content. Hence, students should be provided with limited pre-listening information that will help them just to create a general outline of the spoken text in their minds such as introducing the context through presenting information about the setting, topic, and the genre of the recording, printing critical vocabulary items, telling who the speakers are (Field, 2008, p. 18; Wilson, 2008, p. 64).

2.7.2.1.3. *Creating motivation*

As the quote by Gary Buck highlights "people never listen without a purpose, except perhaps in a language class", a listening purpose is required for the listener to focus

on the spoken text (Wilson, 2008, p.60). Such kind of purpose and background information helps students listen “selectively” the important parts of the spoken text and decrease the memory and information processing load (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p.56). Therefore, in order to facilitate listening comprehension of the students, the topic of the spoken text might be presented, and the students might be asked about what they expect to hear. By doing so, they will have had purpose for extensive listening, which will be to check their guesses during listening (Field, 2008, p. 18).

With respect to its primary goals, pre-listening stage serves an introduction of the listening topic to the listener. Therefore, it should be “short and fast paced” and should not include too much information about the listening (Wilson, 2008, 79).

2.7.2.2. *During listening*

At the second stage of the listening plan, learners listen to the text both intensively and extensively several times at this stage. Allowing multiple plays of the recording might help them reduce their anxiety. However, the number of replaying the recording, should be decided by taking into account of the purpose for the listening. For instance, if the listener’s purpose is to get the main idea of the spoken text, playing it once might be enough. If the focus is on language analysis, it might be played several times. On the other hand, playing the recording more than three times might also cause boredom for students. Furthermore, if the listener is not able to decode the meaning of the spoken text, after hearing it three times, listening to it once more might not help him much in understanding the text (Wilson, 2008, pp. 60-61). Therefore, at this stage, it is important for teachers and students have a purpose prior to listening and students’ being encouraged to focus on the text more intensively or more extensively, for getting the main idea of the spoken text or for specific information (Hedge, 2000, pp. 252). As for extensive listening, general principles and outcomes have not changed much; however, the approach to intensive listening has been adapted in a way to give students purpose for listening through pre-set questions and checking answers for them (Field, 2008, p. 19).

2.7.2.2.1. *Pre-set questions*

In the early format of the listening lesson plan, in intensive listening phase, the listeners were not asked any questions about the spoken text until listening it; as a result, it was carried out without any specific purpose for the listeners. Therefore, students did

not know what to pay attention to during listening, and whether they answered the questions correctly or not were mostly based on their memory. However, in the current format of listening lesson, pre-setting the questions before the second play of the recording gives students a purpose to listen, and allows them to take notes while listening. Such knowledge for the purpose of listening and note-taking, might also help establish reliability for the listening comprehension questions as it tests students' ability to respond rather than their ability to remember (Field, 2008, p. 20).

2.7.2.2.2. *Checking answers*

Checking answers for the questions might be a challenging process due to the fact that students do not have the same pace for answering them. They are also not so willing to answer them because of the anxiety they have. They feel nervous for not having text before them to check their answers. In order to deal with this problem, they might be allowed to peer check before answering the questions in the class (Field, 2008, p. 21).

In short, while listening activities have two main goals for students. One of them is to enhance comprehension of the spoken text through "well-designed" activities. These activities have a number of significant advantages for improving the listening performance of the students. Firstly, it highlights the important parts of the spoken text by providing special focus on some parts and keep them focused throughout the passage. Secondly, it allows students to figure out the genre of the recording. Thirdly, they can provide examples about how the students might respond and help students to "chunk" the listening into sections or information units. In addition, it might also create a positive environment by pinpointing the sections of interest, humor, irony etc. The second main goal of the while listening activities is to get feedback about whether students understand the recording or not. Thanks to this feedback, teachers can find out which parts of the spoken text should be practiced or clarified (Wilson, 2008, p. 82). However, checking students' answers for the listening activities provides information about the "product" of the listening, not the "process" of it. In order to probe into the listening process, learners' discussion and participation should also be evaluated (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 121).

2.7.2.3. *Post-listening*

Post-listening activities consist of a number of activities such as checking and

summarizing, discussion to check whether students' expectations are met or not, creative writing tasks, getting critical responses, information gap, problem solving activities and deconstructing and reconstructing the listening text (Wilson, 2008, pp.97-108). Thanks to these broad range of activities, post-listening activities also provide practice for reading, writing and speaking skills by integrating them to the topic (Hedge, 2000, p.152) as well as reflecting the process of listening and listening comprehension problems of the students (Wilson, 2008, p. 86).

2.7.2.3.1. *Functional language*

In the earlier format of the listening lesson plan, listening materials were prepared with reference to the grammar structure to be reinforced and they were used as a means of practicing the new grammar structure. However, today's listening materials present functional usage of the language such as apologizing, threatening, offering etc., and these functions are difficult to teach without contextualization. Therefore, highlighting these functions and even pausing briefly to practice them at post listening stage might be beneficial for students in acquiring functional use of language (Field, 2008, p. 21).

2.7.2.3.2. *Inferring vocabulary*

In real life listening, the listeners do not know all of the vocabulary items used by the speakers. Therefore, they try to infer these unknown vocabulary items from the context of the speech in order to comprehend the speech. With reference to the real life listening skills, teachers are suggested to pre-teach only critical vocabulary items to the students rather than teaching all of the unknown vocabulary items prior to listening. Regarding the other unknown vocabulary items, which are not taught at pre-listening stage, teachers can teach them by leading their students to guess their meanings from the context at post-listening stage. Such kind of a guessing activity can be quite helpful for students with respect to its importance in real life listening skills. However, this inferring activity might sometimes be neglected by teachers on the grounds that replaying the recording to provide sample sentence for the unknown vocabulary item might be time-consuming. In order to deal with this problem, teacher might record the sample sentences for unknown vocabulary items in isolation instead of replaying the spoken text and trying to find the sample sentences from the whole spoken text (Field, 2008, p. 22).

2.7.2.3.3. *Paused play*

Paused play, used for practicing intonation patterns, is not much preferred now for its leading students to “parroting”, which is the repetition of the words without understanding their meaning. Although paused play does not match with the current communicative approaches, it can still be used to check whether students are able to identify individual words in a connected speech (Field, 2008, p. 22). Moreover, it might be also useful for “chunking” a longer text and playing it with various pauses (Wilson, 2008, p. 61). According to a psychological phenomenon, people tend to remember the first series of visual or aural stimuli better than the later ones. While listeners are able to understand the spoken text at the beginning better, their understanding gets worse as they go on the listening (Ur, 2008, p. 19). Therefore, dividing a longer spoken text into shorter parts and playing it with various pauses might help students deal with the overload of long listening texts and aid comprehension (Wilson, 2008, p. 61).

2.7.2.3.4. *Final play*

The recording might sometimes be played for the last time by giving the script to the students for the first time. The final play with the scripts of the spoken text can contribute to the students a lot by presenting them individual feedback about the parts they have unsuccessfully decoded and raising their awareness about the “short weak quality function words” that they have not noticed while listening (Field, 2008, p. 22, Wilson, 2008, p.61).

In conclusion, all of these changes in the goals of listening lesson shed light on the three developments about the perceptions on listening. Firstly, listening as a skill has gained primary importance over the details of the language content. Secondly, teachers’ providing contextual information about the spoken text, guiding their students to guess words from the context and providing authentic texts to their students reflect the tendency to adapt the classroom listening practice to the one encountered in real life. Lastly, the importance of motivation for listening has been recognized and improved through identifying a clear purpose for listening via pre-setting questions and creating expectations of the students about the spoken text (Field, 2008, p. 25).

2.8. Listening Comprehension Problems of the Language Learners

Research into listening in foreign language learning showed that listening is a problematic skill due to the internal and external factors that the listener encounters during listening (Brown and Yule, 1983; Watson and Smeltzer, 1984; Chaudran and Richards, 1986; Nunan, 1987; Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Spada, 1990, cited in Nunan, 1997). In line with the findings of the studies conducted on listening comprehension, the difficulties and problems that the listeners encounter were categorized with different labels by the researchers. For instance, these listening problems were labelled as uncertainties by Cherry (1957), and categorized as uncertainties of confidence, uncertainties due to the gaps in the message, uncertainties about strategy use, uncertainties of language, uncertainties of the content and uncertainties about visuals (cited in Hedge, 2000, pp. 236-243). On the other hand, Anderson and Lynch (1988) categorized the assessment of spoken text as easy or difficult in accordance with the “type of language we are listening to”, “our task or purpose in listening”, and “the context in which the listening occurs” (p. 46). Another categorization was made by Ur (2008) as “understanding intonation and stress”, “coping with redundancy and noise”, “predicting”, “understanding colloquial vocabulary”, “fatigue”, “understanding different accents”, “using visual and aural environmental clues” (pp.13-22). Moreover, Wilson (2008) divided these problems into different categories according to their relation to the characteristics of the message, the delivery, the listener and the environment (p.12). Although different categorizations were made with respect to the listening comprehension problems, most of the problems these categories address are common. All of these various categories will be mentioned under the subcategories of delivery, listener, message (Wilson, 2008, p. 12), and strategy use related problems (Cherry, 1957 cited in Hedge, 2000, pp. 236-243).

2.8.1. Delivery related problems

The way the speaker talks in the spoken text and the extent of listener’s control have an impact on the listening performance. The control of the listener over the spoken text can be explained with reference to the reciprocal and nonreciprocal listening. While reciprocal listening includes interaction between the listener and speaker, in nonreciprocal listening, the listener has no opportunity for interaction with the speaker just like the case in watching television or listening to the radio. In other words, in reciprocal listening, the listener has a chance of controlling the speech by using “repair strategies” such as asking

for clarification, controlling the pace of speech by asking the speaker to slow down etc. when he or she could not understand the speech. Natural speech contains pauses, hesitations, false starts, incomplete sentences, corrections and colloquial vocabulary. In non-reciprocal speech, the learner has no control over these features of natural speech such as pace of the speech, vocabulary items and grammatical structures which are used by the speaker, and no opportunity for asking for clarification or repetition when he or she could not understand a word or a sentence. In addition to the listener's control over the spoken text, the organization of the delivery, the number and the accent of speakers also affect the listener's comprehension of the spoken speech. Even native speakers of English can sometimes have problems in understanding different accents in non-reciprocal listening. When "American 'talkies' were first shown in the cinema in Britain, audiences had great difficulty in understanding the American accent". On the grounds that even native speakers of English, the British, have difficulty in understanding the American accent, it might be said that non-reciprocal listening can be considered as more difficult than the reciprocal listening for the learners (Wilson, J. 2008, p.13). Considering the fact that the listener is able to see the speaker in real life listening situations, the usage of audio without visual clues is "unnecessarily restricting". In addition, seeing the speaker provides nonverbal cues to the listener and aids listening comprehension as well as reducing the listening anxiety. Therefore, teachers should use videos for practicing listening; however, audios can also be used for practicing telephone conversations or radio programs (Hedge, 2000, p.242). Besides, teachers should build their students confidence for listening through authentic listening tasks if they want to prepare their students for real life listening situations (Hedge, 2000, p.238). Another delivery related problem might stem from the differences in sound system between the listener's native language and the target language. If some English sounds do not exist in their native language, foreign language learners can have difficulty in discriminating and perceiving these sounds (Ur, 2008, p.11). Besides, even if they know these sounds, they may still have difficulty in perceiving if they are not familiar enough with different sound combinations and collocations in the target language (Ur, 2008, p.14). Furthermore, the pace of speech, English system of stress, intonation, and rhythm also affect the listening performance. For example, if the learners are accustomed to practice slow-paced speech in listening or they are not familiar enough to understand the meaning during fast speech (Ur, 2008, p.14), they might perceive a spoken text as very fast and have difficulty in

comprehending it (Hedge, 2000, p.238). As for English systems of stress, intonation and rhythm, “though less obviously difficult than the problems of the actual sounds”, they might also interfere with the learners’ understanding the spoken English (Ur, 2008, p.13).

2.8.2. Message related problems

With reference to the characteristics of the message, students might experience a number of difficulties while listening. The most common problem related to this category is students’ having difficulty in understanding the input as a result of their lack of adequate and colloquial vocabulary knowledge. However, students can sometimes fail to perceive the words even if they know them, due to the differences between their written and spoken form. In other words, students’ knowledge for the written form of a word does not always result in their knowledge of the spoken form of that word (Ur, 2008, p. 17). On the other hand, even if they know the spoken form, they might still have problems in identifying this word as a result of their failure in recognizing word boundaries or connected speech (Wilson, J. 2008, p.13). Besides, knowing the colloquial vocabulary does not mean that they are familiar enough with them to identify even in a fast paced speech (Ur, 2008, p. 17). Moreover, one of the reasons for having difficulty in understanding the spoken text might also be related with the students’ lack of adequate familiarity with understanding the meaning during fast speech (Ur, 2008, p.14). Besides, different forms of pronunciation of some letters also interferes with the listening comprehension. For instance, the word “ough” has different kinds of pronunciation for the words “bought, enough, dough”, and the listener needs to know these various forms of pronunciation in order to recognize the word (Wilson, J. 2008, p.13). In addition to this problem, different pronunciations of a word according to its position in the sentence also have an influence on the listening performance of the learner. Students generally learn a new vocabulary with its careful pronunciation and sometimes in isolation from a complete sentence. However, they do not often learn the pronunciation differences of the same word according to its position in the sentence (whether emphasized or not) or being affected by the other words. Nor did the students learn how the newly learnt word sounds like when said quickly (Ur, 2008, pp. 17-18). Therefore, this problem can be categorized as speaker or pronunciation related problem as well as a vocabulary problem. Other message related difficulties for students can be listed as the “lexical density” in the message, which refers the “short spaces of time between the content words”, difficult

grammatical structures and mishearing the words (Wilson, J. 2008, p.13).

2.8.3. Listener related problems

Students have individual differences considering both long-term and short-term issues. With respect to the long-term issues, students might differ in their motivation, concentration, having background information about a text and their preferred way of learning considering the multiple intelligences theory. All of these factors affect the listening performance of the learners. Besides, age is also an important factor that have an influence on the listening comprehension performance of the listener as the listening needs and the problems of the students might differ in accordance with age. For instance, young learners have shorter attention spans, fewer cognitive abilities, difficulties in focusing on “disembodied voices”; therefore, the usage of music and visual aids are essential for them. As for short-term or temporary issues, students’ having anxiety towards listening, their being tired or bored, even their having cold during listening have an effect on their listening comprehension performance because blocked sinuses affect the aural system (Wilson, J. 2008, p.14). Moreover, students get tired to the extent of which they concentrate on listening because unlike the other skills in the language, students cannot have breaks whenever they need or cannot adapt the pace according to them while listening (Ur, 2008, p.19). However, some of these temporary issues might be dealt with by building students’ confidence and reducing their anxiety levels through activating their prior knowledge and contextualizing the text. Therefore, in order to deal with students’ negative opinions towards listening, teachers should adapt the pace and level of the students in a way not to be too “taxed” for learners and create a positive environment in the class to reduce their anxiety levels (Hedge, 2000, p.237).

2.8.4. The environment related problems

The characteristics of the environment regarding temperature of the room, background noise or the poor quality of the recordings might affect the listeners’ performance in listening (Wilson, J. 2008, p.14). Environmental noise as well as poor quality of the recordings might cause “gaps” in the message that the listener hears. In order to bridge the gap, the listener tries to understand the spoken text relying on other clues such as predicting the sentence structure or conjunctions. Therefore, teachers should also provide spoken texts which has background noise in order to improve students’ prediction strategies in case of a gap in the message (Hedge, 2000, p.239).

In addition to the listening problems discussed under these four subcategories, the memory also plays an important role in the listeners' performance; however, this problem does not fit "neatly" in any of these four categories (Wilson, J. 2008, pp.14-15). The listening process takes place in a limited time and the heard aural input is restricted to the capacity of holding the input in short term memory (Ur, 2008, p.19). Therefore, the listener has an active role in decoding process not only by relying on his memory to record the input but also by keeping up with the upcoming aural flow of speech. Therefore, the listener might experience an overload of words unless he adapts himself to the "rhythm" and "flow" of the natural speech. This cognitive overload might be one of the main reasons for students' losing their concentration (Wilson, J. 2008, pp.14-15). Unlike reading and writing skills, there is no "permanent" data to be looked for when some part of the data is forgotten. Similarly, no word boundaries exist in listening process. Hence, the listener tries to figure out those boundaries imaginatively. However, it might be difficult to figure out those boundaries when there is "elision, assimilation and intrusion" in speech, which are inter-word processes of omitting or adding some sounds between the words in order to make them easier to pronounce. Similar to elision, assimilation and intrusion, chunking some phrases as one word, as in colloquial vocabulary items, can also be problematic for the learners to recognize. In addition, these features of connected speech might cause "confusion" when they are not perceived by the listener due to their expectations of hearing the pronunciation of the word as they have learnt in isolation. Even a short time of confusion might result in listeners' missing the incoming speech and the main idea of the spoken text (Ur, 2008, pp.18-19). Moreover, most of the students have difficulty in doing tasks because they tend to test their memory rather than their comprehension. In order to deal with this problem, teachers can activate schemata of their learners through pictures, asking questions about the topic etc. This activation not only helps students to reduce their memory overload and anxiety, but also aids students' adapting to the topic and predicting the content and the incoming sentences (Wilson, 2008, pp.14-15). Another memory related problem is related with the longer listening passages. Listeners are able to understand the spoken text at the beginning better; however, it becomes worse as they go on the listening, which can be explained through a psychological phenomenon that is the tendency to remember the "first series of visual or aural stimuli better than we do later ones" (Ur, 2008, p. 19). Therefore, dividing a longer spoken text into shorter parts and playing it with various pauses might help students to deal with the overload of long

listening texts and aid comprehension (Wilson, 2008, p. 61).

2.8.5. Strategy related problems

Students' tendency to try to understand every word, even the unimportant ones, causes them to have listening anxiety and feel discouraged when they come across with an unknown or incomprehensible vocabulary item (Ur, 2008, p.13). In addition, longer listening comprehension passages also affect the listening performance of the students as a result of their strategy use. In the early listening practices, the students were provided with shorter spoken texts requiring them to understand all of the sentences due to their being short or including single words. However, in later practices of listening, students are presented with longer spoken texts including slow and clearly pronounced speech like the shorter texts, and they are still expected to understand every word. Hence, learners create unrealistic expectations about trying to hear every word in listening text rather than general comprehension. As a result of this misconception, the listener assumes that "successful comprehension is total comprehension". Therefore, many language learners have difficulty in getting the main idea of the spoken text. As a result of failing to understand the main idea of the spoken text, students also feel discouraged and stressed. Due to this tendency for understanding every single word, the listener might say that "I did not understand a thing" even if he understood enough for "communicative purposes". Moreover, effective listening requires to detect and "skim" the unimportant items rather than word-by-word listening because these words are actually redundant. In our native language system, we can easily "switch off" ourselves about redundancy; however, foreign language learner is not able to do this because of his paying attention to every word. As a result, he cannot benefit from having "natural rest" in case of redundancy and in order to get ready for the incoming speech. He is focusing on every detail too hard to get the main idea of the spoken text (Ur, 2008, pp.14-15). However, people listen to their native language without hearing every word by tapping their background knowledge about the topic, and most of the language learners are not aware of this phenomenon (Hedge, 2000, p. 237; Ur, 2008, p.14). In order to identify the unimportant items and skim redundancy, a learner should have the ability to predict what is coming next. However, prediction in foreign language requires "a reasonable grasp" of the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of the target language. After having reasonable knowledge of these components and having listening practice for prediction through semantic implications of certain patterns, a learner might transfer his native language prediction

skills in listening to the foreign language listening skills. If a learner is able to predict what is coming next, he can “skim” the redundant words and get ready for the next significant words (Ur, 2008, p.16).

2.9. Recent Research Conducted on Listening Comprehension Problems of Language Learners

Thanks to the advancements in technology, language learners can access aural and visual L2 or FL texts through the internet and social network sites such as Youtube, Instagram and podcast applications (Vandergrift, 2007). Therefore, Prensky (2001) refers today’s students as “Digital Natives” who were born into the digital world and become “native speakers” of the digital language of the computers and the internet. On the other hand, those who were not born into the digital world but later keep up with some aspects of the technology and the digital language are called as “Digital Immigrants” (Prensky, 2001). Considering that difference between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants, it can be concluded that language learning and listening comprehension problems they face might also differ from each other. For this reason, recent studies and their findings about the listening comprehension problems of language learners were included in that section.

One of the recent studies for listening comprehension was conducted by Hasan (2000) to find out learners’ perceptions of listening comprehension strategies and problems. The subjects of the study were 81 native speakers of Arabic who learn English as a foreign language for academic purposes in the ESP Centre at Damascus University. They were studying at different departments such as medicine, science, engineering, agriculture, and economics at intermediate level of English. The results of the study showed that these EFL learners have various kinds of listening comprehension problems which are related to the message, the speaker, the listener, the task and activities. It was also found out that some students are lack of effective strategies, skills, and activities which can help them to improve their listening comprehension. Under the light of these findings, Hasan (2000) suggested that the identification of the EFL learners’ listening comprehension problems might provide basis for the design of listening courses and textbooks as well as suggesting implications for teachers by reflecting the causes of the listening comprehension problems. Another study on listening comprehension was conducted by Goh (2000) to explore the listening comprehension problems of the second language listeners from a cognitive perspective. In order to reach that aim, ESL learners’

listening comprehension difficulties were identified and these difficulties were examined under the light of three-phase model of language comprehension proposed by Anderson (1995, *Cognitive Psychology and its Implications*, 4th Edition. Freeman, New York, cited in Goh, 2000). The participants of the study were 40 Chinese students at tertiary level learning English as a preparation for their undergraduate studies. For data collection, three instruments were used: weekly diaries kept by the participants for the listening course in which they wrote about their listening process and problems, semi-structured interviews with 17 of the participants, and verbal data through “immediate retrospective verbalization” procedure with 23 of the subjects. The findings of the study showed 10 listening problems occurred during the cognitive processing phases of perception, parsing and utilization. It was found out that five of these problems were related with recognition of the words and difficulties with attention during the perceptual processing. As for the parsing process, EFL learners were found to have difficulties in creating “mental representations” for the words they heard. In the utilization stage, students reported that they have difficulty in comprehending the spoken text as a result of their lack of prior knowledge or failure in applying the prior knowledge to the spoken text. Another study exploring the perceptions of students’ listening comprehension problems and their reasons for these problems was carried out by Graham (2006). In the study, students’ beliefs about their awareness for the strategies they use while listening were also investigated. To reach those aims, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

(1) “How successful did learners believe themselves to be as listeners, and to what did they attribute their success or lack of it?”

(2) “What strategies were they aware of employing when listening?”

The study conducted in England. The subjects for this study were 595 English high school students from 10 institutions aged 16-18 years learning French as a foreign language. The data was collected through a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was applied to 595 students, and the interviews were carried out with 28 of the participants who were chosen according to their responses for the questionnaire and in consultation with their teachers. The findings showed that student have listening problems mostly in pace of speech in the spoken text, trying to figure out the words in connected speech in French, and decoding the meaning of the words identified. As for the reasons for these difficulties, students reported that their listening problems arise from their own “supposed” low

abilities in listening skill, the difficult levels of the tasks and texts. Furthermore, they showed little awareness about the effect of their ineffective listening strategy use and skill application on their listening performance. In line with these studies, Hamouda (2012) investigated the listening comprehension problems of 60 English major students at Qassim University. For data collection, questionnaire and interviews were used. The findings yielded that EFL Saudi learners have listening problems regarding accent, pronunciation, pace of speech, lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge, and poor quality of the recording. Another research carried out to “reemphasize” the importance of listening skill in ELT context and to determine prospective English teachers’ perceptions of listening comprehension problems. A recent study about the perceptions of the listening comprehension problems of the foreign language learners was carried out by Williams (2017). The main purpose for this study was to find out the foreign language listening comprehension problems of the undergraduate learners of French and Spanish. Moreover, the researcher explored the factors that might affect listening comprehension. In addition, university level and post-secondary level teaching methods were compared. Lastly, the efficiency of the teaching methods at a post-secondary school level in their preparing students for foreign language learning at a university in a non-native country were investigated. Interviews and questionnaires were the research instruments for this study. The participants for this study were 48 undergraduate students pursuing degrees in both French and/or Spanish. The results showed that the majority of the participants have negative attitudes towards listening comprehension and performance; thus, it was suggested that the lecturers should help their students to overcome these problems. Moreover, students’ listening performance were found out to be affected by actual processing of the spoken text, acoustic, discourse, and linguistic, psychological and affective variables.

In Turkish EFL context, Demirkol (2009) investigated not only listening comprehension problems of Turkish EFL preparatory school students but also their perceptual learning styles. To reach this aim, the most and the least frequently reported listening comprehension problems by the students, the effect of gender on listening comprehension problems with reference to the students’ proficiency levels and genders, common perceptual learning styles among Turkish preparatory school EFL learners, the relationship between students’ perceptual learning styles and their listening comprehension problems were investigated. The participants were 295 students with

different proficiency levels studying at Gazi University, School of Foreign Languages. The data was collected through two questionnaires, both of which consisted of 30 items. The results yielded that while the most frequently reported listening problem was listener related, the least frequently reported one was task related. As for the proficiency levels, the advanced level students were found to have more listening problems than the other levels. The most common perceptual learning style was revealed to be visual, followed by auditory, and then kinesthetic. Finally, it was found that students who preferred visual learning style more than the other perceptual learning styles reported having more listener and speaker related problems. Furthermore, Yıldırım (2013) conducted a study in order to explore both students' and teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems. The researcher investigated and compared teachers' perceptions of university level EFL students' listening comprehension problems with the students' perceptions. Further, teachers' reported classroom practices were also explored in the study in order to probe into the way they deal with their students' listening comprehension problems. 423 B1.2 level EFL preparatory school students, aged between 18-28 attending the IELP at the School of Foreign Languages and 49 teachers were the participants of the study. In order to find out their perceptions of listening comprehension problems, a 30-item questionnaire was applied. Moreover, 12 of the teacher participants were interviewed to probe into their classroom practices to deal with their students' listening comprehension problems. The results from the questionnaire revealed that except for one item in the questionnaire, teachers' mean scores were always higher than students' mean scores, and it was concluded that unlike teachers' perceptions, their students do not experience listening comprehension problems as often as their teachers think. Besides, the data gathered from the interviews showed that all of the teachers agreed on the significance of the listening as a skill. In addition, teachers' reported classroom practices for dealing with these problems were found to share similarities regardless of their years of teaching experience. Following to that research, a number of studies were carried out with respect to teachers' perceptions about their students' listening comprehension problems. One of these studies were carried out by Özyurt (2014) in order to find out the perceptions of EFL teachers about preparatory school EFL students' listening comprehension problems and to explore their classroom practices for dealing with these problems. 56 EFL teachers working at Gaziantep University were the subjects of this study. As a research instrument, a 30-item questionnaire and interviews were used. The findings from the data yielded that

teachers are aware of the different listening comprehension problems which are related to the speech rate of the speaker, unknown vocabulary items, long spoken texts, preference for teacher's reading aloud rather than recordings, students' feeling nervous etc. Moreover, teachers were found to employ a number of different practices in order to deal with these problems. Similarly, Solak and Altay (2014) explored 124 prospective English teachers' beliefs on English language listening comprehension problems at ELT department at a state-run University in Turkey. A questionnaire was used to collect data about prospective teachers' beliefs in English language listening comprehension problems that they could encounter in unidirectional listening. The results showed that participants used top-down processes effectively during the listening process; however, they were not so good at using bottom-up processes. In terms of gender, no significant difference was found with respect to their beliefs. Furthermore, Yıldırım (2015) investigated the effect of teaching experience on English language teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems. The study compared 81 pre-service teachers' perceptions of English learners' listening comprehension problems with 67 in-service teachers working at public schools for at least five years. The results of the study yielded that pre-service teachers have more "optimistic" perceptions about the learners' listening comprehension problems as compared to in-service teachers. Although pre-service teachers' "optimistic" perceptions can be considered normal, the quality of their listening classes might be affected by these very optimistic perceptions. In order to deal with this problem, the researcher suggested to increase the number of hours prospective teachers teach during practicum process and to emphasize the listening comprehension problems of EFL learners at methodology courses of universities.

Most of these studies focused on exploring the listening comprehension problems of the language learners from either students' or teachers' perspectives. However, Berne (2004) suggested that conducting a research comparing both teachers and students with respect to their perceptions of listening comprehension problems can be useful for more "enlightening" results. The only study comparing both teachers' and students' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in Turkish EFL context was carried out by Yıldırım (2013) with B1.2 level EFL preparatory school students and their teachers. On the grounds that the early listening practices of students can also have an effect on their performance in later practices of listening (Ur, 2008, pp.14-15), it might be beneficial to explore high school teachers' and students' perceptions about learners'

listening comprehension problems and to identify these problems before students enroll to a university. To the knowledge of the researcher, there have not been any studies exploring both teachers' and students' perceptions of listening comprehension problems at a Turkish high school EFL context. Therefore, both teachers' and their students' perceptions about learners' listening comprehension problems were investigated in this study at a Turkish high school EFL context.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The main goal of this study was to investigate the perceptions of the 9th (freshman), 10th (sophomore), 11th (junior), 12th grade (senior) Anatolian high school EFL learners and their teachers about learners' listening comprehension problems and to compare the given answers among these four groups of students and teachers. The second aim for this study was to get high school EFL learners' opinions about the possible factors that might have an effect on their listening comprehension performance and their own suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance. Likewise, high school teachers' opinions about their students' listening comprehension problems and their reported practices for dealing with these problems were also researched in this study. To achieve these aims of the study, following research questions were posed to guide the current study.

(1) What are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL learners' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in a Turkish Anatolian high school context?

- Is there any difference among the learners from 9th grade to 12th grade and their teachers about their perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems?

(2) What are the Turkish Anatolian high school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it?

(3) What are the high school teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and their reported practices for dealing with these problems?

3.2. Research Design

One of the main problems that a teacher or a researcher face while studying listening is that listening process cannot be directly accessed, and it is impossible to observe the students' problems and the skills they use in the listening comprehension process. It can only be deduced by examining learners' response "(whether spoken,

written or non- verbal)” about the listening input (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 7). Therefore, this study was designed as a mixed method research design, employing both quantitative and qualitative data from the participants. Quantitative data was gathered from the results of the questionnaire by using one-way ANOVA and Descriptive Statistics. One-way ANOVA was employed to compare mean scores of four groups of students and teachers with each other for each item in the questionnaire. Descriptive Statistics was used to find out the listening comprehension problems reported as the most and the least problematic by students and teachers. Moreover, qualitative data was also gathered from both students’ answers for two open-ended questions asking students’ opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance and their suggested solutions for improving it, teachers’ list of their students’ listening comprehension problems and teachers’ answers for the questions asked in semi-structured interviews.

3.3. Setting

The study was conducted at three different Anatolian high (secondary) schools in Yalvaç district of Isparta, Turkey. The students in Turkey have to take four years of high school education. In order to enroll a high school, they also have to take a standardized exam for transition from Primary Education to Secondary Education System. Until the beginning of 2018-2019 academic year, students used to take TEOG exam and enrolled to high schools according to their TEOG exam scores, which resulted in ranking high schools from lowest to highest in Turkey. Therefore, these schools were generally labelled as successful and unsuccessful schools by parents. This hierarchical ordering of schools also led a quality gap among schools. Moreover, as a result of their TEOG scores, students also had to attend high schools which is far away from their places of residence. In order to deal with these problems, a new high school entrance system was introduced at the beginning of 2017-2018 academic year(http-1). According to this new system, a high school entrance exam called as LGS, which includes questions addressing to the same six subjects with TEOG, is applied for students to enroll to the certain schools determined by Turkish Ministry of Education (http-2). The students who are not able to enroll to the schools accepting students according to their LGS scores are placed to other high schools with respect to their places of residence as well as their 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Point Average (GPA). As for these three Anatolian high schools, students were

placed to these schools according to their TEOG scores until the beginning of 2018-2019 academic year; however, this year, 9th graders were placed according to their places of residence and GPA. These Anatolian high schools aim to prepare their students for university exam in a way to address all the departments in universities. 9th and 10th grade curriculum covers Math, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Turkish, English, Second Foreign Language, Social Studies, Sports and some elective courses such as Music and Art. At the end of the 10th grade, students are expected to decide which areas to specialize in and enroll into one of the classes from the Science and Maths class, the Turkish and Mathematics class, the Literature and Social Sciences class, and Language class. These classes are named according to the scope of courses in their curriculum. For example, the Science and Maths class focus mainly on Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, as well as Turkish, English and German while language class focus mainly on English, Turkish, German, Geography and History.

3.4. The Participants of the Study

Prensky (2001) refers today's students as "Digital Natives" who were born into the digital world and become "native speakers" of the digital language of the computers and the internet. On the other hand, those who were not born into the digital world but later keep up with some aspects of the technology and the digital language are called as "Digital Immigrants" (Prensky, 2001), most of whom are the teachers of "Digital Natives" today. Considering the difference between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants, it can be concluded that language learning and listening comprehension problems they face might also differ from each other. Therefore, both students and teachers took part as the participants in this study. The subjects of this study were chosen through stage sampling, which involves "selecting the sample in stages, that is, taking samples from samples" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.112). For this study Yalvaç district of Isparta was chosen due to its convenience. There are just three Anatolian High Schools in Yalvaç except for Anatolian Vocational High Schools. Therefore, at first stage, all of these three Anatolian High Schools were chosen for carrying out this research. At the second stage, all of the students were chosen randomly from one of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes from each of these three schools. Besides, as for, 11th and 12th graders, students were chosen addressing to one of each kind of class focusing on different fields of studies in these three high schools. The student

participants of the study were 553 high school students between the ages of 14 and 18 at different grades from three different Anatolian high schools (see Table 3.1). All of the students were chosen randomly from one of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes. As for, 11th and 12 graders, students were chosen addressing to one of each kind of class focusing on different fields of studies in these three high schools.

Table 3.1. *Distributions of students by their grades*

Students' grade	Frequency	Percent
9th	88	15.9
10th	84	15.2
11th	185	33.5
12th	196	35.4

Regardless of their grades and field of studies, all of the participants have to take four hours of English in a week. Only the students choosing language as a field of study take 14 hours of English at 11th and 12th grades. The English levels of the high school students were determined according to their grades with reference to CEFR by the Turkish Ministry of Education. Students at 9th grades are supposed to gain proficiency from A1 level towards B2+ level until graduating from the high school. The transformation with respect to the students' proficiency levels in accordance with their grades can be seen in Figure 3.1.

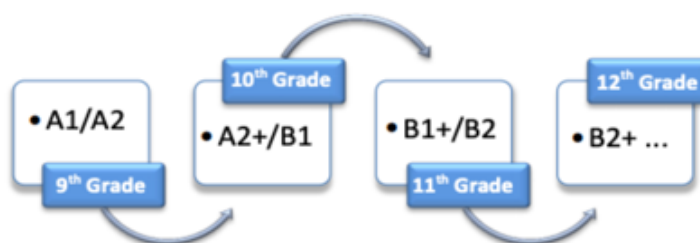


Figure 3.1. *High School EFL learners' English proficiency levels change according to grades (http-3)*

Each term at least two English exams are administered to the high school students. In 2016, The Turkish Ministry of National Education made a change in the exam format of high school English lessons (http-1). According to this change, at least one of the

English exams in each term has to be designed in a way to assesses the students' four skills in English: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. As a result, all of the high school students have to take skill based exam regardless of their grades and fields of study.

At the last stage of stage sampling, all of the English teachers working at these three schools were selected as the participants of the study. The teacher participants of the study were eight teachers of English with various years of teaching experience working at these schools (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. *Distributions of teachers by their experience in teaching*

Teaching experience	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	2	25
6-10 years	4	50
11-15 years	2	25

Besides, seven of the teachers graduated from the English Language Teaching Department and one of them graduated from the English Language and Literature Department.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments were used in this study of mixed methods design. The instrument used for quantitative data collection was a questionnaire, which was also used in several studies (Hasan, 2000; Demirkol, 2009; Yıldırım, 2013; Özyurt 2014, Yıldırım, 2015). The questionnaire was originally prepared by Hasan (2000) and adapted by Demirkol (2009) for students (see Appendix 1) and by Yıldırım (2013) for teachers (see Appendix 4). The questionnaire used in this study is a 5 point Likert scale consisting of 30 items about listening comprehension problems. For the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was applied to twenty-three students who were attending the same high schools, and their answers were computed to SPSS. In order to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha test was utilized. The results showed that the questionnaire has the reliability of .78, which suggests that the items in the questionnaire are internally consistent. Considering the fact that students' background and levels of English can be known by their teachers, validation

process of the students' questionnaire was completed through the consensus of the students' teachers on the items in the questionnaire. In a similar way, teachers' questionnaire was also validated through the consensus of the teachers' working in different schools. Qualitative data was gathered from students' answers for two open-ended questions asking students' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance and their suggested solutions for improving it, teachers' list of their students' listening comprehension problems and teachers' answers for the questions asked in semi-structured interviews, which were administered to seven of eight teachers who were willing to participate.

3.5.1. Teachers' and students' perceptions of listening comprehension problems questionnaire

The student version of the listening comprehension problems questionnaire was originally prepared by Hasan (2000) and adapted by Demirkol (2009), and the teacher version of the same questionnaire was prepared by Yıldırım (2013). The teachers' questionnaire is made up of two parts which were prepared by Yıldırım (2013) as Part A and Part B. Prior to Part A, an introduction section was presented, which asks teachers some background questions about their teaching experience and the grade levels in high school that they currently teach English. In Part A, an open-ended question which required teachers' listing their students' listening comprehension problems was used as a research instrument. The purpose of this listing process was to explore teachers' opinions about their students' listening comprehension problems and to find out whether there is any difference between the students who take four hours of English and the students from language classes who take fourteen hours of English in a week in terms of their listening comprehension problems. As for Part B, teacher version of the questionnaire was included. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items with 5 point Likert scale ranging from '1' standing for never to '5' always. The items in the teacher version of the questionnaire are made up of questions concerning high school teachers' perceptions of listening comprehension problems of their students. Similar to teacher version of the questionnaire, students' questionnaire was also composed of two parts. In Part A, student version of the questionnaire was included. The student version of the questionnaire also consisted of the same 30 items with teachers' questionnaire in a way to address students' own listening comprehension problems in their native language, Turkish. Besides, Part B of the

students' questionnaire included two open ended questions regarding students' opinions about listening comprehension problems and their suggested solutions for improving their listening performance in English.

3.5.2. Open- ended questions and a semi-structured interview

In order to probe into the perceptions of high school students on listening comprehension problems, they were asked two open-ended questions in their native language, Turkish (see Appendices 2 and 3), adapted from the study by Demirkol (2009). One of these questions was concerned with opinions of students about the probable factors that might have an effect on their listening comprehension performance in English. The other question asked their suggested solutions for improving their listening performance in English. On the other hand, teachers asked to list their students' listening problems considering their students from different grades having 4 hours of English class, and students from language classes having 14 hours of English in a week prior to the questionnaire. Regarding the results from the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, which was adapted from the study of Yildirim (2013), was prepared. The main aim of preparing these questions was to have a deeper understanding of the teachers' opinions and reactions about listening comprehension problems of their students in class and to discover their classroom practices for dealing with these problems.

3.6. Data collection procedure

The data for this study was gathered at the end of the first academic term after the students had taken the skills based English exam testing their competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. A listening comprehension problems questionnaire and two open-ended questions were utilized to collect data from the student participants of the study in three different Anatolian High Schools. Likewise, the data from the teacher participants from these schools was gathered through the teacher version of the questionnaire, open-ended question for listing the listening problems of their students, and through a semi-structured interview. Firstly, teachers listed the listening problems of their students regarding the weekly English classes, either 4 hours or 14 hours, they take. Next, they were conducted the teacher version of the questionnaire. Following to the results gathered from the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was administered to seven of the eight teachers, who were willing to participate, to explore their opinions for

students' listening comprehension problems and their classroom practices for dealing with these problems. Before the interview, the interviewees were informed about the purpose of the interview, how the data was going to be used gathered from answers, and their permission was sought. The data from the interviews was recorded through note-taking procedure to prevent interviewer anxiety that might be caused by tape recording.

3.7. Data analysis

The quantitative data, gathered from the listening comprehension problems questionnaire, was analyzed by IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0. All of the items in the questionnaire were analyzed according to the five subcategories of the questionnaire which were labeled as message, task, speaker, listener and strategy (see Appendix 6). In addition, Descriptive Statistics was run in order to find out the listening problems reported as the most and the least problematic by students and teachers. Then, a one-way ANOVA test was performed in order to compare the mean scores of 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grade students' and the teachers with respect to each item in those subcategories and to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference across these five groups in terms of their perceptions on listening comprehension problems.

The qualitative data was gathered from the teachers' listening comprehension problems list, semi-structured interviews and students' answers for the open-ended questions. The qualitative data was evaluated through a content analysis, which has been defined as "a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (Berelson, 1952; GAO, 1996; Krippendorff, 1980; and Weber, 1990 cited in Stemler, 2001). In this study, the answers of the students for the factors affecting their listening comprehension were unitized at first. Following to the unitizing process, their answers were categorized according to their content. Answers having similar content were grouped in the same category. Finally, all of the categories with similar content were recategorized with regard to the subcategories of the questionnaire as message, task, speaker, listener and strategy related listening problems or factors. As for the analysis of students' suggested solutions, the same procedure was applied. 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance were categorized with respect to the students' grades. Students' suggested solutions were unitized and recategorized for a few times according to their content. In addition, their suggested solutions were tabularized with

regard to the problems they address in the questionnaire. For the analysis of the data gathered from teachers' listing listening problems and their responses to interviews, the same categorization procedure was implemented. Each of these categories were described and interpreted regarding the subcategories of the questionnaire and research questions of the study. Furthermore, teachers' responses for the interview were unitized and categorized through content analysis, and discussed with reference to the students' opinions about factors that might have an effect on their listening comprehension and their suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension. The content analysis procedure was carried out independently by the researcher and another rater who is an experienced English teacher. After the independent analyses of the data, the analyses of the researcher and the rater were compared. Following to reaching a consensus about the names of the categories which were classified according to their content, 20% of the dataset were analyzed by the researcher and the rater again. An interrater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency among raters. The results showed high-inter reliability, which was found .83 as for the answers of the students for the factors affecting their listening comprehension, .87 as for the suggested solutions of the students for improving their listening comprehension performance in English, .86 for the teachers' list of most common listening comprehension problems of their students, and .81 for teachers' responses to the interview questions.

CHAPTER IV

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Findings

The main objective of this research was to identify the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grade Anatolian High School students' perceptions of listening comprehension problems in comparison to their English language teachers' perceptions of the listening comprehension problems. Through this study, it was also aimed to find out both teachers' and students' points of view towards the factors affecting the students' listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for dealing with these factors to improve the listening comprehension ability of the students. To reach those aims, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

(1) What are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL learners' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in a Turkish Anatolian high school context?

- Is there any difference among the learners from 9th grade to 12th grade and their teachers about their perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems?

(2) What are the Turkish Anatolian high school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it?

(3) What are the high school teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and their reported practices for dealing with these problems?

In the following section, the findings about these research questions were presented successively.

4.1.1. Findings about Research Question 1: What are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL learners' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in a Turkish Anatolian high school context?

In order to find out four group of students' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems, firstly, Descriptive Statistics was run to reveal the listening comprehension problems reported as the most and the least

problematic by the students of different grades and by their English teachers. The findings for the listening comprehension problems reported as the most and the least problematic by students and teachers can be seen in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

Table 4.1. *Listening problems reported as the most problematic by students*

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
5	Speaker	4.27
18	Speaker	4.18
13	Speaker	4.02
23	Listener	3.97

Note: Item 5 is about visual clues for the spoken text

Item 13 is about providing tape scripts as a pre-listening activity

Item 18 is about the pace of speech

Item 23 is about the poor quality of the tape recorder

As can be seen from Table 4.1., three of listening problems reported as the most problematic by the students were speaker-related problems, and one of them is related to the listener category. Students were found to have more problems in comprehending spoken text without visual clues and tape scripts, understanding the speakers speaking too fast and understanding the spoken text as a result of poor quality of the tape recorder. Students' listening problems reported as the most problematic by teachers were shown in Table 4.2. below.

Table 4.2. *Listening problems reported as the most problematic by teachers*

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
18	Speaker	4.63
12	Strategy	4.50
13	Speaker	4.50
2, 8, 23	Listener	4.13
15	Message	4.13
5	Speaker	4.00

Note: Item 2 is about feeling nervous about not being able to understand the spoken text

Item 5 is about visual clues for the spoken text

- Item 8 is about preferring teachers' reading aloud to a recorded spoken text
- Item 12 is about improving listening comprehension through pre-listening information
- Item 13 is about providing tape scripts as a pre-listening activity
- Item 15 is about interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension
- Item 18 is about the pace of speech
- Item 23 is about the poor quality of the tape recorder

The Table 4.2 shows that the listening problems reported as the most problematic for their students by the teachers address to different problem categories. However, three of these problems were found to be speaker related problems. The other reported problems were revealed to be related with message, listener and strategy use. The results showed that students' most problematic listening problems were also reported by their teachers for the students with different mean scores, which show that teachers and students agree on the most problematic listening comprehension problems. Moreover, listening problems reported as the most problematic by the students and their teachers were also analyzed. The findings were shown in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4.

Table 4.3. *Listening problems reported as the least problematic by students*

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
24	Strategy	2.69
14	Task	2.71
29	Speaker	2.82
21	Listener	2.86

Note: Item 24 is about paying attention to the topic markers,
 Item 14 is about filling a chart or graphic while listening,
 Item 29 is about understanding the meaning of a spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language,
 Item 21 is about quickly forgetting the words that they hear during listening.

The findings showed that listening problems reported as the least problematic by the students were related with strategy, task, listener and speaker category. Students reported that they do not frequently experience problems in paying attention to the topic markers, filling a chart while listening, understanding the meaning of a spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language and quickly forgetting the words that they

hear during listening. Students' listening problems reported as the least problematic by their teachers were illustrated in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4. *Listening problems reported as the least problematic by teachers*

Item Number	Related Category	Mean
14	Task	2.88
4	Task	2.88

Note: Item 14 is about filling a chart or graphic while listening,

Item 4 is about difficulty in predicting what speakers are going to say from the title.

The findings yielded that students' listening problems reported as the least problematic by the teachers were task-related problems, which are about filling a chart or graphic while listening, and difficulty in predicting what speakers are going to say from the title. With respect to the students' answers, the results showed that two of the students' listening problems reported as the least problematic by the students were the same with their teachers. In other words, both teachers and students agreed that filling a chart or graphic while listening was the least frequently experienced problem.

In the following section, the findings about the perceptions of high school students and teachers about students' listening comprehension problems were presented with reference to each item of the questionnaire under five subcategories.

4.1.1.1. Speaker related problems

In the questionnaire, seven of the items were categorized as speaker related problems. (See Table 4.5)

Table 4.5. *Speaker related problems*

Item Number	Description
1	unclear pronunciation of the words
5	providing visual clues for the spoken text
13	providing tape scripts as a pre-listening activity
16	understanding natural speech with hesitations and pauses
18	understanding the fast-paced speech
28	understanding different accents

Table 4.5. (Continuing) *Speaker related problems*

Item Number	Description
29	understanding the meaning of a spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language

A one- way ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean scores of four groups of students attending 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades and their English teachers in order to find out whether grade has an effect on students' perceptions on speaker related listening comprehension problems and to compare them with their teachers' perceptions of students' speaker related listening comprehension problems. The findings showed that six of the seven items have statistically significant differences. The results were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. *ANOVA for teachers' and 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grade students' perceptions of the speaker related problems*

Item No		<i>df</i>	F	Sig.
1	Between Groups	4	3.391	.009*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
5	Between Groups	4	1.642	.162
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
13	Between Groups	4	6.464	.000*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
16	Between Groups	4	3.713	.005*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
18	Between Groups	4	5.726	.000*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
28	Between Groups	4	3.960	.004*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
29	Between Groups	4	3.120	.015*
	Within Groups	556		

Table 4.6. (Continuing) *ANOVA for teachers' and 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grade students' perceptions of the speaker related problems*

Total	560
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Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

The findings yielded a statistically significant difference among four groups of students and teachers ($F(4, 556) = 3.391, p < .05$) regarding their answers on item 1, ($F(4, 556) = 6.464, p < .05$) on item 13, ($F(4, 556) = 3.713, p < .05$) on item 16, ($F(4, 556) = 5.726, p < .05$) on item 18, ($F(4, 556) = 3.3960, p < .05$) on item 28, and ($F(4, 556) = 3.120, p < .05$) on item 29. With the aim of determining where the exact difference is, Tamhane's T2 post hoc test for the item 1, item 13, item 16, item 18, Games-Howell test for item 29 and Scheffe post hoc test for the item 28 were run. The post hoc test results were presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7. *Post hoc test results for item 1, item 13, item 16, item 18, item 28 and item 29*

Item No	Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Sig.
1	9th	12th	-.480	.003*
13	11th	12th	.579	.000*
16	9th	11th	-.555	.006*
		12th	-.457	.030*
18	9th	10th	-.621	.001*
		11th	-.550	.002*
28	9th	11th	-.564	.008*
		12th	-.485	.034*
29	9th	Teachers	-1.193	.037*

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

According to post hoc results, only one of the pairs were found to have a statistically significant difference regarding their answers for item 1: 9th grade students ($M=3.15, SD=.965$) and 12th grade students ($M=3.63, SD=1.118$) at $p < .05$ level. It can be inferred from the results that while 9th grade students stated that they do not have much difficulty in understanding the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly, the

12th grade students stated the opposite. However, the other groups of students and teachers do not differ significantly from each other considering their answers for the item 1. Similarly, as for item 13, which is about providing tape scripts before listening exercises, post hoc results showed that only one pair, 11th grade students ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.018$) and 12th grade students ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.255$) have significant differences at $p < .05$ level. It can be said 11th grade students do not rely on tape scripts before listening exercises in order to understand the text as frequently as 12th graders do. However, 9th and 10th grade students and teachers do not differ significantly from each other with respect to item 13. The post hoc results for the item 16 indicated that there is a statistically significant difference among only two pairs in terms of their perceptions about the difficulty in understanding natural speech full of hesitation and pauses: 9th grade students ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.228$) and 11th grade students ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.228$); and 9th grade students ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.228$) and 12th grade students ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.084$) at $p < .05$ level. Therefore, it can be concluded that both 11th grade and 12th grade students have difficulty in understanding the natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses while 9th grade students do not agree with 11th and 12th grade students with respect to the item 16. For item 18, the results from the Tamhane's T2 post hoc test yielded that three pairs significantly differ from each other when their perceptions about difficulty in understanding fast-paced speaker are taken into account: 9th grade students ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.195$) and 10th grade students ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .881$); 9th grade students ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.195$) and 11th grade students ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .949$), 9th grade students ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.195$) and teachers ($M = 4.63$, $SD = .518$). It can be said that 9th graders do not experience this problem as often as 10th graders, 11th graders and their teachers think. Scheffe post hoc test was computed to determine the difference across teachers and four groups of students with regard to item 28, which is about understanding speakers with varied accents. The post hoc results revealed that only two pairs differ significantly from one another in terms of their perceptions on understanding varied accents: 9th grade students ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.252$) and 11th grade students ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.074$); and 9th grade students ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.252$) and 12th grade students ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.184$) at $p < .05$ level. Unlike 9th grade students, 11th and 12th grade students stated that they often experience difficulty in understanding speakers with varied accents. One of the items that teachers and students differ significantly from each other is item 29. According to the post hoc results for item 29, 9th grade students and teachers were found to have a

statistically significant difference with regard to their perceptions on understanding the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language: 9th grade students ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.321$) and teachers ($M = 3.75$, $SD = .886$) at $p < .05$ level. While teachers believe that their students have difficulty in understanding the meaning of a spoken test without seeing the speaker's body language, 9th grade students do not agree with their teachers.

The findings produced nonsignificant results for item 5, which is about providence of visual clues. Therefore, it can be suggested that 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students and their teachers support the idea that providing visual clues help listeners to understand the spoken text. Except for item 5, the perceptions of the teachers and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students about all of the items categorized under the speaker related listening comprehension problems were found to differ significantly according to the statistical findings.

4.1.1.2. Listener related problems

Ten items of the questionnaire were categorized as listener related problems in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. *Listener related problems*

Item Number	Description
2	feeling nervous about not being able to understand the spoken text
7	answering questions requiring long answers
8	preferring teachers' reading aloud to a recorded spoken text
9	not being able to concentrate on the rest of the message when missing a few words
20	spending great effort and students' feeling tired accordingly
21	quickly forgetting the words that they hear during listening
22	having difficulty in understanding uninteresting texts
23	unclear sounds resulting from the poor quality of the tape recorder
25	not being able to get a general understanding from the first listening
26	poor classroom conditions and outside noise

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to investigate the perceptions of teachers and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students about the items related with listener related problems. The findings yielded a statistically significant difference for seven of ten items among

teachers and four groups of students regarding their mean scores about these listener related problems. The results for one-way ANOVA test were presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9. *ANOVA for teachers' and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students' perceptions of the listener related problems*

Item No		<i>df</i>	F	Sig.
2	Between Groups	4	4.586	.001*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
7	Between Groups	4	1.158	.328
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
8	Between Groups	4	1.549	.187
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
9	Between Groups	4	4.134	.003*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
20	Between Groups	4	3.270	.012*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
21	Between Groups	4	3.584	.007*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
22	Between Groups	4	2.759	.027*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
23	Between Groups	4	2.464	.044*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
25	Between Groups	4	6.321	.000*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
26	Between Groups	4	2.035	.088
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

As Table 4.9. presents, the results indicated a significant difference ($F(4, 556) = 4.586$, $p < .05$) for item 2, ($F(4, 556) = 4.134$, $p < .05$) for item 9, ($F(4, 556) = 3.270$, $p < .05$) for item 20, ($F(4, 556) = 3.584$, $p < .05$) for item 21, ($F(4, 556) = 2.759$, $p < .05$) for item 22, ($F(4, 556) = 2.464$, $p < .05$) for item 23, and ($F(4, 556) = 6.321$, $p < .05$) for item 25, which means that teachers or some of the students attending different grades expressed different opinions. However, the results also showed that there is not a statistically significant difference across five groups with regard to their opinions on item 7 ($F(4, 556) = 1.158$, $p = .328$), item 8 ($F(4, 556) = 1.549$, $p = .187$) and item 26 ($F(4, 556) = 2.035$, $p = .088$). In order to find out which groups have significant differences in terms of the teachers' and high school students' opinions about listener related problems, Tamhane's T2 post hoc test for item 2, item 9, item 22, item for item 23 and Scheffe post hoc test for item 20, item 21, and item 25 were used as follow-up tests. The findings from post hoc tests were presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. *Post hoc test results for item 2, item 9, item 20, item 21, item 22, item 23 and item 25*

Item No	Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Sig.
2	11th	12th	.463	.002*
9	9th	10th	-.636	.020*
		11th	-.584	.006*
		12th	-.510	.027*
		Teachers	-.898	.015*
20	9th	11th	-.526	.028*
21	9th	11th	-.542	.025*
		12th	-.544	.022*
22	9th	11th	-.479	.039*
		12th	-.489	.029*
23	9th	11th	-.481	.028*
25	9th	10th	-.615	.018*
		11th	-.740	.000*
		12th	-.591	.004*

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

As Table 4.10 presents, post hoc comparisons with Tamhane's T2 test indicated that the mean scores for the 11th grade students ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.229$) were significantly different than those of 12th grade students ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.205$) considering their perceptions about item 2. That is to say, 11th grade students tend to often feel nervous and worried when they do not understand the spoken text; however, 12th grade students do not feel nervous about not being able to understand a spoken text as frequently as 11th grade students do. As for item 9, which is about not being able to concentrate on the rest of the passage when missing a few words, post hoc results showed that the scores of the 9th grade students differ significantly ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.131$) from all of the other groups, which are 10th grade students ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.327$), 11th grade students ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.206$), 12th grade students ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.241$), and teachers ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .535$). It can be suggested from the results for item 9 that although teachers and 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students think that students' concentration on the rest of the passage is affected negatively by their missing a few words during listening, 9th grade students do not agree with them. Item 20, another listener related problem about spending great effort and feeling tired accordingly, was analyzed through follow up test to determine which groups differ statistically significant from each other. The findings highlighted that there is a statistically significant difference between 9th grade students ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.224$) and 11th grade students ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.242$) taken into account of their scores on item 20. Otherwise speaking, 11th grade students stated that they spend great effort to understand a spoken text and feel tired in contrast to 9th grade students. Another statistically significant listener related problem was item 21, which is about students' quickly forgetting the words that are heard during listening. Scheffe was used as a follow up test to determine the exact difference among groups. This test revealed that 9th grade students ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.080$) differ significantly from 11th grade ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.299$) and 12th grade students ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.246$) with regard to their mean scores for item 21. Both 11th and 12th grade students were found to share similar perceptions in that they quickly forget the words that they hear while listening contrary to the 9th grade students who claimed the opposite. Likewise, as for the item 22 which is about difficulty in understanding uninteresting texts, the mean scores of 9th grade students were found to differ significantly ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.277$) from the mean scores of 11th grade ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.248$) and 12th grade students ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.225$). That is to say, 11th and 12th graders have more difficulty in understanding uninteresting texts than the 9th graders.

Similar to item 20, the post hoc results for item 23 yielded a statistically significant difference only between the 9th grade (M = 3.66, SD= 1.258) and 11th grade students (M = 4.14, SD= 1.148), which means that 9th grade students stated that they are not so affected by the quality of the recorder for listening comprehension as often as 11th grades students do. Concerning item 25, which is about not being able to get a general understanding from the first listening, three pairs were found to have a statistically significant difference regarding their mean scores for item 25. 9th grade students (M = 2.91, SD= 1.171) were found to differ statistically significant from the 10th grade students (M = 3.52, SD= 1.114), 11th grade students (M = 3.65, SD= 1.203) and 12th grade students (M = 3.50, SD= 1.148). Regarding their perceptions on getting a general understanding from the first listening, 9th grade students think that getting a general understanding from the first listening is not so problematic for them as the other students attending different grades do.

To sum up, the mean scores of five groups with respect to three of ten items were found to be statistically nonsignificant. In other words, not only teachers but also high school students at all grades were found to share similar perceptions about difficulty in answering questions requiring long answers, preference for teachers' reading aloud to a recorded spoken text, and being affected by poor classroom conditions and outside noise. Considering the statistically significant results, it can be concluded that 9th grade students have different perceptions from the other students attending different grades for the listener related problems except for item 2, which is about feeling nervous about not being able to understand the spoken text.

4.1.1.3. Strategy related problems

In the questionnaire, five of thirty items were related with problems concerning strategy use. These items were shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11. (Continuing) *Strategy related problems*

Item Number	Description
10	predicting words
12	improving listening comprehension through pre-listening information
19	understanding the spoken test through background knowledge
24	paying attention to topic markers

Table 4.11. (Continuing) *Strategy related problems*

Item Number	Description
30	listening to every detail to get the main idea

In order to identify the perceptions of the teachers and high school students at different grades on strategy related problems, a one-way ANOVA test was run. The findings indicated a statistically significant difference among teachers and four groups of students regarding their mean scores concerning strategy related problems only for one of the five items, item 12, which evaluates the perceptions of students and teachers about improving listening comprehension through pre-listening information. In contrast to item 12, the findings produced nonsignificant results for item 10, item 19, item 24, and item 30 (See Table 4.12).

Table 4.12. *ANOVA for teachers' and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students' perceptions of the strategy related problems*

Item No		<i>df</i>	F	Sig.
10	Between Groups	4	2.155	.073
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
12	Between Groups	4	6.770	.000*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
19	Between Groups	4	1.293	.271
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
24	Between Groups	4	.895	.467
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
30	Between Groups	4	.656	.623
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

In order to determine which of the groups differ significantly from each other with respect to item 12, Tamhane's T2 test was utilized as a follow-up test. The results are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13. *Post hoc test results for item 12*

Item No	Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Sig.
12	9th	11th	-.538	.009*
		Teachers	-1.000	.006*
	10th	Teachers	-.810	.030*
	11th	9th	.538	.009*
		12th	.502	.000*
	12th	11th	-.502	.000*
		Teachers	-.964	.009*
	Teachers	9th	1.000	.006*
		10th	.810	.030*
		12th	.964	.009*

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

As can be seen from Table 4.13., the follow up test results revealed that almost all of the groups differ significantly from each other with reference to their mean scores for item 12. Regarding their perceptions of improving listening comprehension through providing pre-listening information about the text, item 12, 9th graders were found to differ significantly ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.295$) from the 11th graders ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.050$), and teachers ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .535$), considering their mean scores for the item 12. Likewise, it was found that there is a statistically significant difference between the 10th graders ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.202$) and teachers ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .535$) regarding their perceptions on item 12. Considering the mean scores for item 12, 11th graders ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.050$) were also found to differ significantly from the 9th ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.295$) and 12th graders ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.102$). Moreover, the results yielded that there is a statistically significant difference for 12th graders between two pairs: 12th graders ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.102$) and 11th graders ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.050$), and 12th graders ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.102$) and teachers ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .535$) in terms of their mean scores for providing

pre-listening information in order to improve students' listening comprehension. Considering the post hoc results, it can be inferred that all of the students and teachers think that pre-listening information about the text can improve their listening comprehension. However, the mean scores for their perceptions on improving listening comprehension through pre-listening information can be ranged from the lowest to the highest as 9th graders (M = 3.50, SD= 1.295), 12th graders (M = 3.54, SD= 1.102), 10th graders (M = 3.69, SD= 1.202), and 11th graders (M = 4.04, SD= 1.050) and teachers (M = 4.50, SD= .535). Teachers can be said to believe that pre-listening information about the text can help their students' listening comprehension more than their students think.

4.1.1.4. Task related problems

Five items in the questionnaire were concerned with task related problems (See Table 4.14).

Table 4.14. Task related problems

Item Number	Description
3	holding a discussion after listening
4	predicting what speakers are going to say from the title
11	writing a summary of the spoken test
14	filling a chart or graphic while listening
17	taking notes while listening

To evaluate the perceptions of four groups of students at high school and their teachers regarding task related listening comprehension problems, a one-way ANOVA test was performed. According to the findings obtained from the one-way ANOVA test, there is a statistically significant difference for all of the items concerning task related problems across teachers and four groups of students with reference to their mean scores about these items: (F (4, 556) = 6.477, p= .000) concerning item 3, (F (4, 556) = 4.957, p= .001) for item 4, (F (4, 556) = 4.404, p= .002) for item 11, (F (4, 556) = 3.281, p= .011) for item 14 and (F (4, 556) = 2.615, p= .034) for item 17. The findings for one-way ANOVA test was shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15. *ANOVA for teachers' and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students' perceptions of the task related problems*

Item No		<i>df</i>	F	Sig.
3	Between Groups	4	6.477	.000*
	Within Groups	556		
4	Between Groups	4	4.957	.001*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
11	Between Groups	4	4.404	.002*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
14	Between Groups	4	3.281	.011*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
17	Between Groups	4	2.615	.034*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

In order to find out which groups have significant differences in terms of their mean scores for task related listening problems, Scheffe was used as a post hoc test for item 3, item 4, item 11, item 14, and Tukey HSD was performed for item 17 as a follow up test (See Table 4.16).

Table 4.16. *Post Hoc test results for item 3, item 4, item 11, item 14, and item 17*

Item No	Grade	<i>Grade</i>	Mean Difference	Sig.
3	9th	11th	-.680	.001*
		12th	-.738	.000*
4	9th	11th	-.657	.002*
		12th	-.635	.003*
11	9th	11th	-.649	.003*
14	9th	12th	-.545	.017*
17	9th	11th	-.461	.040*
		12th	-.454	.042*

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

According to Scheffe post hoc results, only two of the pairs were found to have a statistically significant difference regarding their answers for item 3: 9th graders ($M=2.36$, $SD= 1.136$) and 11th graders ($M = 3.04$, $SD= 1.280$), and 9th graders ($M=2.36$, $SD= 1.136$) and 12th graders ($M = 3.10$, $SD= 1.297$) at $p<.05$ level. It can be concluded from the results that while 11th and 12th grade students reported to share similar perceptions in having difficulty for holding a discussion after listening to the spoken text, the 9th graders stated they do not experience difficulty for after listening discussion tasks as frequently as 11th and 12th graders do. On the other hand, the other groups of students and teachers were not found to differ significantly from each other considering their answers for the item 3. Similarly, 9th graders ($M = 2.27$, $SD= 1.047$) were found to differ significantly from the 11th ($M = 2.93$, $SD= 1.315$) and 12th graders ($M = 2.91$, $SD= 1.274$) in terms of their mean scores for the item 4, which is related with predicting the content of the spoken text from the title. In other words, 11th and 12th graders share similar perceptions about having difficulty in predicting the content of the spoken text from the title, while 9th graders do not agree with them concerning the experienced frequency of this problem. The results for item 11 also showed a statistically significant difference only between 9th graders ($M = 2.89$, $SD= 1.272$) and 11th graders ($M = 3.54$, $SD= 1.247$) concerning their perceptions of writing a summary of the spoken text. According to the results for item 11, it can be stated that 11th grade students experience more difficulty in writing the summary of the spoken text than the 9th graders do. According to the post hoc results for item 14, only one pair, 9th graders ($M = 2.37$, $SD= 1.286$) and 12th graders ($M= 2.91$, $SD=1.260$) was found to have a statistically significant difference with respect to their perceptions on the difficulty of filling a chart or graphic while listening. Inferring from the results, it can be said that 12th graders have more difficulty in filling a chart or graphic while listening than the 9th graders do. Similar to item 3 and item 4, the post hoc results for item 17 showed that there is a statistically significant difference between two pairs about their perceptions on difficulty in taking notes while listening. In other words, 9th graders ($M= 2.75$, $SD= 1.275$) differ significantly from the 11th ($M= 3.21$, $SD= 1.279$) and 12th graders ($M= 3.20$, $SD= 1.269$) regarding their opinions on the difficulty in taking notes while listening. 11th graders can be said to experience difficulty in taking notes while listening more frequently than the 9th graders. In conclusion, it can be said that 9th graders have

different perceptions about the task related listening problems with the 11th and 12th graders for most of the items.

4.1.1.5. *Message related problems*

In the questionnaire, three of the items are about the perceptions of the students and teachers based on message-related problems (See Table 4.17).

Table 4.17. *Message related problems*

Item Number	Description
6	interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text
15	interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension
27	interference of difficult grammar structures with students' listening comprehension

With the purpose of investigating the perceptions of students at different grades and their teachers for the items about message related problems, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. The findings showed a statistically significant difference among five groups of participants regarding their mean scores for all of the message related items. The findings for the one-way ANOVA test was presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18. *ANOVA for teachers' and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students' perceptions of the message related problems*

Item No		<i>df</i>	F	Sig.
6	Between Groups	4	4.175	.002*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
15	Between Groups	4	4.106	.003*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		
27	Between Groups	4	3.044	.017*
	Within Groups	556		
	Total	560		

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

It can be seen from the Table 4.18 that the findings yielded a statistically significant difference among five groups of participants ($F(4, 556) = 4.175, p = .002$) for item 6, ($F(4, 556) = 4.106, p = .003$), for item 15 and ($F(4, 556) = 3.044, p = .017$) for item 27 at $p \leq 0.05$ level. In order to identify which groups have significant differences taking into account of their mean scores for item 6, item 15 and item 27, Scheffe test for item 6 and item 27, and Tamhane's T2 post hoc test for item 15 were performed. The findings of the post hoc tests were shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19. *Post Hoc test results for item 6, item 15, and item 27*

Item No	Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Sig.
6	9th	11th	-.517	.020*
15	9th	10th	-.614	.007*
		11th	-.538	.008*
27	9th	12th	-.532	.019*

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$).

The item 6 was about the difficulty in interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text. The findings obtained from post hoc tests indicated that only one pair, 9th graders ($M=3.03, SD=1.108$) and 11th graders ($M= 3.55, SD=1.170$) have statistically significant differences considering their mean scores for item 6, which means that 11th graders experience difficulties in interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text more often than the 9th graders. Item 15 was about the effect of unfamiliar words on listening comprehension of the students. Similar to item 6, 9th graders ($M= 3.39, SD=1.263$) were found to differ significantly from the 10th ($M= 4.00, SD=1.053$) and 11th graders ($M= 3.92, SD=1.120$) in terms of their mean scores for item 15. In other words, 10th and 11th graders think that unfamiliar words interfere with their listening comprehension although 9th graders do not face with this problem as frequently as the 11th and 12th graders do. Another message related problem was item 27, which is about the effect of difficult grammatical structures on students' listening comprehension. Considering the mean scores for the item 27, only 9th graders ($M= 3.09, SD=1.1247$) were found to differ significantly from the 12th graders ($M= 3.62, SD=1.181$). It can be concluded from the post hoc results that the 9th graders do not experience message related problems as often

as the other graders do. In other words, 9th graders share different perceptions with the other graders regarding message related problems.

4.1.2. Findings about Research Question 2: What are the Turkish Anatolian high school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it?

The second research question in the present study aimed to find out the opinions of student participants of the study about the factors that might have an effect on their listening performance in English and their suggestions for improving it. To reach this aim two-open ended questions were asked to all of the students. Their answers for these questions were categorized through content analysis and presented with reference to their grades and the listening problems scale of the questionnaire, which has five subcategories as speaker, message, task, listener and strategy related problems.

4.1.2.1. 9th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

Majority of the students who responded to these questions reported that lack of adequate vocabulary and pronunciation affects their performance negatively, which is parallel with the item 15 from the category of message related listening comprehension problems. Besides, item 15 was also about the interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension. Some of the 9th grade responders highlighted the importance of vocabulary knowledge in comprehension with reference to the pronunciation as follows:

Student 33: *"Kelimelerin telaffuzunu bilmediğimiz zaman zorluk çekiyoruz. Bunu önlemek için kelime bilgimizi artırmalı, telaffuzları iyi öğrenmeliyiz."*

[We experience difficulties when we do not know the pronunciation of the words. In order to deal with it, we must improve our vocabulary knowledge, and learn the pronunciation of the words well].

In addition, most of the 9th graders think that there is a close relation between the vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation, and improving their skills in vocabulary and pronunciation might lead an improvement in their listening performance. A great majority

of the students also suggested that listening songs in English is helpful for improving their pronunciation. Specifically, one of them provided a basis for this suggestion by saying:

Student 15: “Üç yıldır İngilizce müzikler dinliyor ve söylüyorum. Bunlar telaffuzumun gelişmesini sağladı.”

[I have been listening to and singing songs in English for three years. They have improved my pronunciation].

Moreover, most of them suggested that reading books in the target language and doing reading comprehension activities can also improve the vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge.

Another factor reported by 9th graders were their lack of adequate grammar knowledge to understand longer texts. Some of the 9th graders commented that they do not know sentence structures well enough to understand a spoken text. Therefore, they suggested that learning sentence structure might be useful for listening comprehension. 9th graders also reported some speaker related listening comprehension problems. 9th graders said that they have difficulty in understanding the fast paced speech and unfamiliar accents in the spoken text. The quote below illustrates these problems:

Student 15: “Kelimeler anlaşılabilir, yüksek sesle ve aksansız söylendiğinde, kelimeleri daha iyi anlayabileceğimi düşünüyorum.

[I think I can understand the words better when they are uttered clearly, loudly and without an accent]”.

Furthermore, it was frequently reported by 9th graders that the level of the listening materials which they are exposed to does not match with their English proficiency levels; therefore, they stated to find these materials boring and too detailed. For this reason, 9th graders suggested as a solution that listening materials should include slow paced speech and match with their English levels as well as being simple referring to the fact that listening material has an effect on their motivation. The quote below illustrates the rationale behind their suggested solutions:

Student 19: “Dinleme metinlerinin daha sade ve anlaşılır olması bizim daha çok ilgilenmemizi sağlar ve ilgilendiğimiz şeyi anlayarak yaparız bunun da gelişmemize katkı sağlayacağını düşünüyorum”

[I think that listening texts' being plain and comprehensible draw our interest more, and we do things that we are interested in a comprehensive manner which will contribute to our improvement]."

In order to adjust the pace of speech to the levels of the students, 9th graders also pointed out their preference for the teachers' reading aloud rather than the speakers in the recording.

In addition, a small number of the 9th graders were also commented on some listener related factors. They stated that their having listening and speaking anxiety in foreign language during or after listening sessions, poor quality of the tape recorders focusing on other subjects at school and teachers' spending little time for improving English skills, lack of attention, and interference of learning a second foreign language, German, also affect their listening performance.

Regarding these factors, 9th graders suggested solutions for dealing with these problems. These solutions were listed with reference to the subcategories and items of the questionnaire (See in Table 4.20).

Table 4.20. *9th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem Category	Suggested solutions
5	Speaker	• watching captioned version of the videos, movies, educational programmes in English
13		• providing visual clues for the text
29		
22	Listener	• listening to songs in English • playing games in English • watching videos in English
28	Speaker	• improving pronunciation
15	Message	• improving vocabulary knowledge by reading books in English and doing reading comprehension activities • watching captioned videos,

Table 4.20. (Continuing) *9th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem category	Suggested solutions
27	Message	- listening to songs in the foreign language - being instructed about elements of a sentence structure to improve their listening comprehension
3	Task	- practicing listening and speaking skills more often in the class, - teachers' use of English in the class while speaking rather than L1.
18	Speaker	- adjusting the level of the material to our English levels, - teachers' reading aloud the spoken text with pauses.
1 16	Speaker	- listening materials having slower pace of speech which is plain and clear enough - pausing the recording after each sentence for translation
8	Listener	teachers' reading aloud the listening text and stories in English

Note: Item 5 is related to providing visual clues to understand the spoken text.

Item 13 is related to providing tape scripts.

Item 29 is related to understanding the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.

Item 22 is related to understanding uninteresting spoken texts.

Item 28 is related to understanding varied accents.

Item 15 is related to interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension.

Item 27 is related with the interference of difficult grammatical structures with listening comprehension.

Item 3 is related to difficulty in discussion after the spoken text.

Item 18 is related to understanding fast paced speech in spoken text.

Item 1 is related to understanding the words that are not pronounced clearly.

Item 16 is related to understanding natural speech full of hesitations and pauses.

Item 8 is related to preference for listening teacher's reading aloud than a recorded spoken text.

As Table 4.20 illustrates, most of the suggestions that 9th graders made were about the listening problems related with speaker and listener factors. They also pointed out their suggestions about solutions for some of the message and task related listening problems. The most frequently reported suggestions by 9th graders were watching videos, series and movies in captions, providing visual clues for the listening text, listening to songs and playing games in English, and doing more classroom activities for improving vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge as well as listening and speaking skills. In addition, they commented that reading books in English and doing reading comprehension activities as well as teachers' speaking in English rather than using their native language can aid to improve not only listening but also their speaking skills as well. Moreover, they asked teachers for teaching them the elements of a sentence to understand difficult grammatical structures. The 9th grade participants also implied that the level of the listening materials do not match with their levels of English. Therefore, it was suggested as a solution by them that the listening materials should be adjusted to the English proficiency levels of them and the spoken text should be plain, clear and slow. Furthermore, in order to improve listening comprehension, they stated their preference for their teachers' reading aloud to the spoken text or stories and pausing after each sentence to translate the sentence into Turkish.

4.1.2.2. 10th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

In terms of the factors influencing the listening performance, 10th graders commented that lack of adequate vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge, lack of visual clues for the listening text, lack of practice with listening skill, speakers' speaking too fast, poor recording quality and the level of the listening texts are the major factors affecting their listening performance. The quotes below point out some of these problems and solutions for them:

Student 11: "*Daha çok İngilizce metin dinlenmeli, pratik yapılmalı.*
[More listening practice should be done].

Regarding the quote above, it can be said that most of the 10th graders believe in that more time should be spent on listening skill during classroom hours. Through practice, 10th graders think that they can improve their listening performance in English. In addition, the following quotes show the students' suggested solutions for teachers' choice about the listening materials.

Student 8: "Dinlemelerde daha yavaş konuşan insanlar olmalı"
[People in the spoken texts should speak slower].

Student 9: "Anlaşılması kolay parçalar seçilmeli"
[Listening texts which can be understood easily should be chosen].

These comments imply that 10th graders think that the level and content of the spoken text do not match with their English proficiency levels. In order to deal with these problems, 10th graders stated their suggested solutions for improving their listening performance. Each of these solutions were matched with the items and categories of the questionnaire for a deeper understanding (See Table 4.21).

Table 4.21. *10th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem category	Suggested solutions
5	Speaker	• watching subtitled version of the videos, movies, and series both in Turkish and English
13		• providing visual clues for the text
29		
22	Listener	• listening to songs in English and translating them
		• playing games in English through smartphones
		• watching videos in English
28	Speaker	• improving pronunciation,
		• learning different accents and being familiar with them,

Table 4.21. (Continuing) *10th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem category	Suggested solutions
15	Message	- improving vocabulary knowledge through vocabulary games, - vocabulary learning techniques
3	Task	- practicing listening and speaking skills more often in the class, - chatting with speakers of English
18	Speaker	- adjusting the level of the material to our English levels, - teacher's reading aloud the spoken text with pauses.
1	Speaker	listening materials having slower pace of speech which is plain and clear enough to comprehend
16		pausing the recording after each sentence for translation
8	Listener	teachers' reading aloud the listening text and stories in English
23	Listener	providing students with tablets and conducting listening exercises and exams through tablets
26		
6	Message	listening to short spoken texts

Note: Item 5 is related to providing visual clues to understand the spoken text.

Item 13 is related to providing tape scripts.

Item 29 is related to understanding the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.

Item 22 is related to understanding uninteresting spoken texts.

Item 28 is related to understanding varied accents.

Item 15 is related to interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension.

Item 3 is related to difficulty in discussion after the spoken text.

Item 18 is related to understanding fast paced speech in spoken text.

Item 1 is related to understanding the words that are not pronounced clearly.

Item 16 is related to understanding natural speech full of hesitations and pauses.

Item 8 is related to preference for listening teacher's reading aloud than a recorded spoken text.

Item 23 is related to unclear sounds resulting from the poor quality of the tape recorder.

Item 26 is related to poor classroom conditions and outside noise.

Item 6 is about difficulty in understanding long spoken texts.

Similar to 9th graders, the points highlighted by the 10th graders were mostly about suggested solutions for speaker and listener related problems. Likewise, the most frequently stated opinions by 10th graders were watching videos, series or movies with subtitles in Turkish and English, providing visual clues for the text, listening to music in English and translating them, doing more practice for listening and speaking skills, and adjusting the level of listening materials to them, which has plain, clear and slow speech. They stated that the level of the listening materials is not suitable for them; therefore, they demanded adjustment for the listening materials with respect to their levels or their teachers' reading aloud the listening text. Different from the 9th graders, the students attending 10th graders also emphasized the importance of vocabulary learning techniques to gain vocabulary knowledge. 10th graders also believe that chatting with speakers of English might help them practicing and improving their communicative skills as well as being familiar with different accents. Furthermore, they stated that conducting listening exams and listening practice through personal tablets can be useful in dealing with the problems resulting from poor tape recorder and classroom conditions.

4.1.2.3. 11th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

The 11th grade participants of this study were the students focusing on different fields of study at high school such as Science and Maths class, the Turkish and Mathematics class, the Literature and Social Sciences class, and Language class. 11th graders listed the factors that interfere with their listening performance as speaker, message, task, listener and strategy related factors. As for speaker related factors, they reported that varied accents and spoken text including features of connected speech such as elision, linking or catenation, or assimilation interfere with their listening comprehension performance in English. Some quotes from 11th graders point out these problems as follows:

Student 20: "İngilizce konuşurken cümleler baskılayarak akıcı söylenmelidir. Ağız içi konuşmalar anlamamı zorlaştırır."

[The sentences should be uttered in a stressed and fluent way. Slurred speech [connected speech] interferes with my listening comprehension].

Student 9: “Konuşmacıların çok hızlı konuşması ve kullandıkları İngilizce’nin anlaşılır olmaması”

[Speakers’ speaking too fast and their unintelligible use of English].

Both of these students highlighted the fact that they have difficulty in understanding the speakers in the listening material. Moreover, what they referred as “slurred” or “unintelligible” speech might be related with the features of connected speech such as elision, catenation or assimilation. They also reported some listener related problems such as having negative attitudes towards English, lack of concentration and their low English proficiency levels. In addition, they also stated that they do not spend enough time for practicing listening and speaking skills but focus on grammar at English classes, which might be associated with their task related problems since discussion after the listening text as a task requires both listening and speaking skills. Besides, they pointed out to have difficulty in understanding the spoken text as a result of inadequate vocabulary knowledge, which is a message related problem. Other reported problems by the 11th graders were lack of visual clues, which is a speaker related problem and understanding different accents, which is a listener related problem. Considering these problems, 11th graders’ suggested solutions were listed in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22. *11th graders’ suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem Category	Suggested Solutions
5	Speaker	• watching subtitled or captioned version of the videos, movies, series, and audio stories
13		• providing visual clues for the text
29		
22	Listener	• listening to songs in English and translating them
		• playing games in English
		• watching videos in English

Table 4.22. (Continuing) *11th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem category	Suggested Solutions
28	Speaker	- improving pronunciation, - learning different accents and being familiar with them,
15	Message	- improving vocabulary knowledge through vocabulary games, - reading books in English with their Turkish translations
3	Task	- practicing listening and speaking skills more often in the class, - allocating one classroom hour for listening every week - chatting with speakers of English
14	Task	sentence structure practice by addressing elements of a sentence
27	Message	
18	Speaker	- adjusting the level of the material to our English levels, - simple spoken texts - spoken texts with speakers speaking slowly - teacher's reading aloud the spoken text with pauses.
1	Speaker	- listening materials having slower pace of speech which is plain and clear enough to comprehend - pausing the recording after each sentence for translation
16		
8	Listener	teachers' reading aloud the listening text and translating it instead of a tape recorder
23	Listener	providing students with tablets
26		
22	Listener	- providing listening materials having interesting topics - authentic videos, games, songs
6	Message	listening to short spoken texts

Table 4.22. (Continuing) *11th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Note: Item 5 is related to providing visual clues to understand the spoken text.

Item 13 is related to providing tape scripts.

Item 29 is related to understanding the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.

Item 22 is related to understanding uninteresting spoken texts.

Item 28 is related to understanding varied accents.

Item 15 is related to interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension.

Item 3 is related to difficulty in discussion after the spoken text.

Item 14 is related to difficulty in writing a summary of the spoken text.

Item 27 is related to interference of difficult grammatical structures with listening comprehension.

Item 18 is related to understanding fast paced speech in spoken text.

Item 1 is related to understanding the words that are not pronounced clearly.

Item 16 is related to understanding natural speech full of hesitations and pauses.

Item 8 is related to preference for listening teacher's reading aloud than a recorded spoken text.

Item 23 is related to unclear sounds resulting from the poor quality of the tape recorder.

Item 22 is related to difficulty in understanding uninteresting topics

Item 26 is related to poor classroom conditions and outside noise.

Item 6 is about difficulty in understanding long spoken texts.

As Table 4.22 illustrates, 11th graders have similar suggested solutions with the 9th and 10th graders. Their top suggested solutions, which were also agreed by the 9th and 10th graders, were watching subtitled or captioned videos, series or movies and providing visual clues for the text, listening to songs and playing games in English, doing more practice for listening and speaking skills, and adjusting the level of listening materials to them, which has plain, clear and slow speech. As for improving their listening performance, some of the students highlighted the importance of doing more practice for listening skill as follows:

Student 3: "Yeterli bir şekilde dinleme yapmadığımız için kulağımız alışmıyor. Daha çok dinleme yapılabilir. Ve dinlediğimiz parçanın yazılı bir şekilde elimizde bulunması gerekir. Ve yazılı metni görüp yanlışlarımızı tahlil edebiliriz. Ayrıca dinleme metinleri daha eğlenceli metinler olabilir."

[We are not able to familiarize with listening due to the inadequate practice for listening. More listening practice can be done. And the tape script must be provided while listening. And we can analyze our mistakes with reference to the tape script. In addition, the spoken texts should be more enjoyable].

As the quote illustrates, 11th graders can be said to feel the need for more listening practice, and they want to have the tape script of the spoken text while listening in order to find out their mistakes. They also emphasized the importance of the spoken texts' being interesting and enjoyable. Therefore, most of the 11th graders also suggested watching captioned or subtitled video, movies or series or listening stories with captions and listening to songs and playing games in English stating that they are catchy. Some of their statements were reported below:

Student 16: "Yabancı diziler izlenebilir. Sesli hikaye kitapları dinleyebiliriz. Bu şekilde dinleme performansımızı geliştirebiliriz."

[Authentic videos might be watched. We can listen to audio stories. In this way, we can improve our listening performance.]

Student 7: "Sık sık yabancı şarkılar dinlenmeli. Çok fazla yabancı şarkı dinlediğim için iyi yapabiliyorum."

[We should often listen to songs in foreign language. I can do well thanks to listening to songs in foreign language much.]

Student 20: "Dinleme metinleri dinlemek yerine haftanın belirli saatlerinde alt yazılı filmler izlenebilir."

[Instead of listening to the spoken text, subtitled movies can be watched in scheduled classroom hours weekly.]

Student 12: "Daha çok pratik yapma fırsatımız olsa bir nebze ilerletebiliriz diye düşünüyorum. Dizi, film, şarkı gibi şeyleri dinleyerek veya izleyerek geliştirilebilir."

[I think we can achieve an improvement to some extent if we do more practice for listening. It can be improved through things such as watching series, movies or listening to songs.]

In addition, the majority of the 11th graders highlighted the necessity for listening practice as follows:

Student 18: "Haftalık ders programının bir saatinde dinleme uygulamaları yapsak daha iyi olur."

[It would be better to spare one hour in a week for listening practice].

Student 15: "Haftada bir dersin kısa bir bölümünde dinleme yapılabilir"

[Listening practice can be done in a short part of the lesson weekly].

Student 5: “Bence daha çok dinlemeye yönelik olan bir ders geliştirilmeli ve düzenli olarak en az haftada bir dinleme çalışması yapılmalıdır.”

[I think more listening-focused lesson should be developed and listening practice should be done once a week on a regular basis].

Student 14: “İngilizce cümle kurmakta ve İngilizce bir şeyler konuşmakta hala zorlanıyoruz. Bunun için ayrı çalışmalar istiyoruz. Daha yavaş metinlerden başlanabilir ve dinleme performansımızı geliştirmek adına normal okul saatlerinde ayrı bir çalışma yapılabilir. Bu çalışmalar sayesinde dinleme performansımız gelişebilir.

[We still have difficulty in forming sentences and speaking in English. Hence, we want practice for this issue. It can be started from the spoken texts with slower paced speech, and listening practice can be done in classroom hours in order to improve our performance. Thanks to these practices, we can improve our listening performance.]

As quoted above, 11th grade students can be said to feel that one classroom hour in a week should be spared for listening practice regularly since they stated that they have difficulty in understanding varied accents and their listening comprehension can be improved via more listening practice. Furthermore, a small number of the 11th graders stated that practice with sentence structures can improve their listening comprehension performance while majority of them stated that English lessons should be less grammar focused. Likewise, it was reported that improving speaking performance can lead to improvement in listening performance. In order to improve listening and speaking performance, it was suggested that chatting with native speakers and using applications for speaking might be useful. Some students also felt that it is necessary to go abroad and take English courses in countries where English is spoken as a native language. Others suggested avoiding the use of L1 by their teachers in the classroom as a solution for improving their listening and speaking performance. In addition, they also suggested that listening materials should be plain and include clear and slow speech which is suitable for their English proficiency levels or teachers should read aloud the text adjusting the pace in accordance with the students' levels. Some of the 11th grade participants also pointed out that listening skills should be practiced starting from early ages.

4.1.2.4. 12th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

Similar to 11th graders, the 12th grade participants of this study were also the students who chose different fields of study at high school such as Science and Maths class, the Turkish and Mathematics class, the Literature and Social Sciences class, and Language class. The listening problems stated as the most frequently by 12th graders were speaker and listener related problems. Regarding speaker related listening problems, majority of the students reported that they have difficulty in understanding varied accents and fast connected speech in the spoken text. They also pointed out the need for improving vocabulary and pronunciation to familiarize with different accents; hence, they suggested the use of authentic materials instead of grammar-focused spoken texts or teachers' reading aloud the spoken text. Moreover, most of them stated that spoken texts are boring, instead of them, captioned videos, cartoons, series, movies or songs should be used because they are much more interesting, and visual clues facilitates their listening comprehension. Concerning these problems, some of the students supported their suggested solutions by stating:

Student 3: "Ortaokul hocamızın hikaye ve görsel şeylerle ders anlatması benim hala o konuları hatırlamama yardımcı oluyor. Görsel şeylerden yararlanılmalı.

[In middle school, my English teacher's presenting the subjects using visual aids and stories still help me recall those subjects. Visual aids should be used].

Student 4: "Yabancı video, müzik veya diyalogları dinlemek ve okumak bize yardımcı olabilir."

[Watching videos in foreign language and listening to music and conversations can help us].

A great number of 12th graders also criticized the planning of English lessons. They think that they do not learn English used in daily life. According to 12th graders, English lessons focus on grammar and allocated time for listening and speaking practice is inadequate. For them, improving speaking and listening skills as well as vocabulary knowledge should precede grammar instruction. Some of the utterances related with these problems were stated below:

Student 17: “Biz yaklaşık olarak 4. Sınıftan beri İngilizce öğreniyoruz ama bize İngilizce’yi günlük hayatta kullanılabilecek şekilde öğretmiyorlar biz karşımızdaki insana grammar anlatmayacağız sonuçta

[We have been learning English since the 4th grade; however, we have not been taught English for daily use. We are not going to teach grammar to the person whom we speak to].

Student 10: “Derste diyaloga girilmesi olabilir. Çünkü bir bebek yaşadığı ortamın dilini 3-4 yılda kapar ama biz 12 senedir görüyoruz hala anlamıyoruz. Konuşmuyoruz, sadece formül görüyoruz, tabi anlamayız ve konuşamayız.

[We can have conversations in the class taking into account of the fact that a child can acquire the spoken language around him. However, we cannot understand English despite learning it for 12 years. We cannot speak, we learn only formulas, as a result neither can we understand nor can we speak.]

Student 8: “Anlamaya, anlatmaya konuşmaya yönelik değil dilbilgisine bağlı kalarak İngilizce öğretilmesinin hiçbir faydası olmadığını düşünüyorum.

[I think it is no use to teach English grammar focused rather than comprehension and speaking].

Student 36: “İngilizce dersi dilbilgisi işlenerek devam etmekte konuşmaya ağırlık verilmeli derslerde. Dinleme, okumaya dayalı derslerin işlenmesi gerekir.

[English lessons have been carried out by focusing on grammar, speaking should be focused during lessons. English lessons should be carried out focusing on listening and speaking skills].

Student 27: “Bize gramer öğretiliyor ama İngilizce bilmiyoruz, konuşamıyoruz. İlk önce konuşmayı öğrensek daha sonra grammar öğrensek daha başarılı olunur bence.”

[We have been instructed grammar but we do not know English and we cannot speak it. I think we can be more successful if we learn to speak prior to grammar].

All of the quotes highlight that 12th graders think more time should be spared for listening and speaking activities considering the fact that learning grammar alone does not result in improvement in listening and speaking practice. They also added that more listening practice should be done starting from early ages in primary schools.

According to 12th graders, English lessons should focus on improving speaking and listening skills rather than grammar instruction. In addition, they stated that teachers should always speak in English and prepare debate games as speaking and listening practice in order to improve listening and speaking skills. Moreover, apart from school,

they believe that using online resources, games and applications prepared for listening and speaking practice can lead improvement in these skills. With reference to listener related problems, they feel that aptitude for language learning, lack of motivation, as well as their low English levels of proficiency have also effect on their listening performance. 12th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening performance can be seen in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23. *12th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening problem category	Suggested solutions
5	Speaker	• watching subtitled or captioned version of the videos, movies, series, and cartoons
13		• providing visual clues for the text
29		
22	Listener	• listening to songs in English and translating them • playing games in English • watching authentic videos in English
28	Speaker	• improving pronunciation, • learning different accents and being familiar with them,
15	Message	• improving vocabulary knowledge through vocabulary games,
3	Task	• practicing listening and speaking skills more often in the class • less grammar focused lessons • first being taught with speaking prior to grammar • allocating one classroom hour for listening every week • chatting with speakers of English • using applications for improving listening and speaking,

Table 4.23. (Continuing) *12th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Related item number	Listening category	problem	Suggested solutions
18	Speaker		• preference for teacher's use of English in the class instead of L1 • adjusting the level of the material to our English levels, • authentic materials instead of grammar focused spoken texts. • simple and clear spoken texts • practice with stress, rhythm and intonation • teacher's reading aloud the spoken text with pauses. • getting familiar with different accents through more listening practice,
1	Speaker		• listening materials having slower pace of speech which is plain and clear enough to comprehend
16			• listening to the recording with intervals
8	Listener		• teachers' reading aloud the listening text and translating it instead of a tape recorder • teachers' reading aloud the listening text and translating it instead of a tape recorder
22	Listener		• providing listening materials having interesting topics • authentic videos, games, songs
6	Message		• listening to short spoken texts

Note: Item 5 is related to providing visual clues to understand the spoken text.

Item 13 is related to providing tape scripts.

Item 29 is related to understanding the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.

Item 22 is related to understanding uninteresting spoken texts.

Item 28 is related to understanding varied accents.

Item 15 is related to interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension.

Item 3 is related to difficulty in discussion after the spoken text.

Item 18 is related to understanding fast paced speech in spoken text.

Item 1 is related to understanding the words that are not pronounced clearly.

Table 4.23. (Continuing) *12th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening comprehension performance in English*

Note: Item 16 is related to understanding natural speech full of hesitations and pauses.

Item 8 is related to preference for listening teacher's reading aloud than a recorded spoken text.

Item 22 is related to difficulty in understanding uninteresting topics

Item 6 is about difficulty in understanding long spoken texts.

4.1.3. Findings about Research Question 3: What are the high school teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and their reported practices for dealing with these problems?

The third research question addressed in this study aimed to investigate the teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and the way they deal with these problems in the classroom. To achieve this purpose, all of the teachers were asked to list the listening comprehension problems of their students prior to the listening comprehension questionnaire. Further, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven of the teachers, who were willing to participate, in order to gain an insight of their current practices for dealing with these problems.

4.1.3.1. *High school teachers' opinions about their students' listening comprehension problems and their reported practices for dealing with these problems*

In the first part of the study, teachers were asked to list the listening comprehension problems of their students for the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students taking four hours of English and 11th and 12th grade language class students taking 14 hours of English in a week separately. The data gathered from these lists showed that the listening comprehension problems of the students do not differ much with respect to the time spent for learning English at school. The findings revealed that teachers tend to think that their students mostly have speaker and listener related problems as well as message and strategy use related problems (see Table 4.24). However, they did not state any task related listening problems. With reference to the students' listener related problems, teachers stated that their students have listening comprehension problems due to their lack of self-confidence and readiness for listening skill, their being not accustomed to listening practice because of the limited classroom hours of English and limited self- study, their being unmotivated and being inattentive towards listening, their prejudices and negative

attitudes towards listening in English such as listening anxiety, having difficulty in understanding unfamiliar topics and remembering the details of a spoken text. In addition, one of the teachers also stated that poor musical ability might also have an effect on their listening performance. Further, another teacher also commented that students attending language classes study English by focusing on the university exam system. Since the listening skill is not tested in the university language exam, it was reported that students do not feel motivated for improving their listening skills at high school. Additionally, teachers responded that students also can be distracted from the outside noise easily and affected by the quality of the digital recordings and poor classroom conditions during listening. Regarding speaker related problems, teachers reported that high school students have difficulty in understanding the pronunciation of the words, the varied accents, understanding speakers having fast-paced speech. According to the teachers, students also have some message related listening comprehension problems. They have difficulty in interpreting the meaning of a spoken text made up of long sentences due to the difficult grammar structures and unknown vocabulary items and the level of the listening material. With respect to the strategy use problems, teachers reported that students also have difficulty in acquiring and improving good listening skills, and they do not know the listening strategies.

Table 4.24. *Teachers' opinions about students' listening comprehension problems*

Listening problem category	Reported problem by teachers
Listener	• lack of self confidence • lack of readiness for listening skill • not being accustomed to listening due to limited practice • being unmotivated and inattentive towards listening • having negative attitudes towards listening • having difficulty in understanding unfamiliar topics • having difficulty in remembering the details of a spoken text. • poor musical ability

Table 4.24. (Continuing) *Teachers' opinions about students' listening comprehension problems*

Listening problem category	Reported problem by teachers
Speaker	difficulty in understanding the pronunciation of the words, the varied accents, and understanding speakers having fast-paced speech.
Message	- difficulty in interpreting the meaning of a spoken text made up of long sentences - interference of difficult grammatical structures with comprehension - interference of unknown vocabulary items with comprehension
Strategy	- the level of the listening material - difficulty in acquiring and improving good listening skills - lack of listening strategy knowledge

In order to probe into the opinions and practices of high school teachers regarding their students' listening comprehension problems, a structured interview made with seven of the teachers in accordance with their willingness. There were six questions in the interview to reveal the opinions of Anatolian high school EFL teachers about their students' listening comprehension problems and their reported classroom practices for dealing with the problems they stated. In the interview, a detailed note-taking procedure was applied rather than recording in accordance with the interviewers' preference. Then, the collected data was analyzed through content analysis. In the following section, the results for each question were presented.

4.1.3.1.1. Interview Question 1: What is your opinion about the significance of listening skill for your students?

All of the teachers agreed on the primacy of listening skill for their students. Some of the teachers emphasized the importance of listening with reference to the importance of it in L1 acquisition process to improve speaking skill. The following quotes illustrate this:

“As far as I am concerned, listening is the most crucial skill for gaining a new language. The importance of this skill; however, is not be able to be understood well. We all begin to learn our native language by listening our parents and someone near us. When it comes to learn a foreign language, this is not the case in our country. We start to learn a foreign language by writing. Can we teach a baby writing before speaking?”

“Just like in L1 (native language) acquisition process, listening in foreign language learning is a primary skill which precedes speaking.”

Some interviewers also pointed out the importance of listening in developing and understanding English as a foreign language as follows:

“It’s a must for a language learner.”

“The importance of listening is undeniable. To be able to hold a nice, natural-sounding conversation, students need to improve their listening skills. It is vital for language learning.”

“Listening is important for students in terms of improving their interpretation in the target language.”

It was also stated by some teachers that there are four skills in English which must be given equal importance

“I think it is really important. As everybody knows, English has four skills, and listening is an inseparable one.”

“All skills should be given equal importance”

With regard to the majority of teachers’ opinions, it can be inferred that teachers believe that listening plays an important role both in L1 acquisition and L2 learning process considering its role in providing comprehensible input which is required for developing speaking skills of students.

4.1.3.1.2. Interview Question 2: What are the readiness levels of Anatolian high school students when they are at 9th grades and 12th grades? Is there any difference regarding their levels of readiness?

The interviewers stated different opinions about the readiness levels of 9th graders. While some of them think that 9th graders are more motivated and ready for listening activities, others stated the opposite. The following quotes are presented as an example for their different opinions:

“9th graders are definitely not ready.”

“The 9th grade students are never ready to listen to a text; however, their levels change through 11th and 12th grades as we made practice.”

“Although 9th graders’ readiness and motivation levels are high, 12th graders are not so motivated for listening.”

“While 9th graders are more unwilling and anxious for listening, they become more willing and less nervous about listening activities as they practice more.”

“Most of my students have low readiness levels. Nothing much changes from 9th grade to 12th grade.”

As can be concluded from these quotes, while some teachers agree that 9th graders have low readiness levels resulting from lack of practice and inadequate vocabulary knowledge, others think that they are highly motivated to do listening exercises; however, their motivation gets lower as they proceed through 12th grade.

4.1.3.1.3. Interview Question 3: What are the students’ feelings about listening activities?

Although the interviewers differ in their opinions about whether their students like listening activities or not, they all agreed that they have listening anxiety. The following quotes state the possible reasons for their having listening anxiety:

“Our students do not like listening as they are not accustomed to listening something about a lesson. But if students gain the habit of listening starting from the early ages, they might like listening to all kinds of texts.”

“They feel anxious towards listening. They also feel nervous for fear of missing the details in the spoken text. However, they prefer listening to grammar learning or reading if they do not have to take a listening exam.”

“Most of my students feel so nervous about listening activities that they do not even want to expose any listening practice”.

“Students like listening activities in general. They like listening anything in the target language. However, they feel anxious when they listen to something. Therefore, they need to be encouraged.”

Regarding these quotes, it can be said that one of the reasons for the negative attitudes of students towards listening is that they do not have enough listening practice. Therefore, teachers suggested that they should be exposed to listening materials starting from early ages. Another reported reason for their listening anxiety is that students' attempt for trying to understand every detail in a spoken text. Moreover, being tested by their listening skills also stated to affect the students' attitudes towards listening. According to some teachers, students' listening anxiety also stem from their readiness levels and can be overcome by practice through time. Some quotes supporting this view are presented below:

“Most of the student are not fond of it at first. But they get accustomed to it through time.”

“At the beginning of the 9th grade, they feel nervous about listening activities. Later, they start to find them funny.”

One of the reasons for the listening anxiety of students was stated as the type of listening material as quoted below:

“They often like listening to music in their second or foreign language but they feel nervous when they have to listen something about real life topics, texts etc.”

Concerning the responses of the interviewers, it can be said that all of the interviewers believe that students have listening anxiety and it can be dealt with through practice and encouragement through time.

4.1.3.1.4. Interview question 4: *What are the most common listening problems of students in the classroom? What are your classroom practices for dealing with these problems?*

The majority of the interviewers expressed that their students mostly have speaker, listener and message related problems. However, they also mentioned about some strategy and task related listening problems. In order to analyze their responses, their statements were categorized with reference to these subcategories of listening problems.

Teachers' opinions about their students' listener related problems

In the interview, one of the most frequently reported listener related problems by the teachers were negative feelings of students towards the spoken text and related listening activities. Another reported problem is their unwillingness about listening and doing exercises about the uninteresting spoken texts.

Negative attitudes towards listening

According to the teachers, students have negative attitudes towards listening. They feel nervous when they are exposed to listening materials, and this problem interferes with their listening comprehension performance. Some of the quotes below explains teachers' opinions about regarding this problem:

"Prejudice and lack of self-confidence towards listening are the most common problems for my students."

"They have a mental block for listening."

"The general listening problems of the students are having listening anxiety, being worried, unwillingness for listening, misinterpreting the text, being exposed to inadequate pre-listening activities and so on."

Practices for negative feelings

With respect to reported quotes by the teachers, it can be concluded that teachers are aware of their students' negative feelings towards listening and they try to deal with this problem by boosting their confidence in listening via easier tasks, making the topic of the spoken text interesting through presenting enjoyable captioned videos and songs, and help them familiarize with the text by providing background information for the listening text.

“In order to deal with students’ negative attitudes towards listening, I try to motivate them through songs with lyrics and through videos with English captions. Then they gain self-confidence about listening.”

“Regarding mental block of the students for the listening activities, I practice more for improving their skills in order to get their confidence back. To reach this aim, the easiest solution is just to use much easier texts, perhaps using them mainly as a prompt to discussion or grammar presentations to stop their feeling patronized. I also disguise other easy listening comprehension tasks as a pronunciation work on connected speech etc.”

“I think presenting background information about the listening text might help reducing the listening anxiety levels of the students”. Prior to listening, I tell them what the listening text is about and provide some background information about the spoken text.”

Uninteresting topics

One of the most frequently reported listener related problems by the teachers is that students have difficulty in understanding the spoken text which has uninteresting topics for them. The following quotes point out this problem:

“When they find the audio uninteresting, they are unwilling to listen.”

“When the topic is uninteresting, my students do not seem willing to do the listening activities.”

“They avoid doing discussion activities if the spoken text is uninteresting for them. They just focus on doing while-listening activities.”

Reported quotes suggest that students are unwilling about listening to uninteresting spoken texts. Teachers' most frequently reported practices for dealing with these issues are presented in the next section.

Practices for uninteresting topics

The quotes above illustrate that according to teachers, their students are not willing to take part in listening activities if the spoken text is uninteresting for them. In order to deal with this problem, teachers reported to carry out the following practices:

"They are usually unfamiliar with the topics they are supposed to understand. At this point, I give some information beforehand to make them feel comfortable with the topic, context etc."

"I try to take their attention by presenting them some pictures and photos about the listening topic."

"In order to motivate them, I provide them with some background information prior to listening."

"In order to make the topic interesting, I give examples from daily life and my own personal experiences".

"At this point I give some information beforehand to feel them comfortable with the topic, context etc."

It can be concluded from these quotes that teachers conduct pre-listening activities such as providing visual cues, background information and examples from daily life in order to take their students' attention.

Teachers' opinions about their students' speaker related problems

As for the speaker related problems category, the only problem stated by teachers was that students have difficulty in understanding varied accents and connected speech.

Difficulty in understanding varied accents

The majority of the teachers reported that their students have difficulty in understanding varied accents and as a result they feel discouraged towards listening. The following quotes illustrates this fact:

“Natural speech with pauses and varied accents in authentic recordings confuse my students.”

“Different accents make the listening more difficult for the students.”

“My students feel discouraged when they could not understand varied accents”.

Practices for varied accents

Teachers expresses a number of different kinds of activities in order to deal with their students’ listening problem of understanding varied accents as follows:

“I give them clues and tell them that some words are used interchangeably in British and American English, so I allocate some time for teaching the words that are differently pronounced in British and American English.”

“Providing listening text to the students makes them more motivated and focused on the listening material. I sometimes read the text aloud and translate them as well as giving examples after the listening.”

“I use authentic listening materials to make my students familiarize with different accents”

“I play back the spoken text a few times in order them to be aware of the fact that they can understand the text if they listen to it carefully”.

“I choose listening materials which include the same accent”.

“I read aloud the text again when they could not understand the accent in the spoken text”

“I play back the spoken text a few times, and in the second or third listening, I try to help them by translating some difficult parts of the text. I stop the listening recording in some parts.”

Concerning these quotes, it can be deduced that most of the teachers carry out different kinds of practices. On the one hand, some teachers try to avoid this problem by providing and focusing on the same accent in their listening materials. On the other hand, others provide authentic listening materials with varied accents or teach varied pronunciation of the words.

In the next section, message related problems and their suggested solutions were presented.

Teachers' opinions about their students' message related problems

According to the majority of the interviewers, long spoken texts and unknown vocabulary items are the most common message related problems of their students. However, these problems can also be referred as listener related problems with reference to their consequences. These problems were reported to bring about negative attitudes towards listening and causing boredom, anxiety, tiredness, and loss of concentration of students, which are listener related problems.

Long spoken texts

Nearly all of the teachers expressed that their students have difficulty in understanding and paying attention to the long spoken texts. Sample quotes supporting this view were presented below:

"Longer listening texts distract students' attention"

"The students have difficulty in paying attention to the long spoken texts. They lose their concentration easily."

"Our students find longer texts boring."

"They easily become nervous and bored when faced with long spoken texts."

As the quotes illustrate, long spoken texts have negative effects on students. In the following section, teachers' reported practices for this problem is presented.

Practices for long spoken texts

Most of the teachers explained that they deal with long spoken text by dividing into shorter sections. In addition, the interviewers said that they summarize and ask comprehension questions for each part individually. The following quotes shows an example for suggested practices.

“I divide the listening text into shorter parts and summarize each part with my students.”

“I divide the listening text into shorter parts and ask comprehension questions for each part.”

“I practice a long spoken text part by part. I divide the text into shorter parts, and this make listening easier for students.”

“I divide the longer texts into two parts. At first, we talk about the first part, and then go on with the other part. Also, I ask my students to focus on just one word and tell them that they do not have to understand every word and the whole text.”

In the following section, another reported message related problem, unknown vocabulary items, is presented.

Unknown vocabulary items

According to the majority of the teachers, inadequate knowledge of vocabulary might be one of the most problematic areas affecting students' listening performance. Sample quotes supporting this view were illustrated below:

“Unknown vocabulary items are one of the main obstacles for my students' understanding a text.”

“My students miss details in the rest of the passage while focusing on unknown vocabulary items, and this affects their listening performance much”

“They easily give up listening the text when encountered with unknown vocabulary items.”

“They cannot focus on rest of the text when they do not know the meanings of words in the spoken text.”

“If they are familiar with the words they hear and the topic, they are really happy about what they are doing. But if not, they feel nervous.”

Teachers reported that unknown vocabulary items cause lack of concentration and anxiety for their students. Therefore, they reported to apply a number of practices to deal with it. In the next section, these practices are presented.

Practices for unknown vocabulary items

Most of the teachers reported to provide solutions for unknown vocabulary items at pre-listening stage. However, some of the teachers said to do practice for unknown vocabulary items at post-listening stage.

Pre-listening practices for unknown vocabulary items

“Prior to listening, I pre-teach unknown vocabulary items in the text.”

“I always advise them to focus on the whole text and try to guess the meaning of the word from the context.”

“One of the methods I use is to present a listening or two in order to get them to concentrate just on guessing words from context. Another is to load up the tasks even more by adding a logic puzzle or listening and writing task so that just listening and trying to remember words seems like an easier option for students. Finally, spending a lot of time revising vocabulary and practicing skills where they come into contact with it and use it.”

Post-listening practices for unknown vocabulary items

“I give them one very easy task that I know they can do even if they do not get 90% of what is being said to build up their confidence, such as identifying the name of a famous person or spotting something that is mentioned many times.”

“After listening, I teach them unknown vocabulary items through example sentences and translations.

“I give students extra time to guess the unknown vocabulary items from the context or explain them.”

Both reported pre-listening and post-listening activities of teachers focus on teaching unknown vocabulary items to the students.

Teachers' opinions about their students' task related problems

With regard to task related problems, most of the interviewers stated that their students are unwilling to carry out discussion after the listening text. In addition, some of them also stated that their students have difficulty in taking notes while listening.

Speaking anxiety for discussion after the spoken text

As pointed out by most of the interviewers, students have also speaking anxiety when they are asked to talk about the spoken text. The following quotes illustrate teachers' opinions about speaking anxiety of their students towards listening tasks:

"They are not really good at expressing themselves because they do not feel relaxed while speaking in L2."

"The students have problems in telling their opinions about the text."

"My students want to use L1 while expressing their opinions after the spoken text. They say they can express themselves better in their native language."

The quotes point out that students experience anxiety not only for listening but also for speaking in English. Therefore, they prefer to use L1 for discussion rather than L2. In the next section, teachers' reported practices for dealing with these problems are presented.

Practices for speaking anxiety for discussion after the spoken text

Concerning speaking anxiety of the students in English, teachers said that they try a number of ways to reduce their anxiety levels and encourage them for speaking in L2. The following quotes give information about teachers' practices for dealing with speaking anxiety of their students:

"To foster speaking in L2, I give them some language structures to be used while speaking."

"They usually prefer L1 in speaking activities, but if they are presented the unknown vocabulary items, they can state themselves in L2 easily."

"I try to help them form sentences by assisting them for the vocabulary usage."

"We try to make them relaxed and we try to feel them relieved by asking short and simple questions about the text in the first place."

"I encourage them as much as I can".

As can be understood from these quotes, teachers said that they try to deal with students' speaking anxiety by motivating and encouraging them. In order to motivate them, they reported to implement different kinds of practices. One of these practices is to teach unknown vocabulary items prior to speaking tasks. Another is helping them with the sentence structure as well as unknown vocabulary items. Further, it was also stated that asking short and simple questions about the spoken text can help boosting their confidence towards speaking.

Difficulty in taking notes while speaking

One of the listening problems expressed by the interviewers is that students find it difficult to take notes for activity while listening. According to teachers, one of the main reasons for that problem is students' tendency to write down every detail. The following quotes from the interviews highlights teachers' opinions about this problem.

"Sometimes they have problems while taking notes when they do not know the spelling for a word (spelling and punctuation can be really problematic)."

"They complain that they cannot write down something while listening."

"Students have difficulty in taking notes while listening. Because they try to write down every detail."

"The students get left behind trying to figure out the meaning of the previous word that they hear while listening."

With reference to quotes, it can be said that students have difficulty in taking notes while listening because they do not know which parts are important. Therefore, they try to write down every word and miss the rest of the spoken text. However, teachers said that they implement a number of activities to deal with this problem. In the following section, their practices were presented.

Practices for dealing with difficulty in taking notes while listening

According to teachers, there is a number of techniques and activities to provide solutions for note taking problem of students while listening. Their practices were provided below through sample quotes:

"I tell them that they do not have to write the words correctly (indeed they should), but just write them down as how they understand, then I help them to correct their mistakes."

"I teach them some note-taking strategies, and they can improve their note-taking skills."

"I recommend them to write only the words they think they are important."

Regarding these quotes, it can be concluded that teachers believe that teaching note-taking strategies or letting students write down the words ignoring the spelling for them and correcting their mistakes after the listening might be an effective way for dealing with this problem.

Teachers' opinions about their students' strategy related problems

One of the interviewers stated a listening problem related with strategy use. According to the interviewer, students also have difficulty in predicting the words from the context and getting the main idea of the spoken text as they focus on every detail. This problem is also related with the message related listening problems; however, it was categorized as strategy related listening problem due to the fact that what interferes students' getting the main idea of the spoken text is actually their trying to focus on every detail rather than just unknown vocabulary items. The interviewer's quote about this problem is represented below:

"They just do not know the most important words. Therefore, they focus on every detail and miss the rest of the passage while trying to figure out the meaning of every word."

As can be understood from the quote that the interviewer thinks that students have difficulty in getting the main idea of the spoken text as they focus on details rather than the whole text.

Practices for strategy related problems

The interviewer stated that he teaches the important vocabulary items as a pre-listening activity and help the learners focus on the important content words by doing so:

“Doing vocabulary pre-teaching before each listening as a short term solution and working on the skill of vocabulary from context can help, but I make myself sure that I practice this with words that can actually be guessed from the context (a weakness of many textbooks) and that I work on that with reading texts for a while to build up to the much more difficult skill of guessing vocabulary and listening at the same time.

In this section, students’ listening comprehension problems identified by the teachers and teachers’ practices for dealing with these problems were presented with reference subcategories of listening comprehension problems.

4.1.3.1.5. Interview question 5. How much time do you spend for listening activities?

The majority of the teachers reported that they spent little or no time for the listening activities due to the time limitation. However, one of the interviewers stated that he tries to allocate one hour for listening every week. Sample responses were given below as follows:

“Not even little, 10-15 min every classroom hour.”

“Not really because it is time consuming and needs to be dealt with properly.”

“We do not enough time for listening activities as we do not have enough language classes.”

“One classroom hour in a week”

It can be concluded from the quotes that limited classroom hours of English can be the main reason for preventing teachers from allocating enough time for listening practice.

4.1.3.1.6. Interview question 6. What are your opinions about the course books?

Most of the teachers agreed on the fact that the course books are insufficient for

listening practice. Moreover, they also stated that the levels of the course book materials do not match with the levels of the students; therefore, many students find the activities difficult. As a solution, they reported to use extra materials with reference to the levels of the students. Some sample quotes about the course books are presented as follows:

“Indeed, current course books are elaborately written but not adequate. We have problems in using the course books in the class.”

“Course books are not efficient. I use extra materials most of the time.”

“Course books do not match with the levels of students, and students’ levels are quite different with reference to their TEOG results. Some of them did not even have an English teacher until high school.”

“I think the course books are inadequate for listening exercises. There are not enough pre-listening activities for listening text. I need some extra materials. But I like pronunciation activities in the course books.”

“They are not sufficient for listening exercises. Listening quality of the recordings is quite poor. I have to use extra materials.”

“I need to use authentic materials like a part of a movie or news.”

“The course books are not adequate for improving four skills. We need to use extra materials most of the time.”

It can be said that most of the interviewers find the course books inadequate for improving listening skills and points out that the level of the course books is not suitable for the levels of their students. Therefore, they reported that they need to use extra materials for practice.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Conclusion

In this section, conclusions of the study were presented with respect to the research questions.

5.1.1. Perceptions of high school EFL learners and their teachers on listening comprehension problems

The present study aimed at providing answers for three main research questions:

(1) What are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL learners' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in a Turkish Anatolian High School context?

- Is there any difference among the learners from 9th grade to 12th grade and their teachers about their perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems?

(2) What are the Turkish Anatolian high school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it?

(3) What are the high school teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and their reported practices for dealing with these problems?

To provide answers to these questions, 553 high school students between the ages of 14 and 18 at different grades from three different Anatolian high schools and 8 teachers who work at these high schools responded to the listening comprehension problems questionnaire which was actually designed for students (adapted from Hasan 2000, by Demirkol, 2009) and adapted for teachers (Yıldırım, 2013). The perceptions about the frequency of students' experiencing these listening comprehension problems were analyzed by categorizing the students according to their grades of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th. Moreover, the results for these four groups of students and teachers were compared with each other in order to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference across these five groups in terms of their mean scores for the listening comprehension problems. In order to explore the exact problem areas of the students, listening comprehension problems in the questionnaire divided into five subcategories as listener related, speaker

related, message related, task related, and strategy use related listening comprehension problems. To reach that aim, the most and the least frequently reported listening comprehension problems by the students at different grades and their teachers were found out by utilizing Descriptive Statistics. The results showed that students mostly have speaker and listener related problems. The most frequently reported listening comprehension problems by the teachers and the students were found to be similar in their perceptions about the necessity of visual clues in order to facilitate listening comprehension, difficulty in understanding when speakers speak too fast, providence of tape scripts prior to listening and interference of unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder with listening comprehension. In addition to these problems, findings gathered from teachers also showed that teachers believe that their providing students pre-listening information about the text improves their listening comprehension more than their students think. Teachers also were found to have a tendency to think that their students feel nervous and worried when they do not understand the spoken text and experience listening comprehension problems as a result of unfamiliar words. Besides, they have preference for teachers' reading aloud the spoken text rather than the recording. Although, quantitative data results of the students revealed that they do not experience these problems as often as their teachers think, qualitative data results showed the opposite. The majority of the students listed these problems as the top factors influencing their listening performance. The listening comprehension problems reported as the least problematic by students were related with strategy use, task, speaker and listener. However, the listening comprehension problems reported as the least problematic by the teachers were related with task and strategy use category. Students and teachers were found to be similar in their reported frequency of difficulty in filling a chart or graphic. The other listening comprehension problems reported as the least problematic by students were paying attention to the topic markers, difficulty in understanding the meaning of the spoken text without seeing speakers' body language and forgetting the words that they hear while listening. As for the teachers, listening comprehension problems reported as the least problematic were revealed to be related with filling a chart or graphic while listening, difficulty in predicting what speakers are going to say from the title. With the aim of determining differences in perceptions of listening comprehension problems by students at different grades and teachers, a one-way ANOVA was utilized. The results showed that 9th graders were significantly differ from most of the upper graders in their

reported frequency of experiencing all of the message and task related problems, all of the listener related problems except for the problem of feeling nervous when fail to understand the spoken text, preference for teacher's reading aloud rather than recording, interference of poor classroom conditions and outside noise with listening comprehension, and all of the speaker related problems apart from providence of visual clues to facilitate listening comprehension. However, as for strategy related listening comprehension problems, 9th graders were found to differ significantly from the upper graders with respect to their mean scores only in the item about the necessity of providence of pre-listening information for improving listening comprehension. With respect to the reasons for 9th graders' not experiencing listening comprehension problems as often as upper graders, it was concluded that it might be related with the curriculum design. The high school curriculum in Turkey has been designed aiming to progress in English proficiency from A1 level to B2 + as the students pass through the upper grades. From A1 level to B2+, both course books and teachers' guides include listening in collaboration with speaking, and adequate listening materials are included. Moreover, 2018-2019 9th-12th grades English curriculum covers the views of CEFR. Although 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders have the same curriculum, their course books and syllabi are naturally different. 9th grade is the first year of high school; therefore, the syllabus of 9th graders has been designed as a revision for what students learnt from 2nd grade to 8th grade concerning English. In addition, 9th graders' English level of proficiency are considered as A1/A2 level, and the course books and materials are prepared in a way to revise their previous learning in English. However, as for upper graders, it is expected from 10th graders to be at A2+/ B1, 11th graders to be at B1+/ B2, and 12th graders to be at B2+/ ... English proficiency levels. With respect to these expected levels, it can be concluded that 9th graders do not experience listening comprehension problems as frequently as upper graders because their syllabus is appropriate for their levels and designed as a revision for previous years. Besides, they might have already had background knowledge about the topics, content, vocabulary items and grammatical structures covered in the syllabus. Taking into account of the fact that students are expected to progress from A1 to B2 + until they graduate from high school, and complexity of the materials, vocabulary items and grammatical structures are designed accordingly. Therefore, the reason for upper graders' experiencing listening problems more frequently might be this mismatch between their current levels and their expected

levels. Although students are expected to gain proficiency from A1 level at 9th grade towards B2+ level at 12th grade, and progress through levels and grades until graduating from the high school, they might not be progressing through these levels despite progressing an upper grade. Passing to an upper grade might not automatically result in progressing from one level to another with respect to English proficiency. A 12th grade student might still be at A1 level in terms of his/ her English proficiency. No testing is carried out in order to find out their current English proficiency levels. Considering all of these, the first conclusion of the study is that English proficiency levels of students should not be determined according to their grades. Instead, at the beginning of each academic year, a placement exam testing four skills of English can be administered, and with respect to their scores, students can be placed to the English classes formed according to CEFR English proficiency levels. Forming English classes as A1, A2, B1 etc. levels rather than 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade English classes might be more effective for students to gain English proficiency and for teachers to deal with their listening comprehension problems. In addition, teachers should comply step by step with the English curriculum and syllabi starting from 2nd grade to 12th grade.

5.1.2. High school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it

In order to explore high school students' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension problems and their suggested solutions for dealing with these problems, they were asked two open ended questions. The results showed that most of the problems and suggested solutions reported by the learners are common regardless of their grades although they were found to differ in the frequency of experiencing these listening comprehension problems according to their grades. The most common reported problems were lack of listening practice as a result of grammar focused English lessons, lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of concentration during listening, having listening and speaking anxiety, difficulty in understanding the fast paced speech and varied accents, difficulty in understanding the spoken text because of the poor quality of the recordings, and finding the levels of listening materials difficult. Considering the fact that most of these reported problems are closely related with lack of listening practice in English, it is important to emphasize that a great majority of the students stated that their

listening and speaking performance in English are affected negatively by the grammar focused English lessons. Some of the students emphasized their demand for less grammar focused lessons as follows:

Student 17: “Biz yaklaşık olarak 4. Sınıftan beri İngilizce öğreniyoruz ama bize İngilizce’yi günlük hayatta kullanılabilecek şekilde öğretmiyorlar biz karşımızdaki insana grammar anlatmayacağız sonuçta

[We have been learning English since the 4th grade; however, we have not been taught English for daily use. We are not going to teach grammar to the person whom we speak to].

Student 10: “Derste diyaloga girilmesi olabilir. Çünkü bir bebek yaşadığı ortamın dilini 3-4 yılda kapar ama biz 12 senedir görüyoruz hala anlamıyoruz. Konuşmuyoruz, sadece formül görüyoruz, tabi anlamayız ve konuşamayız.

[We can have conversations in the class taking into account of the fact that a child can acquire the spoken language around him. However, we cannot understand English despite learning it for 12 years. We cannot speak, we learn only formulas, as a result neither can we understand nor can we speak.]

Student 8: “Anlamaya, anlatmaya konuşmaya yönelik değil dilbilgisine bağlı kalarak İngilizce öğretilmesinin hiçbir faydası olmadığını düşünüyorum.

[I think it is no use to teach English grammar focused rather than comprehension and speaking].

Student 36: “İngilizce dersi dilbilgisi işlenerek devam etmekte konuşmaya ağırlık verilmeli derslerde. Dinleme, okumaya dayalı derslerin işlenmesi gerekir.

[English lessons have been carried out by focusing on grammar, speaking should be focused during lessons. English lessons should be carried out focusing on listening and speaking skills].

Student 27: “Bize gramer öğretiliyor ama İngilizce bilmiyoruz, konuşamıyoruz. İlk önce konuşmayı öğrensek daha sonra grammar öğrensek daha başarılı olunur bence.”

[We have been instructed grammar but we do not know English and we cannot speak it. I think we can be more successful if we learn to speak prior to grammar].

The quotes above reflect two sides of the same coin. Teachers seem to still focus on grammar to teach English to their students; however, the other side of the coin is that students strongly believe that the main obstacle in their path of learning English and improving their listening and speaking skills is the grammar focused lessons which they are exposed to. Teachers are implied to put emphasis on grammar as a means of teaching

skills in English by most of their students. However, the new English curriculum does not impose teaching of grammar but puts stress upon it considering the fact that teaching English skills already covers teaching grammar. Moreover, “In integration of the four skills, an emphasis is given to speaking and listening skills to enable learners to practice communication and real-life use of language” (http-3).

In line with the goals and objectives of the new English curriculum, students also stated their demand for improving their communicative skills in English prior to learning grammar. In addition, students expressed emphatically their need for learning the daily use of English in a way to improve their communicative competence in English, and disapproval for the current grammar focused English lessons. Therefore, it can be suggested for teachers to give primacy to improving their students’ communicative skills rather than focusing on grammar. With respect to listening as a skill, it is considered as the basis of second language acquisition (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 235), since it provides comprehensible input for the learners without which any learning cannot be realized. Therefore, it can be suggested that improving students’ listening comprehension can be the initial step for any learning happen and development of other skills or components in the target language.

The other most commonly reported problems and suggested solutions for them address different stages in a listening lesson plan. For instance, most of the high school students stated that they feel nervous when they do not know the vocabulary items in a spoken text and they get bored when they do not understand these words. However, this problem can be dealt at pre-listening stage of the lesson. Prior to listening, teachers can provide the critical vocabulary items to their students and give some information about the setting, content and the speakers of the spoken text. In this way, students can make use of their background knowledge about the listening topic and try to predict what the speakers are going to say. Moreover, they can fill the gaps in the message resulting from poor quality of the recorder or the outside noise relying on their background information through prediction when they missed some parts of the listening. Additionally, preparing students at pre-listening stage can motivate and build their confidence towards listening since they have already known some clues about the spoken text. It might be better for them to have an outline of the topic than knowing nothing at all. Besides, they will have had a purpose for listening and doing listening exercises. During listening, most high school learners agreed on the difficulty of understanding speakers speaking too fast or

unclearly and identifying the words in a connected speech. In addition to lack of vocabulary knowledge and listening practice, these problems might be related with the level of the listening materials since most of the students from different grades stated that there is a mismatch between the levels of the listening materials and their current levels of English. This mismatch can be explained under the light of the high school curriculum which is designed in accordance with the students' expected levels of English proficiency. As the complexity of the vocabulary and grammatical structures as well as intended skills increase as they progress to an upper grade, students having lower English levels than the expected ones might have difficulty in understanding these materials and can feel discouraged as a result of failure in comprehension.

Furthermore, the majority of the students also recommended to listen authentic materials such as captioned videos, movies, songs and games rather than structured grammar focused recordings. In other words, students reported to need real life listening materials rather than real like ones.

Regarding the post listening stage of the listening, students reported their needs for tape script in order to find out what they have missed or the mistakes they have made. Moreover, students demanded more practice in listening and speaking skills in order to discuss the spoken text after listening. Therefore, it can be concluded that more time should be allocated for listening and speaking practice as most of the participants stated that lack of practice is the major factor affecting their listening performance. Moreover, teachers should identify the factors affecting their students' listening comprehension and design listening activities in a way to deal with these problems.

5.1.3. High school teachers' opinions about their students' listening comprehension problems and their practices for dealing with these problems

In order to explore teachers' opinions about listening comprehension problems of their students and their classroom practices for dealing with these problems, the interviewers were asked six questions. As for the significance of listening, the results showed that teachers consider listening skill having primary importance for their students taking into account of the fact that it provides comprehensible input for the learners and improve not only their listening but speaking performance as well. Considering the readiness levels of students, teachers were found to have ambivalent attitudes towards the readiness levels of their students. While some of the interviewers think that readiness

levels of the students progress as they proceed through the upper grades, others stated that nothing much changes from 9th grade to 12th grade in terms of their readiness levels. The reason for these ambivalent opinions might be closely related with the time spent for listening practice in the class. In other words, students whose teachers do not spend much time for listening practice might have lower readiness levels even if they are at the same grade from different schools or exposed to the same materials. Besides, qualitative data results gathered from students' opinions showed that the majority of the students think that lack of listening practice is one of the major factor affecting their listening comprehension performance; therefore, they demanded for more listening practice and they even suggested allocating one classroom hour for listening practice. As the third conclusion of the study, it can be inferred that the more time spent for listening practice, the higher readiness levels students might have. Regarding the feelings of the students about the listening activities, teachers stated different opinions about whether their students like listening activities or not; however, they all agreed that most of their students have listening anxiety. Underlying reasons for listening anxiety of the students were reported as lack of listening practice, some strategy related listening problems such as trying to understand every single word in a spoken text, and feeling nervous. Therefore, as the fourth conclusion of this research, it can be suggested that teachers should allocate more time for listening practice on a regular basis and teach some listening strategies in order to deal with their negative attitudes towards listening. Indeed, the new English curriculum focuses on improving students' listening and speaking skills; therefore, teachers should comply step by step with the English curriculum and syllabi starting from 2nd grade to 12th grade, and give primacy for improving students' communicative skills. In this way, students can be exposed to a wider range of spoken texts and be familiarized with different kinds of spoken texts and varied accents. As for the most common listening comprehension problems of the students and practices of teachers for dealing with these problems, teachers listed these problems as students' having difficulty in understanding varied accents and connected speech, comprehending long spoken texts and unknown vocabulary items, having speaking and listening anxiety, and trying to understand and taking notes every detail in the spoken text. In order to deal with varied accents and connected speech problem of the students, teachers reported different practices. Some teachers declared that they provide and focus on the same accent in their listening materials; however, others provide authentic listening materials with varied accents or

teach varied pronunciation of the words. However, considering the fact that English is used as a lingua franca today, in real life communication, students will mostly speak with interlocutors speaking English as a foreign language rather than native speaker. Therefore, it might be useful for them to be exposed to authentic materials with varied accents including non-native speakers rather than the same accent. Although teachers' perceptions about listening comprehension problems of their students were found to be similar to each other about unknown vocabulary items, some of their practices were found to be different. In order to deal with unknown vocabulary items, it was revealed that teachers prefer teaching unknown vocabulary items by encouraging students to predict them from the context. However, their sequence for teaching them was found to be different. While some of the teachers pre-teach vocabulary items in pre-listening part, others teach them at post-listening part. Considering that pre-teaching vocabulary items reduce anxiety levels the students, it can be suggested that pre-teaching unknown critical vocabulary items and revising them at post-listening stage might improve vocabulary knowledge and listening performance of the students. As for the long spoken texts, most of the teachers reported common practices as dividing the text into smaller parts and summarizing and asking comprehension questions for each part individually. For difficulty in note-taking, teachers stated that students' trying to write down every detail is the main reason for this problem; therefore, they reported to teach them note-taking strategies or letting students write down the words ignoring the spelling for them and correcting their mistakes after the listening. Similar to their teachers' beliefs, students also declared to have difficulty in predicting the words from the context and getting the main idea of the spoken text as they focus on every detail. As a practice, pre-teaching critical vocabulary items and doing prediction exercises from the context for the other unknown words were reported.

In conclusion, it might be suggested that designing the listening lesson according to current procedure for it as pre-listening, listening and post listening and employing the appropriate activities for each stage might motivate students for listening and reduce their anxiety levels. Besides, there are many metacognitive and cognitive strategies that can be used at each stage. Therefore, it can be said that teachers play an important role in avoiding listening comprehension problems of their students by identifying the factors affecting their listening performance and preparing activities to deal with these problems. All of the stated problems and practices reported by teachers reflect that the teachers are

aware of the students listening comprehension problems and try to deal with them through presenting a number of activities. However, their practices are limited to the time they spent for listening. When the teachers asked about the time they spent for listening, the majority of the them reported that they spent little or no time for the listening activities due to the time limitation. However, listening activities can be carried out at any time of a classroom hour, even just for ten minutes. For instance, listening can be used as a warm up or follow up activity for speaking, reading or writing practice via listening activities such as checking and summarizing, discussion to check whether students' expectations are met or not, creative writing tasks, getting critical responses, information gap, problem solving activities and deconstructing and reconstructing the listening text (Wilson, 2008, pp.97-108). Thanks to these broad range of activities, listening activities also provide practice for reading, writing and speaking skills by integrating them to the topic (Hedge, 2000, p.152). Considering the fact that the majority of the students, regardless of their grades, think that lack of practice is one of the main factors that affects their listening performance negatively, and demanded for more listening practice, teachers might allocate more time for listening every week by using listening as a warm up or follow up activity for speaking reading or writing practice. Teachers were also asked about their opinions about the course books because most of the students stated that listening materials are too difficult and detailed for them. Many teachers agreed on the fact that the course books are insufficient for listening practice. In addition, they stated that the levels of the course book materials do not match with the levels of the students; therefore, many students find the activities difficult, and their teachers reported to use extra materials with reference to the levels of the students as a solution. The main reason for this this mismatch might be related with the gap between students' current and their expected levels of English proficiency. Therefore, it can be suggested that in order to provide students with appropriate level of course books, a standardized English placement test should be administered at the beginning of each academic year, and students should be placed to CEFR classes according to their test scores, and be provided with course books according to their English proficiency levels such as A1, B1 etc. rather than 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade or 12th grade English course books. Another reason for this mismatch might be related with ignorance of listening at EFL classrooms due to time limitation. Indeed, improvement of listening and speaking skills has primary importance in English curriculum of Turkey starting from the 2nd grade. In English curriculum, as learners

progress through levels and grades, the complexity and formality of language used in the curriculum increases. Therefore, if teachers do not focus on improving listening skills starting from the 2nd grade as the curriculum requires, students can have problems in keep up with the complexity of the listening and speaking materials as they are not exposed to them in their previous learning. Hence, it can be suggested that teachers should keep up with the requirements of the new English curriculum and focus on improving students' communicative skills starting from 2nd grade at primary schools as the curriculum suggests.

5.2. Discussion

In this section of the study, the results gathered from the quantitative and qualitative data were discussed with respect to the research questions.

5.2.1. The perceptions of high school EFL learners and teachers about learners' listening comprehension problems

Research Question 1: What are the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade EFL learners' and their teachers' perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems in a Turkish Anatolian high school context? Is there any difference among the learners from 9th grade to 12th grade and their teachers about their perceptions of learners' listening comprehension problems?

One of the research questions addressed in this study was to find out the perceptions of high school EFL learners and their English teachers about the learners' listening comprehension problems. For data collection, a 30-item listening comprehension problems questionnaire, which consists of five subcategories of listening problems as message, speaker, listener, task and strategy use related problems, was administered. The results of the questionnaire were discussed with reference to these five subcategories by comparing the answers of the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th graders and their teachers with each other.

5.2.1.1. *Speaker related problems*

The most frequently reported students' listening problems by the students and their teachers were found to be speaker related problems. The findings from the

questionnaire showed that students mostly have listening problems related with the visual clues, pace of the speech in the recording, and poor quality of the tape recording. Similarly, the most frequently reported listening comprehension problems of the students by their teachers were shown to be echo with the students most frequently reported problems regarding the pace of the speech and providing the tape script before listening, which means that teachers are aware of the speaker related problems of their students. Yıldırım (2015) conducted a study to compare the perceptions of pre-service and in-service teachers about listening comprehension problems of the students using the same questionnaire. The overall mean scores of in-service teachers were found to be (M=3.35) for the items in speaker related listening comprehension problems category. In this study, the teachers' mean scores for speaker related problems were found to be (M= 3.88) for item 1, (M= 4.00) for item 5, (M= 4.50) for item 13, and (M= 3.25) for item 16, (M= 4.63) for item 18, (M= 4.13) for item 28, and (M= 3.75) for item 29. The overall mean scores of teachers (M=4.02) can be said to be in line with the in-service teachers' overall scores for the speaker related problems (M=3.35) in the research of Yıldırım (2015).

In terms of the items from the speaker related category, the perceptions of 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th graders and teachers were found to differ significantly from each other except for item 5, which is about providing visual clues about the spoken text to enhance listening comprehension. In other words, both students and teachers were found to share similar perceptions in that visual clues help students understand the spoken text. Further, the results concur with the findings from the research carried out by Hamouda (2012) with 60 EFL Saudi learners at university. Hamouda (2012) found out that lack of visual aids or facial expressions or body language in a spoken text interfere with learners' listening comprehension. Besides, this problem might also be related with students' perceptual learning style. Demirkol (2009) investigated the listening comprehension problems of preparatory school EFL students and explored the relationship between listening comprehension problems and perceptual learning styles of the EFL learners. Findings yielded that students who preferred visual learning style more than the other perceptual learning styles reported have more listener and speaker related problems. Therefore, it can be concluded that high school EFL learners' perceptual learning styles might be playing an important role in their experiencing listening comprehension problems, and as a solution, providence of visual aids might eliminate these problems. Moreover, according to Hedge (2000), the usage of audio without visual clues is

“unnecessarily restricting” considering the fact that the listener is able to see the speaker in real life listening situations. In addition, seeing the speaker provides nonverbal cues to the listener and aids listening comprehension as well as reducing their listening anxiety. Therefore, teachers are suggested to use videos for practicing listening; however, they can also use audios for practicing telephone conversations or radio programs (p. 242).

As for the item 1, which is about the difficulty in understanding the unclear pronunciation of the words, 9th graders were found to differ significantly from 12th graders. 12th graders were revealed to experience this problem more than the 9th graders. The difference might be related with the percentage of unknown vocabulary items in the spoken text. The syllabus of 9th graders was designed in a way to allow learners “start their high school English classes with a revision on CEFR A1 level”. Therefore, the spoken texts might be covering some basic vocabulary items, grammatical structures and pronunciation knowledge which might be stored in the previous years of English learning as a background knowledge for the 9th grade learners. However, 12th graders are generally thought to have gained progressive knowledge in pronunciation, grammatical structures and vocabulary since 9th grade, and the course books and listening materials of 12th graders were prepared with this consideration. Unlike this common belief, most 12th grade learners might be lack of the vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge which they are supposed to have. As a result, they might be experiencing this problem more often than the 9th graders. Besides, Hasan (2000) found that unclear pronunciation, pace of speech, and speed are among the major listening comprehension problems of the students and attributed the reasons for these problems as lack of knowledge for bottom up strategies, and recommended to make up for bottom up strategies through top-down strategy training. The item 13 were related with providing tape script before listening exercises to enhance listening comprehension. The results showed that providing tape script before the listening exercises were found to be more helpful for comprehension by 11th graders when compared to 12th graders. The difference between these two groups of students might stem from the differences in their motivation and anxiety levels as well as their vocabulary knowledge. 12th graders might be thinking that if they do not know most of the vocabulary items in the text, they might not benefit from the tape script considering the fact that exposing spoken or written form of a word might not change their comprehension as long as it is unknown. However, it can be concluded that teachers and 9th and 10th graders share the same perceptions with 12th graders about providing tape

script before listening exercises for listening comprehension. Similarly, Hamouda (2012) found that EFL learners at university level have difficulty in understanding the spoken text without transcripts (41.7% often, and 26.7% always). Moreover, the results for the teachers support the findings of the study conducted by Özyurt (2014) with 56 prep school EFL teachers at university. He found that most of the teachers ($M= 3.98$) believe that providing tape scripts as a pre-listening activity is helpful for the students' listening comprehension. Supporting these findings, Wilson (2008) listed some of the reasons for failure in teaching effective listening with reference to "myths" or "half truths" about listening. One of these myths was the belief that "Students should not be allowed to read the scripts of recordings". The main reason for this common belief was that providing students with the tape script might distract their attention, and students might focus on reading the script more than the listening. However, Wilson (2008) suggested that providing the script after the students have listened the spoken text at least twice, might help students find out and confirm what they heard as well as solving listening problems. In addition, it helps the students to recognize the difference between the written and spoken form of a word as well as recognition of some grammar points. Therefore, it was suggested that "the script can be a starting point for teaching" (pp.21-23), and teachers can benefit from it.

The item 16 was related with the difficulty in understanding natural speech which is full of hesitations and pauses. The findings for item 16 revealed that there is no significant difference between the teachers and their students for the perception of students' having difficulty in understanding natural speech with hesitations and pauses. In contrary to these findings, Yıldırım (2013) found that university preparatory school teachers ($M= 3.86$) and their students ($M=3.30$) have different opinions about this problem. As for the student participants of this study, the reported frequency of 9th graders for this problem were revealed to differ from 11th and 12th graders. In other words, 9th graders reported that they do not experience such kind of difficulty as often as 11th and 12th graders. This difference might be related with the level of spoken texts. 9th graders are generally accepted as beginner with respect to their revision syllabus starting from A1 level, and their spoken texts are generally simple in accordance with their levels of English. However, 11th and 12th graders are considered as more proficient learners of English than the 9th graders according to their expected CEFR levels; therefore, they might be presented with spoken texts which might be above their English proficiency

levels. As a result, a difficult spoken text with pauses and hesitations might interfere with 12th graders' listening comprehension more than 9th graders. Another reason for experiencing this problem might be owing to the fact that unlike written language, spoken language contains pauses, hesitations, false starts, incomplete sentences and corrections as well as wider range of colloquial vocabulary such as "get together" (Wilson, 2008, p.13). Therefore, foreign language learners might be experiencing difficulty in discriminating and perceiving some English sounds as these sounds did not exist in their native language (Ur, 2018, p.11) or they are not familiar enough with different sound combinations and collocations in the target language to predict the content of the message which they missed while listening (Ur, 2018, p.14).

Another speaker related problem pointed out in the questionnaire were item 18, which concerns with having difficulty in understanding the speech, when speakers speak too fast. This problem is the most frequently reported one by the teachers with respect to their students, and the second most frequently reported problem by the students among all of the other problems. Similarly, Özyurt (2014) found that it is the most frequently stated problem of speaker related category by the teachers. In addition, the findings from the study of Williams (2017) yielded that more than half of the respondents have difficulty in understanding fast speech when watching a movie in the target language. For the current study, it can be concluded that one of the most problematic factors in affecting students' listening performance is understanding speakers speaking too fast. The findings for this item showed that teachers are aware of this problem and agree with their students. However, 9th graders again were found to differ significantly from all of the student groups except for 12th graders in terms of understanding fast speech. The results showed that 9th graders do not experience this problem as often as 10th, 11th graders, and teachers think. The difference between 9th graders and 11th, 12th graders, might be a result of 9th graders' listening materials may include slower and clearer speech with reference to their expected low levels of English proficiency. The reason for 11th and 12th graders' having this problem might be related with their difficulty in recognizing words in connected speech as well as the difficulty of the spoken text. They might know the words and meanings of them; however, they might not be able to recognize these words in fast paced speech due to the characteristics of connected speech such as elision, assimilation, or intrusion, which are inter-word processes of omitting or adding some sounds between the words in order to make them easier to pronounce. Similar to elision, assimilation and

intrusion, chunking some phrases as one word, as in colloquial vocabulary items during speech might be another problem for the listeners (Ur, 2008, p.19; Wilson, 2008, p.11). Moreover, it might be related with bottom-up processing weaknesses of the learners. Rost (2002, p. 96) pinpointed the importance of bottom-up processing in listening comprehension by stating that although the learners have the knowledge of all the words being used in linguistic input, they need to recognize the “assimilation, unstressed words and the changing speed of the input” for comprehension. Therefore, bottom-up processing plays an important role in listening comprehension and teachers can provide activities fostering bottom-up processing. Similarly, difficulty in understanding varied accents, item 28, were revealed to be experienced with different frequencies by 9th graders and 11th, 12th graders. One reason for this problem might be related with 9th graders’ not having enough exposure to the listening materials to encounter with spoken texts with varied accents. Testing four skills is an obligation for high school, not for middle school. 9th graders lack of practice and exposure to spoken texts might hinder their perceiving different accents as a problem. In other words, they might not have enough listening practice to face with such kind of a problem. As for 11th and 12th graders, another reason for their having more difficulty in understanding different accents might be related with their being accustomed to their teachers’ non-native accent for long years (Hasan, 2000; Ur, 2008, p. 20). For this item, teachers were found to share similar perceptions with their students at high school level about the perceived difficulties in understanding varied accents. In line with these findings, with a frequency percentage of 61% EFL preparatory school students (Demirkol, 2009) and teachers at preparatory schools (64.3 %) were found to think that understanding varied accents is a serious problem affecting students’ listening comprehension (Özyurt, 2014). However, the study of Yıldırım (2013) yielded that teachers and students differ significantly from each other regarding varied accents problem and concluded that students do not experience this listening comprehension problem as much as their teachers think. Having problems in understanding the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker’s body language, item 29, is one of the factors affecting students’ listening performance. However, 9th graders reported to experience this problem not as often as their teachers think. This is in line with the findings of Yıldırım (2013) regarding the significant differences between the teachers and students’ viewpoints about the difficulty in understanding a spoken text without seeing the speakers’ body language. The reason for 9th graders’ perception of this problem might

be related with their not having enough listening practice to detect this factor as a problem.

5.2.1.2. *Listener related problems*

Ten of the items in the questionnaire were listening comprehension problems related with listener. Four groups of students and teachers were found to differ significantly from each other in seven of ten items of the listener-related problems category. As for the item 2, feeling nervous and worried when not understanding the spoken text, 12th graders were revealed to differ significantly from the 11th graders, and reported to experience this problem less frequently than the 11th graders. Unlike these findings, advanced level students at university preparatory school were found to experience more frequently the problem of feeling nervous when they do not understand the spoken text than the less advanced students (Demirkol, 2009). On the other hand, in this study, 9th, 10th, 11th graders and teachers were revealed to agree on the fact that failure in listening comprehension leads to negative feelings for students. Similarly, Özyurt (2014) also found that students' feeling nervous and worried because of not understanding the spoken text is one of the most frequently reported problems by the EFL prep school teachers ($M=4.39$), and the results from the study of Hasan (2000) revealed that EFL university students reported to feel nervous when they could not understand the message with a percentage of 54% (28.3% often, 25.9% always). In line with these findings, Hamuoda's study (2012) illustrated that 41.7% of the EFL university students reported that they always feel nervous and worried when they don't understand the spoken text. However, another study conducted by Yıldırım (2013) showed that while teachers believe that their students feel nervous when they do not understand the spoken text during listening, students expressed different opinions. As for 9th, 10th, 11th graders in this study, failure in understanding the spoken text might be related with students' tendency to trying to understand every word, even the unimportant ones, which causes them to have listening anxiety and feeling discouraged when they come across with an unknown or incomprehensible vocabulary item (Ur, 2008, p.13). On the other hand, the difference in 12th graders perceptions from the other groups can be due to the fact that they are exposed to listening practice since 9th grade at high school, and they might become more familiar with the spoken text with four years of listening practice. Familiarity with the listening practice might be reducing their anxiety levels while listening. Moreover, their getting prepared for the university exam at 12th grade, and being exposed to so many tests during

preparation process might even teach them to cope with their anxiety towards a test.

Another listener related problem in the questionnaire was difficulty in concentrating the rest of the passage when missing a few words (item 9). Surprisingly, the results showed that 9th graders differ significantly from all of the other three groups of students and teachers about their reported frequency of this problem. 9th graders stated that they do not have so much concentration problem for the rest of the passage when they missed a few words, compared with other groups of students and teachers. In other words, while teachers and 10th, 11th, 12th graders think that missing a few words is a factor affecting their concentration during listening, 9th graders do not seem to be affected by that factor as much as the upper graders. These results echo with the studies conducted by Demirkol (2009) and Özyurt (2014). As for the teachers' perceptions, it was found that university prep school EFL teachers consider concentration problem as a result of missing some parts of the spoken text as an important problem, with a frequency of 46.4%, affecting their students listening performance (Özyurt, 2014). Moreover, the results from the study of Demirkol (2009) showed that most of the university prep school EFL learners often experience this problem with a rate of 51.9%. Different from these findings, university prep school students and their teachers were found not to differ significantly regarding concentration problem (Yıldırım, 2013). For this study, in order to discuss the reasons for that difference, 9th graders' answers for the problems in speaker related category can be revised. As for speaker related problems, 9th graders also reported that they do not have so much problem in understanding the unclear pronunciation of the words, the natural speech which is full of hesitations and pauses, the spoken text when speakers speak too fast or with varied accents, and 9th graders were revealed to differ significantly from the other groups about these problems. Considering their answers to these problems, it might be concluded that 9th graders might be generally exposed to the spoken text having slow pace of speech including simple sentences due to the revision curriculum designed for them. The reason for their not experiencing so much problem in these factors can be owing to the fact that the spoken text in their listening materials might be slow and simple enough for them to understand the varied accents or pronunciation of the words. Since they can manage to understand the words in isolation, they might have reported not to have concentration problem for the rest of the passage. However, the students at upper grades might have problems in concentrating on the passage because of the number of unknown vocabulary items and connected speech they are exposed to. In

addition to unknown vocabulary items, cognitive overload might be another reason affecting upper graders' concentration. According to Williams (2008), during listening, while the listener process one word, the other word is "incoming". Therefore, listener might experience an overload of words unless he adapts himself to the "rhythm" and "flow" of the natural speech, and this cognitive overload might be one of the main reasons for students' losing their concentration (pp. 14-15).

As for the item 20, 9th graders also found they do not spend so much effort and feel tired when compared with 11th graders. In line with these results, advanced level students at university prep school were found to report experiencing this problem more frequently than less advanced students (Demirkol, 2009). Besides, EFL prep school teachers were revealed to believe that their students experience this problem with a frequency of 51.8 % "(for the sometimes option respectively; Özyurt, 2014)". These results can be discussed with reference to the nature of listening process. According to Ur (2008), contrary to reading, writing and speaking, students cannot have breaks whenever he needs or cannot adapt the pace according to him while listening, and they get tired to the extent of which they concentrate on listening (p.19). Moreover, as it is discussed for the other items before, the level of the listening materials might be appropriate for the 9th graders, and accordingly, they might not need to spend so much effort to analyze the spoken text. However, 11th graders might be exposed to the materials which are above their levels. Because, there is a tendency to think that students' level of English proficiency gets higher through the years in high school . Therefore, the course books and listening materials are prepared with reference to that tendency. In this study, teachers were found to share similar perceptions with their students about the frequency for the problem of concentration, spending effort and feeling tired. However, another study revealed that the B1.2 level EFL learners and their teachers at prep school expressed different opinions about the frequency of experiencing this problem and it was found that students do not experience these listening comprehension problems as frequently as their teachers assumed (Yıldırım, 2013). 9th graders also differed from upper grades for item 21 in their perceptions about quickly forgetting the words they hear while listening. While 11th and 12th graders were found to have same mean score for that problem, 9th graders' mean score was found to be lower than these groups. Besides, forgetting and remembering the words might be related with memory capacity of the students as well as the length of the spoken text. Length of the spoken text might be playing an important role in forgetting

or remembering words. Since longer spoken texts distract students' attention, students might easily forget the words that they hear while listening. Another reason might be related with the extent of unknown vocabulary items. If there are too many unknown vocabulary items in the text, students are not able to remember them as they will be focusing on the next incoming word. Considering the fact that 9th graders stated not to have so much concentration problem for the rest of the passage when they missed a few words, they consequently might not have problems in remembering the words that they hear. On the other hand, all of the upper grade student groups were found to have concentration problem after missing a few words, their lack of concentration might be the reason for their reported problem of forgetting the words that they hear. In addition, teachers were found to be aware of the memory problems of their high school students regarding comparisons of their means scores for this problem. In a university prep school context; however, it was revealed that while teachers ($M=3.49$) reported to believe that their EFL learners quickly forget the words that they hear, "surprisingly" students ($M=3.08$) were found to state the opposite (Yıldırım, 2013). In another study conducted by Özyurt (2014), teachers reported to believe that their students sometimes experience this problem with a percentage of 46.4%. However, in another study, EFL prep school learners were found to consider these problems as one of the least frequently experienced ones of the listener scale suggesting that "students can make connections between their short and long term memories" (Demirkol, 2009). Contrary to the findings of Demirkol (2009), another study carried out with 60 EFL Said learners attending university, revealed that students have tendency to quickly forget the words they hear, which might be a result of their spending too much time on translating it or not focusing on improving memory methods (Hamouda, 2012). Similarly, Goh (2000) found out that about two thirds of forty EFL learners stated to have problems in remembering what they have just heard and referred the possible cause of this problem as the limited capacity of the students' short-term memory. In line with these results, Hedge (2000) highlighted the fact that listening process takes place in a limited time and the heard aural input is restricted to the capacity of holding the input in short term memory (p.242).

Furthermore, as for item 22, 9th graders also stated that they do not experience problem in understanding the uninteresting spoken texts as often as their upper graders, 11th and 12th graders. However, uninteresting topics were found to have negative effects on most of the students. Teachers were reported to agree with their students about the

interference effect of uninteresting topic on listening comprehension. The results from another study yielded that, with a high frequency of 66.1%, most EFL prep school teachers were found to think that students lose their concentration on listening if the topic is uninteresting for them (Özyurt, 2014). Likewise, Hamouda (2012) with a frequency of 16.7% sometimes, 36.7% often, and 35% always, and Demirkol (2009) with a rate of 51.5% and Hasan (2000) found that many students have difficulty in understanding the listening text when the topic is unfamiliar. However, prep school B1.2 level EFL learners were found to share different opinions from their teachers and stated not experiencing this problem as often as their teachers think (Yıldırım, 2013). In this study, the difference between the 9th graders and upper graders in terms of difficulty in understanding uninteresting topics might be due to the fact that the 9th graders might be coping with these difficulties thanks to their background knowledge or the knowledge of the vocabulary items in the text regarding the fact that their syllabus is a revision for their learning to English in previous years.

Regarding the effect of unclear sounds resulting from the poor quality of the tape recorder, there was a statistically significant difference between 9th graders and 11th graders. For item 23, unlike 11th graders, 9th graders were found that they do not often experience listening comprehension problems related with unclear sounds resulting from poor quality of the tape recorder. Contrary to this finding, there is no significant difference between 9th and 11th graders in terms of their opinions about the effect of unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise on their listening comprehension (item 26). In another study, considering the items 23 and 26, which have rates of 72.2% and 69.7% (for the combined always and often options), majority of the EFL learners attending prep school in a university were reported to frequently experience this problem (Demirkol, 2009). Likewise, some studies conducted with university EFL learners yielded that majority of the university level EFL learners reported to sometimes or often experience these problems (Hasan 2000; Hamouda, 2013; Williams 2017). Although these listening problems seems to be referring the similar things, they might differ in that while poor classroom conditions and outside noise might be too distracting for learners to hear even a word, poor quality of the recorder might be allowing students use prediction strategies by using what they heard even if the heard input is incomplete. Therefore, the difference between 9th graders and 11th graders in terms of their perceptions about having difficulty in understanding sounds clearly due to the poor quality of the tape

recorder, might be explained with reference to the findings of another item which is about prediction of what speakers are going to say from the title of the text. 9th graders were found to state not experiencing this problem as often as 11th graders. The results for those two listening comprehension problems imply that 9th graders might be filling the missing parts cognitively in the spoken text resulting from the poor quality recorder by predicting what speakers might have said. On the other hand, 11th graders might also be using prediction strategies; however, their listening proficiency levels might not match with the level of the listening material. Therefore, they may not be proficient enough to compensate for the missing parts in a speech having varied accent and fast pace because they also reported to have problems in understanding fast paced speech and varied accents more often than the 9th graders. As for the teachers' perceptions about the difficulty in understanding sounds clearly because of poor quality of the recorder, and poor classroom conditions or outside noise, non-significant results were found between the high school students and their teachers, which means that teachers notice the difficulties that their students experience. In a university context; however, Yıldırım (2013) found that while EFL prep school teachers and their students do not differ in their perceptions of item 26 (interference of poor quality of the tape recorder with listening comprehension) and aware of the problems of their students, they were found to differ significantly for their students considering item 23 (interference of poor quality of the tape recorder with listening comprehension) with tendency to think that their students experience this problem more often than their students reported. Moreover, regarding the university prep school EFL teachers' perceptions, Özyurt (2014) found that teachers have the highest rates of 85.8% for the students' listening comprehension problem of unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions and 75% for the poor quality of tape recorders.

With respect to perceived difficulties about getting a general understanding from the first listening, item 25, 9th graders differed significantly from all of the upper graders. Considering the fact that 9th graders were found to have not so much difficulty in understanding the unclear pronunciation, natural speech with hesitations or varied accents, and speakers speaking too fast when compared with upper graders, they might easily get a general understanding from the first listening. However, underlying reasons for upper graders' having difficulty in getting the gist might be related with their poor top-down strategies. In the top-down processing view, listening is a process of "reconstruction" in which the listener "reconstructs" the meaning of what he or she hears

by activating the relevant background information in order to analyze the context in which the listening takes place and factors relevant to the context such as getting the gist, recognizing the topic and the relationship among interlocutors and prior events as well as using the smaller parts of the language as “clues” (Nunan, 1999, p. 201). Another reason for this, might be related with their tendency to think that “successful comprehension is total comprehension” and trying to understand every single word. As a result of the tendency for understanding every single word, students might be saying that “I did not understand a thing” even if they understood enough for “communicative purposes” (Ur, 2008, pp.14-15). Besides, the findings from the studies conducted in universities yielded that university level EFL learners have the highest rates for the sometimes option (Demirkol, 2009), and “often” option (Hasan, 2000) for getting the gist for the first listening. Similarly, Hamouda (2012) found almost all of the students in the study (90%) reported have problems in getting the general idea from the first listening. In line with the results of the study by Yıldırım (2013), non-significant results were produced in this study between the teachers and students about their perceptions for difficulty in having general understanding from the first listening. With respect to university prep school English teachers, Özyurt (2014) found that teachers believe that students sometimes (41.1%) find it difficult to get a general understanding from the first listening.

Considering the problems in listener related scale, teachers and four groups of students were found to agree on having difficulty in answering questions requiring longer answers (item 7), their preference for teachers’ reading aloud (item 8), and having difficulty in understanding the spoken text because of the poor classroom conditions or outside noise (item 26). Moreover, the mean scores for teachers with respect to the listener related problems can be listed from the lowest to highest as (M= 3.25) for item 21, (M= 3.50) for item 7, (M= 3.63) for item 20 and item 25, (M= 3.75) for item 22, (M= 3.88) for item 26, (M= 4.00) for item 9, (M= 4.13) for items 2, 8, and 23. Regarding these mean scores for per item, the overall mean scores of teachers with respect to listener related problems were found to be (M=3.80), which is in line with the overall scores of in-service teachers (M= 3.72) for the listener related problems in the study carried out by Yıldırım (2015).

5.2.1.3. Strategy related problems

There were five items concerning the listening comprehension problems related

with strategy use of the students. The findings of this study showed that students at different grades and teachers do not differ significantly from each other in terms of their perceptions about strategy use related problems except for item 12, providing pre-listening information to enhance listening comprehension. The results illustrated that four groups of students and their teachers share similar opinions about the listening problems concerning predicting words, understanding the spoken text through the background knowledge, paying attention to the topic markers and listening to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text. In other words, four groups of students and the teachers agree on the subject that the students use some strategies to enhance listening comprehension such as predicting the words from the topic, tapping their background knowledge of the topic, paying attention to the topic markers. It was also found that the majority of the students try to listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text. With respect to item 12; however, the results showed that teachers' mean scores concerning the effect of providing pre-listening information on improving students' listening performance were found to differ significantly from the mean scores of 9th, 10th, and 12th graders. Besides, the results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between two pairs: 9th graders and 11th graders, and 11th graders and 12th graders. Considering the mean scores of each group, it can be inferred that the more students are exposed to the listening practice as they enroll into upper grades, the more they feel the necessity for having pre-listening information for improving their listening performance. Another reason for this difference might be attributed to the differences in the use of top-down strategies among learners considering the role of background information in improving listening comprehension by helping learners fill the gaps for missed parts of the spoken text through top-down processing (Goh, 2000). On the other hand, teachers reported to believe that providing pre-listening information is one of the factors affecting their high school students' listening comprehension performance; however, their students were found that they do not agree with their teachers except for 11th graders. Concurring with the results of this study, university prep school English teachers and their students were also found to share different opinions in other studies: The teachers thought that providing pre-listening information is an important factor for improving students' listening comprehension (Yıldırım, 2013; Özyurt, 2014), nevertheless, prep school EFL learners claimed the opposite (Yıldırım, 2013). In contrast with these findings, Hasan (2000) found that 45.6% of the participants stated that they

always need pre-listening information about the text to improve their listening comprehension. With respect to the non-significant results of this study, high school EFL learners reported to use prediction strategies for the words that they associate with the topics. Moreover, majority of them stated to rely on their experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the text, which is in accordance with the findings of the study of Hamouda (2012). Moreover, paying attention to the topic markers while listening were also found to be applied by high school learners regardless of their grades. Lastly, listening to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text is found to be a common problem for high school learners. Moreover, it might be an underlying reason for many of the listening comprehension problems they stated to experience. Ur (2008) shed light on this problem stating the fact that students' tendency to trying to understand every word, even the unimportant ones, causes them to have listening anxiety and feel discouraged when they come across with an unknown or incomprehensible vocabulary item and hinders them getting the main idea of the spoken text (Ur, 2008, p.13). Therefore, teachers can be said to play an important role in teaching listening strategies for helping them overcome this problem.

Regarding the mean scores of teachers for each item in that category as ($M=3.13$) for items 19 and 30, ($M=3.25$) for item 24, ($M=3.88$) for item 10, and ($M=4.50$) for item 12, with an overall mean score of ($M=3.57$), this study can be said to yield the same results with the study of Yildirim (2015) concerning the in-service teachers' overall mean scores for strategy use related listening comprehension problems of English language learners ($M=3.57$).

5.2.1.4. Task related problems

Five items in the questionnaire were concerned with task related listening comprehension problems of students. According to ANOVA and post hoc results, there is a statistically significant difference for all of the items concerning the mean scores for task related problems across teachers and four groups of students. All of these differences were found to be between the 9th graders and upper graders who are at 11th and 12th grades. Although non-significant results were found between high school teachers and their students regarding all of the task related items, prep school students were found to differ significantly from their teachers with respect to all of the task related items except for item 4, difficulty in predicting what speakers are going to say from the content (Yildirim,

2013). In this study, the overall mean scores of the students for experiencing difficulties in task related scale can be listed from the lowest to highest as difficulty in filling a chart or graphic while listening (M= 2.71), difficulty in predicting what speaker are going to say (M= 2.79), having difficulty in holding a discussion after the spoken text, (M=2.93) and difficulty in taking notes while listening and (M= 3.10) and difficulty in writing as summary of the spoken text (M= 3.36). Moreover, it was found in this study that the order of the least and the most frequently reported students' task related listening comprehension problems by the teachers were found to be same with their students. In accordance with these results, Hasan (2000) concluded that "students are not trained to practice listening activities in relation to speaking and writing in some cases." That's why they experience difficulty in carrying out task requiring speaking and writing skills. Furthermore, in this study, it was found that 9th graders do not experience difficulty in holding a discussion after listening, taking notes while listening or predicting what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text as frequently as 11th and 12th graders. Specifically, 9th graders differ in their perceived difficulties about writing a summary of the spoken text from 11th graders, and filling a chart or graphic while listening from the 12th graders. In other words, 9th graders were found to see all of the task related listening items as less problematic than the upper graders do. 9th graders' tendency to perceive task related listening problems as less problematic than the upper graders might be explained with reference to their responses for listener related problems. 9th graders were also found to differ significantly in most of the listener related problems from the upper graders. The results showed that, when compared with upper graders, they reported not to experience problems as frequently as upper graders related with concentration, remembering the words that they hear while listening, understanding the uninteresting topics and unclear sounds resulting from the poor quality of the tape recorder getting the gist of the recording from the first listening. Considering the fact that they do not experience so much problem in remembering words, comprehending the spoken text despite the unclear sounds and getting the gist from the first listening, they might find easier to carry out while listening and post listening tasks. Moreover, 9th grades' having a revision syllabus for the skills and components they improved in previous years might also help them carrying out the tasks.

In addition, the mean scores of teachers with respect to the items in students' task related listening comprehension problems were found to be (M= 3.50) for item 3, (M=

2.88) for item 4, (M= 3.75) for item 11, (M= 2.88) for item 14 and ((M= 3.13) for item 17. With an overall teachers' mean score of (M= 3.22), the results can be said to be in line with the findings of the study carried out by Yıldırım (2015) for the mean scores of the in-service teachers (M=3.87) concerning their perceptions about English language learners' task related listening comprehension problems.

5.2.1.5. Message related problems

In the questionnaire, three of the items are about the perceptions of the students and teachers with reference to message related listening comprehension problems of the learners. The findings showed a statistically significant difference among four groups of student participants regarding their mean scores for all of the message related items. Like the other subcategories of listening comprehension problems, 9th graders were found to differ significantly from the upper graders regarding their mean scores for the message related items. The findings showed that 9th graders do not experience difficulty as frequently as 11th graders in interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text and understanding a spoken text with difficult grammatical structures. As for difficulty in comprehending a spoken text due to difficult grammatical structures, 9th graders were also found to be significantly different from the 12th graders. Moreover, 9th graders were also found to differ significantly from 10th graders about the problem of interference of unfamiliar words with their listening comprehension. In short, it can be concluded that message related comprehension problems are perceived as more problematic by the upper graders than 9th graders. As in the other categories of listening comprehension problems, 9th graders were found not to experience much difficulty in message related listening comprehension problems as compared to the upper graders. These findings might be associated with 9th graders' experiencing less speaker and listener related problems than the upper graders. Since 9th graders reported that they do not often experience problems in getting a general understanding from the first listening, concentrating on the passage and predicting the content of the spoken text, it might be easier for them to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text, predicting the meaning of unfamiliar words, and understanding spoken text including different grammatical structures. Upper graders' experiencing problems in interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text might be related with their tendency to be able to understand the spoken text at the beginning better; however, getting worse as they go on the listening, which can be explained through a

psychological phenomenon, which is our tendency to remember the “first series of visual or aural stimuli better than we do later ones” (Ur, 2008, p. 19). Moreover, their performance might be also affected by the strategies that they are accustomed to use. In the early listening practices, the students were provided with shorter spoken texts requiring them to understand all of the sentences for their being short or including single words. However, in later practices of listening, students are presented with longer spoken texts including slow and clearly pronounced speech like the shorter texts, and so they are still expected to understand every word. Due to their past habits, learners create unrealistic expectations about trying to hear every word in listening text rather than general comprehension. Besides, students’ being unaware of the fact that they listen to their native language without hearing every word by tapping their background knowledge about the topic (Hedge, 2000, p. 237; Ur, 2008, p.14) might be another reason for their tendency to listen to every word in a spoken text and having difficulty in understanding longer passages. Therefore, teaching them effective listening strategies and activating their background knowledge about the topic prior to listening might help them transfer L1 listening skills to the EFL listening. Regarding the difficulties related with unfamiliar words, upper graders might be having anxiety as a result of trying to understand every word and feeling discouraged when they come across with an unknown or incomprehensible vocabulary item (Ur, 2008, p.13). With respect to difficult grammatical structures, it might be related with the increasing complexity of the skills and components in the curriculum from 9th grade towards 12th grade. Therefore, 9th graders may not experience much difficulty in understanding the spoken text with difficult grammatical structures because they revise the structures learnt before. As a result, upper graders naturally can experience this difficulty more than 9th graders. The findings also yielded that teachers agree with their students about their perceptions on message related problems. In another study; however, university prep school English teachers were found to express different opinions from their students for message related items except for item 27, interference of difficult grammatical structures with students’ listening comprehension (Yıldırım, 2013).

In conclusion, 9th graders were found to express different opinions from the upper graders for most of the items belonging to different subcategories of listening comprehension problems. In addition to individual differences such as motivation, language aptitude or having lower anxiety level, this significant difference might be related with the high

school syllabi for all graders. The high school curriculum and syllabi have been stated to be designed in accordance with the “descriptive and pedagogical principals of **“The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).”** Regarding CEFR, “the language proficiency levels are reflected as A1, A2 (Basic Users) and B1, B2 (Independent Users)”. Students at 9th grades are supposed to gain proficiency from A1 level towards B2+ level until graduating from the high school. It was stated that the “the order of the CEFR levels (CoE, 2011) was adapted to meet the specific needs of high school learners in the new 9th to 12th grades English curriculum in which it is intended for learners to start their high school English classes with a revision on CEFR A1 level and then gradually proceed through CEFR levels A2 to B2. Finally, it was also stated that learners are expected to graduate from high school with a minimum CEFR B2+ and/or beyond level of English language proficiency depending on whether students had preparatory class English education or not. As learners progress through levels and grades, “the complexity and formality of language used in the curriculum increases.” (2008, p.7). 9th graders’ reporting not having much difficulty in the majority of the listening comprehension problems might be related to the fact that 9th grade syllabus has been designed with an attempt to revise and recycle the content of 2nd-8th grades English syllabi. Moreover, at the end of the 8th grade, they were expected to be at A2 level; however, their 9th grade curriculum has been designed for not only A2 level but also for A1 level, which means that 9th graders might be provided with the teaching materials even lower than their proficiency levels. Due to the fact that 9th graders’ syllabus is mostly a revising and recycling syllabus for the 2nd-8th grades, most of the 9th graders are probably familiar with the topics, proficient in vocabulary items and grammar structures in listening materials and that is why they do not have so many listening comprehension problems. However, the frequency of experiencing listening comprehension problems for the upper graders were found to be significantly higher than the 9th graders. Since the students are expected to proceed through A2 to B2 + from 9th grade to 12th grade, the complexity of the grammar structures and vocabulary items increases as they attend upper grades. The statistical findings showed that the more students proceed through upper grades, the more they experience listening comprehension problems. Under the light of these findings, it can be concluded that although the students are expected to proceed through A2 to B2+ level until graduating from high school, their levels of English, specifically listening proficiency, might not be improving gradually as expected.

Therefore, comprehending the spoken text might be much more difficult for 11th and 12th graders, as the complexity of the spoken text are designed according to their expected English proficiency levels. In order to find out English proficiency levels of the students, at the beginning of each academic year, a standardized exam testing four skills can be administered at high schools. In accordance with their exam results, student groups and English classrooms can be formed as A1, A2, B1, B2 etc. regarding their English proficiency levels. Thanks to that categorization, students can attend English classes according to their exact English levels rather than attending classes designed for their expected English levels. In addition, they can improve their proficiency in English, and they can also proceed through a higher level of English class in accordance with their improvements. Besides syllabi, listening materials which are suitable for students' English proficiency levels might also change their negative attitudes towards English and motivate them to learn English. Furthermore, most of the students were found to have difficulty in understanding the spoken text resulting from poor classroom conditions, outside noise or the poor quality of the recorder. Considering the fact that today's students are Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001), they can be encouraged to use Educational Informatics Network, EBA, which is an online social educational platform led by The General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies in Turkey. This platform serves as a means of integration of technology into education not only for students but also for teachers. Both students and teachers can communicate and use educational and lifelong learning materials. EBA offers many modules like news, book, video, image, audio, magazine and document models which support individual and collective learning (http-4). As for the special focus of this study, video and audio models of EBA, which contain foreign language listening passages and videos, can match the needs of today's students, digital natives. Students can benefit from EBA whenever and wherever they want. Besides, access to such kind of an educational platform can develop students' confidence, motivate them to learn English and foster their learner autonomy.

With respect to the teachers' perceptions about their students' listening comprehension problems, they were found to share similar perception for all of the learners' listening comprehension problems with their students except for four items. Two of these items were about speaker related listening comprehension problems, which are item 18, difficulty in understanding fast paced speakers and item 29, difficulty in understanding the spoken message without speakers' body language. Teachers were

found to differ significantly from 9th graders for these two items. While teachers thought that these items are one of the main reasons for affecting their learners' listening performance, 9th graders claimed the opposite. Another difference between teachers and 9th graders were found for the item 9, difficulty in concentrating the rest of the message when they a few words, from the listener related category. The reasons for 9th grade students' expressing these problems less frequently than their teachers might be again related with the 9th grades' syllabus designed for revision learning for English in previous years. 9th graders might have gained expected proficiency in previous years, and might not be experiencing these problems relying on their experiences and background knowledge. However, for item 12, which was about the effect of pre-listening information on improving students' listening comprehension, teachers were found to differ significantly from all of groups of students except for 11th graders. The results showed that teachers (M= 4.50) believe that pre-listening information about the text can help their students' listening comprehension more than their students think. Moreover, the mean scores of the teachers for the items in message related problems, which were found to be (M=3.50) for item 27, (M=3.75) for item 6, and (M=4.13) for item 15, with an overall score of (M=3.79) can be said to echo with the findings from in-service teachers (M=3.75) in another study (Yıldırım, 2015) with respect to their overall mean scores for message related problems.

5.2.2. High school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it

Research Question 2. What are the Turkish Anatolian high school EFL learners' opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it?

To provide answers for these questions, the student participants of the study were asked two open-ended questions asking for their opinions about the factors affecting their listening comprehension performance in English and their suggested solutions for improving it.

5.2.2.1. 9th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

One of the message related listening comprehension problems in the questionnaire were about interference of unfamiliar words with listening comprehension performance of the students. Although, 9th graders were found not to experience this problem as frequently as 10th and 11th graders in terms of their mean scores for this problem, qualitative data results from the open-ended questions showed that majority of the 9th grade students believe that lack of adequate vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge affects their listening performance negatively. The difference between the quantitative and qualitative data results for unknown vocabulary items might be related with the syllabus of 9th graders designed for A1 and A2 levels. Some of the students might be at A2 level while others at A1 level of English proficiency. Therefore, vocabulary and pronunciation problems might be reported by A1 level 9th graders as factors affecting their listening performance since they might not be as competent as A2 level 9th graders to decode the spoken text with A2 level. Moreover, it was also found that most of the 9th graders think that there is a close relationship between the vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation, and improving their skills in these two components of the language can lead an improvement in their listening performance. In order to enhance their vocabulary retention and improve their pronunciation, they demanded for a number of activities to be used in the class. The most frequently demanded activities can be listed as listening to songs in English, watching captioned videos and playing games in the target language in English classes. The tendency to demand for listening to songs and watching captioned videos as a vocabulary and pronunciation practice might be related with the entertaining and authentic feature of the songs and videos since students also reported that there is a huge gap between what they have learnt in English classes and the daily use of English which they are exposed to while watching captioned movies or listening to songs. In other words, they want to learn daily use of English and practice it in real life through songs or authentic materials. Therefore, it can be suggested that the use of authentic materials can draw students' attention more and help them reduce their anxiety through motivating them. In addition to songs, students also suggested reading in the target language and doing reading comprehension activities in order to improve their vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation. Another listening problem, which is related with the message category, reported by the 9th graders was related with their lack of grammatical knowledge

to understand long spoken texts. While they were found to differ significantly from the 12th graders with respect to item 27, which is about the interference of difficult grammatical structures, most of the 9th graders stated in their responses that they do not know the sentence structures well enough to understand a spoken text and this affects their listening comprehension. Moreover, the difference between the mean scores of 9th graders and 12th graders for this problem does not mean that 9th graders do not experience any problem with respect to item 27. The quantitative data results showed that the majority of the 9th graders also experience this problem (M= 3.09). Besides, the qualitative data results showed that most of the 9th graders have problems in identifying the subject or verb of a sentence if the subject consists of more than two words. Thus, they suggested to be instructed for the elements of sentence structure to improve their listening comprehension. Considering the fact that sentence structure in Turkish, students' native language, is quite different than that of English, teaching the elements of English sentence structure by emphasizing them in spoken or written context might be helpful for students to decode the spoken text. Moreover, although 9th graders were revealed to differ significantly from upper graders in the frequency of experiencing speaker related problems in quantitative data analysis, most of them stated to have difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents and fast paced speech, and asked for listening materials which include clearer and slower paced speech that is suitable for their levels. In line with this problem, most of the 9th graders also responded that the English level of the listening materials do not match with their levels, and students stated to find them boring because of their consisting too detailed information. Instead of these materials, they demanded plain and comprehensible listening materials which can draw their interest more. In addition, 9th grade learners stated to believe that comprehensible listening materials can lead to improvement in their listening comprehension. With the aim of making the listening materials comprehensible and adjusting them to their levels, they even suggested teachers' reading aloud the spoken text and pause and translate after each sentence to adjust the pace of speech according to their levels. The qualitative data results for this suggestion were supported by the quantitative data results for item 8, which is about preference for teacher's reading aloud the spoken text rather than the recording. The findings yielded non-significant results across four groups of students and teachers, which mean that they all have similar perceptions about the preference for teacher's reading aloud. In consistent with the reported reasons for the problem of difficulty in

understanding unfamiliar accents and fast paced speech, the main cause of experiencing listening comprehension problems might be the inappropriate levels of listening materials. Therefore, teachers can be said to play an important role in identifying the levels of their students and choosing or adapting the spoken materials accordingly. In addition, some of the 9th graders were also commented on some listener related factors such as lack of attention, having listening and speaking anxiety during and after listening sessions, focusing on other subjects at school and sparing little time for improving English skills. The reasons for these factors might be discussed under the light of the quantitative data results for item 6, item 9 and item 22. Although 9th graders were found to differ significantly from the upper graders with respect to mean scores for these items, 9th graders' mean scores for item 6 (M=3.03), which was about difficulty in interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text, item 9 (difficulty in concentrating rest of the message when missed a few words; M=3.10) , and for item 22 (difficulty in understanding uninteresting spoken texts; M= 3.16) showed that majority of 9th graders also experience these difficulties. Unfamiliar words, longer passages, uninteresting topics of the spoken text can lead to increase the anxiety levels of the students. However, these problems can be dealt with at different stages of the lesson plan. At pre-listening stage, teaching critical unknown words, providing background information and activating their schema for the topic might reduce their anxiety levels (Hedge, 2000, p. 237). For longer spoken texts, various pauses during listening might help students to deal with the overload of long listening texts (Wilson, 2008, p. 61) and improve listening performance considering the psychological phenomenon of our tendency to remember “first series of visual or aural stimuli better than we do later ones” (Ur, 2008, p. 19). At post listening stage, providing the tape script after the students have listened the spoken text at least twice, might help students find out and confirm what they heard as well as solving their listening comprehension problems (Wilson, 2008, pp. 21-23). Moreover, in order to build their confidence, almost all of the students demanded for more listening practice; therefore, teachers might spend more time for listening skill. Lastly, some of the 9th graders also commented that learning a second foreign language, which is German for the participants of the study, also affects their listening performance. The main reason for this effect might be related with the English and German cognates. These cognates have same or similar written form in two languages; however, most of their pronunciation differ between two languages. Therefore, an EFL learner having low-level English proficiency might confuse

the pronunciation of some English words with that of German and expect to hear pronunciation of these words as in German while listening to an English spoken text. In order to deal with this problem, teachers might highlight and teach the differences in the pronunciation of some common cognates between English and German. All in all, 9th graders' suggested solutions for improving their listening performance include watching videos, series and movies in captions, providing visual clues for the listening text, listening to songs and playing games in English, being instructed about the elements of a sentence and doing more classroom activities for improving vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge as well as listening and speaking skills. Moreover, they stated their preference for teachers' speaking in English in the class rather than in their native language for instruction since they think exposure to the target language via their teachers' use of it can aid to improve not only their listening skills but their speaking skills as well.

In conclusion, 9th graders stated mostly speaker, listener and message related problems. Their responses emphasized the necessity of teaching unknown vocabulary items and provide background information to familiarize students with the spoken text at pre-listening stage, adjusting the level of the listening materials to the students, using authentic captioned videos or audios having visual aids and songs to motivate students and facilitate their listening comprehension.

5.2.2.2. 10th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

Similar to 9th graders, 10th graders' responses for factors influencing their listening comprehension performance were mostly speaker, listener and message related listening comprehension problems. In terms of the message related factors, 10th graders stated that their poor vocabulary knowledge interferes with their listening performance. Furthermore, they stated that lack of vocabulary knowledge causes them to have listening anxiety. These reported factors can be supported and discussed with reference to their mean scores discussed with respect to the findings for item 2 (feeling nervous about unable to understand the spoken text, M=2.86), item 9 (not being able to concentrate on the rest of the message when missing a few words, M= 3.74), and item 15(interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension, M= 4.00). These quantitative results reflect that there might be a relationship between unfamiliar words and their

problems of concentration, comprehension and anxiety. Lack of vocabulary knowledge might have an effect on their having anxiety towards listening, losing concentration and their decoding the message for listening comprehension. As a suggested solution, similar to 9th graders, 10th graders also demanded for listening songs, watching captioned videos and playing games in the target language. Therefore, teachers might benefit from songs, videos and games to motivate their learners and help them improve their vocabulary and pronunciation as well as reducing their anxiety. In addition, teachers can also reduce the anxiety levels of the learners by designing the pre-listening stage in order to present the topic, teach the critical vocabulary items, and brainstorming about the vocabulary items that they expect to hear in the spoken text. Different from 9th graders, students attending 10th grade asked their teachers for teaching them vocabulary learning techniques to improve their vocabulary knowledge. With respect to the feedbacks from the learners, it can be said that most of the students in high schools do not know how to learn a vocabulary item, and they even ask whether they should write the same word for ten times or twenty times for retention. Therefore, it can be inferred that their inadequate vocabulary knowledge might be related with their lack of knowledge about how to learn a vocabulary item and how to enhance retention. Thus, teachers might teach and review vocabulary learning techniques at the beginning of each term. Moreover, they also pointed out some listener related problems such as having difficulty in understanding fast paced speech, and having difficulty in understanding the sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorders. These problems can be discussed under the light of other reported factors by students, which is lack of practice and mismatch between the levels of the students and listening materials. According to 10th graders, allocated time for listening is not enough and listening materials are not suitable for them. Allocating little time for listening during English classes means little practice for listening. However, students need to have more listening practice to understand fast speech, which requires recognition for features of connected speech, stress, rhythm or intonation, or develop prediction strategies in order to fill the gaps in the message which they missed as a result of the poor quality tape recorder or concentration problem. Moreover, inappropriate levels of listening materials which are prepared in accordance with their expected levels of English proficiency might prevent them from understanding even slow speech. Therefore, they suggested more listening practice as a solution and demanded that listening materials should either be adjusted to their levels or their teachers should read aloud the listening

text or stories in English. Besides, creating CEFR level classes and placing the students into these classes according to their English levels might be a solution for this problem considering the fact that attending 12th grade does not automatically result in having B2 proficiency level. In line with 9th graders, 10th graders also stated to believe that learning a second foreign language interferes with their listening performance in English.

In conclusion, 10th graders stated a number of suggested solutions for the problems they stated. In line with 9th graders, the most frequently stated suggested solutions by 10th graders concerning improvement in listening comprehension were watching videos, series or movies with subtitles in Turkish and English, and providing visual clues for the text, and listening to music in English and translating them. These suggested solutions reflect their need for authentic videos as well as their tendency to listen to a spoken material which is of interest to them. In English classes, students sometimes share their experiences about watching authentic English videos or playing games in English. They state that English they have learnt is quite different from the English used in those authentic videos, games or songs. Moreover, they ask the reason for this difference and demand for learning English used in videos because they want to practice what they have learnt in real life while listening to authentic spoken text. They even stated to believe that chatting with speakers of English might help them practicing and improving skills as well as improving their comprehension for different accents. Therefore, teachers can sometimes use captioned videos, movies or songs to motivate their learners. Besides, they asked for more practice in listening and speaking skills, and adjusting the level of listening materials to them, which has plain, clear and slow speech. Furthermore, the 10th grade participants think that conducting listening exams and listening practice through personal tablets can be useful in dealing with the problems resulting from poor tape recorder and classroom conditions. Therefore, using EBA network and smartboards while teaching English, making listening practice and carrying out English listening exams.

5.2.2.3. 11th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

The 11th grade participants of this study were the students focusing on different fields of study such as Science and Maths class, the Turkish and Mathematics class, the Literature and Social Sciences class, and Language class at high school. 11th graders stated different factors affecting their listening performance. In line with 9th and 10th graders,

they reported that inadequate vocabulary knowledge interferes with their listening comprehension. This reported problem supports the results showing their higher reported frequency for item 2 (feeling nervous about unable to understand the spoken text, $M=3.04$), item 9 (not being able to concentrate on the rest of the message when missing a few words, $M= 3.69$), and item 15 (interference of unfamiliar words with students' listening comprehension, $M= 3.92$). Unfamiliar words can be said to have an effect on multiple areas like concentration and anxiety. For speaker related factors, they reported that varied accents, spoken text including connected speech such as elision, linking or catenation, or assimilation affect their listening performance and they have difficulty in understanding the speakers in the listening material because of its being "unintelligible". Their referring for spoken materials as unintelligible might stem from a number of interrelated factors, which they stated individually. One of the reasons for them might be the inappropriate level of listening materials and negative attitudes towards English. 11th graders demanded for simpler spoken texts that match with their levels, which shows that there is a mismatch between the levels of students and listening materials. The inappropriate levels might be more problematic than it can be assumed that one of the students even asked for teachers to present a different spoken text for each student. Being exposed to materials which are above their English proficiency levels which include difficult grammatical structures, unknown vocabulary items and fast paced speech might cause a sense of incompetency and build negative attitudes towards language. In order to solve this problem, again, teachers play an important role for identifying their students' levels and choosing the materials accordingly. Moreover, teachers can also deal with their students' negative feelings and try to motivate them because anxiety or other negative feelings might be the real cause of failure in learning a language. Another reason might be related with some listener related factors they stated such as lack of concentration and long spoken texts. Longer listening materials might be causing lack of concentration due to fatigue and short term memory problems. Therefore, teachers can divide longer spoken text into shorter parts in accordance with the needs of their students. Listening is an important skill which can be said to be developed through practice. Like 9th and 10th graders, 11th graders also stated that they do not spend enough time for listening and speaking practice but focus on grammar during English classes. Therefore, teachers' allocating more time for listening can eliminate most of these problems. Moreover, the quantitative data results showed that 11th graders significantly differ from the 9th graders

in terms of their mean scores for experiencing difficulty in having discussion after the spoken text, item 6. This difference might be related with the lack of practice in listening and speaking skills since having a discussion after the spoken text requires proficiency in both listening and speaking skills. Moreover, they stated that listening and speaking skills are closely linked and improving speaking performance through practice can lead to improvement in their listening performance. For improvement, they suggested chatting with native speakers and using applications designed for improving speaking skill. Like 10th graders, some of 11th graders also suggested avoiding the use of L1 in the classroom by the teachers as a solution for improving listening and speaking performance. In addition to these suggested solutions, teachers can design a discussion as post-listening activity to address these two skills. Further, they asked for having tape script in order to find out their mistakes, which might be used as post-listening activity by the teachers.

In order to deal with these problems, 11th graders suggested solutions which are similar to those of the 9th and 10th graders. They pointed out the importance of the spoken texts' being interesting and enjoyable for their motivation as well as helping them improving their vocabulary knowledge and listening skills. Most of the them suggested watching captioned or subtitled video, movies or series or listening stories with captions and listening to songs and playing games in English stating that they are catchy. They also stressed the importance of spending one classroom hour in a week in order to familiarize with the listening practice. In addition, a small number of the 11th graders stated that practice with sentence structures can improve their listening comprehension performance while majority of them stated that English lessons should be less grammar focused. In order to deal with this problem, teachers can present a writing activity at the post listening stage in order to practice sentence structures.

Considering all of these problems and suggestions, it can be inferred that the main factors affecting listening comprehension performance of 11th graders are difficulty in understanding the spoken text because of unclear pronunciation of the words and connected or fast paced speech, unknown vocabulary items and negative attitudes towards listening. The main reason for these problems might be the inconsistency between their current and expected levels of English proficiency. 11th graders are considered as having B1+/ B2 English level. The 11th grade syllabus, the complexity of the grammatical structures and vocabulary items are designed in accordance with their expected levels. However, most of the 11th graders might not be at that expected level and that is why they

have so many listening problems in comprehending the spoken texts designed for B1+/B2 level. Thus, teachers can identify students' English proficiency levels and adapt these materials to their levels. Moreover, teachers might also provide more listening and speaking practice rather than grammar in order to improve the listening practice of their students. In the class, captioned videos or audios with visual aids can be used in order to motivate them and to teach the differences between spoken and written forms. Additionally, tape scripts can also be provided as a post listening activity to help the students identify their mistakes.

5.2.2.4. 12th graders' opinions about the factors affecting their listening performance and their suggested solutions for improving it

Similar to the 9th, 10th, and 11th graders, the most frequently reported listening problems by 12th graders were speaker and listener related problems. With respect to speaker related listening problems, majority of the students stated that they have difficulty in understanding spoken texts which include speakers speaking too fast, use connected speech or have varied accents. Additionally, they pinpointed the importance of improving their vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge to improve their listening comprehension for different accents; hence, they proposed the use of authentic materials instead of grammar-focused spoken texts. Further, most of them stated that spoken texts are boring, instead of them, captioned videos, cartoons, series, movies or songs should be used because they are much more interesting and visual clues enhance their listening comprehension. Another problem stated by the 12th graders were about the content of English lessons. According to them, they do not learn English used in daily life and their English lessons focus on grammar and the allocated time for listening and speaking practice is inadequate. They commented that improving listening and speaking skills as well as vocabulary knowledge should precede grammar instruction. One of the students expressed her discouragement about the grammar focused English lessons as follows:

"We have been learning English since the 4th grade; however, we have not been taught English for daily use. We are not going to teach grammar to the person whom we speak to."

In concurrence with this statement, another student pinpointed the similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition process by stating:

“A child can acquire the spoken language around him. However, we cannot understand English despite learning it for 12 years. We do not speak, we learn only formulas, as a result neither can we understand nor can we speak”.

The majority of the students agree on the fact that grammar focused lessons cannot automatically improve their listening and speaking skills, and no use in real life communication taking into account of the fact that what matters in real life communication is mutual intelligibility not the grammatical correctness. Therefore, teachers should hear the voice of their students and spend more time for improving listening and speaking skills and use authentic materials to catch their attention. Moreover, like 11th graders, the students attending 12th grade also stated their preference for their use of English by teachers rather than Turkish because they believe that being exposed to the target language in the classroom environment in addition to using online resources, games and applications prepared for listening and speaking practice can lead improvement in these skills. The tendency of English teachers to use L1 can be associated with their belief that students cannot understand a lesson which is taught in English. However, students claimed the opposite. Students probably see it as an opportunity to improve their listening and speaking skills. Considering the fact that English classes are the only places that students are exposed to target language regularly, teachers can use English while teaching and benefit from L1 to clarify some points. With reference to listener related problems, they feel that aptitude for language learning, lack of motivation, their English levels have also an impact on their listening performance. Therefore, teachers can benefit from pre-listening stage of a lesson effectively. Since, at this stage, teachers can motivate their learners, reduce their anxiety levels and arise interest for listening by giving some information about the topic, pre-teaching critical words from the spoken context, brainstorming about the content of the spoken text and giving them purpose to listen.

Under the light of these results, it can be concluded that most of the problems and suggested solutions reported by the learners are common regardless of their grades although they were found to differ in the frequency of experiencing these listening comprehension problems. The suggested solutions of the learners focused on need for the visual clues and tape scripts, authentic captioned videos, songs and games, preference for

teachers' reading aloud, having knowledge of vocabulary items in the spoken text, interesting and entertaining topics, materials appropriate for their levels having slower and clearer speech, good quality tape recorders, and more practice for listening and speaking to improve their listening comprehension for different accents or characteristics of speech. These results are in line with the findings of Hasan (2000) in that most of the participants suggested "pre-listening information related to the text, good quality tape-recorders, familiar vocabulary, reading the text before listening to it, and interesting topics" as a solution for improving their listening comprehension. Similarly, Graham (2006) found that most of the learners have problems regarding "poor monitoring of understanding, poor application of background knowledge to help overcome problems of comprehension; problems in speech segmentation and recognizing familiar vocabulary in the speech stream". In concurrence with the results of this study, findings from the study of Hamouda (2012) indicated that EFL Saudi learners have listening comprehension problems related with pronunciation, pace of speech, inadequate vocabulary knowledge, different accent of speakers, lack of concentration, anxiety, and bad quality of recording. Furthermore, the findings of the current study can be said to be supported by the results for listening comprehension problems of undergraduate English students learning French or Spanish as a foreign language (Williams, 2017). Williams (2017) found that students have problems regarding the speed of speech, understanding varied accents, and lack of background knowledge about the topic, unknown and colloquial vocabulary items, taking notes while listening and interference of background noise with listening comprehension.

5.2.3. High school teachers' opinions about their students' listening comprehension problems and their reported practices for dealing with these problems

In addition to the students, teachers are also asked to list the most common problems of their students, and conducted interviews for exploring their current classroom practices for listening problems. Teachers pre-list of their students' most common listening comprehension problems will be discussed in relation to the fourth interview question, which asks teachers about the most common listening problems of their students in the classroom and their common classroom practices for dealing with these problems.

Research Question 3. What are the high school teachers' opinions about the listening comprehension problems of their students and their reported practices for dealing with these problems?

In order to probe into the opinions and practices of high school teachers regarding their students' listening comprehension problems, a semi-structured interview was carried out with seven of the teachers in accordance with their willingness. The first interview question was "What is your opinion about the significance of listening skill for your students?". All of the interviewers emphasized the importance of listening skill for their students. Some of them highlighted the importance of listening in foreign language learning referring to the role of listening in L1 acquisition process in developing speaking skill through providing comprehensible input. Similar to L1 acquisition process, they also suggested that listening also should precede the speaking in foreign language learning. Moreover, it was also pointed out that improving listening skills of the students is required for facilitating their interpretation and understanding English as a foreign language. With reference to the answers of the teachers, it can be concluded that teachers consider listening skill as having primary importance for its providing input for the learners and improving their speaking skills. The second interview question was "What are the readiness levels of Anatolian high school students when they are at 9th grades and 12th grades? Is there any difference regarding their levels of readiness?". Teachers expressed different opinions for the readiness levels of their students. On the one hand, some of them stated that 9th graders are more motivated and ready for listening activities when compared with upper graders. On the other hand, others stated just the opposite and uttered that 9th graders are more unwilling to listen in the target language and have higher anxiety levels for listening. Similarly, while some of the interviewers think that students' readiness levels of progress as they proceed through the upper grades, others stated that nothing much changes from 9th grade to 12th grade in terms of their readiness levels. Moreover, teachers, who think that 9th graders have low readiness levels towards listening, attributed 9th graders' unwillingness to lack of practice and inadequate vocabulary knowledge. However, others think that that they are highly motivated to do listening exercises but it becomes lower through 12th grade. These ambivalent attitudes towards the readiness levels of 9th graders might be closely related with the time spent for listening practice by the teachers in the class. Qualitative data results gathered from students' opinions showed that the majority of the students demand for more listening

practice, which means that the time spent for listening is inadequate for students. They even suggested allocating one classroom hour for listening practice. As a result, it can be concluded that the more time spent for listening practice, the higher readiness levels students might have. In other words, students whose teachers do not spend much time for listening might have lower readiness levels even if they are at the same grade or exposed to the same materials.

The third interview question was “What are the students’ feelings about listening activities?”. Although interviewers differ in their perceptions on whether students like listening activities or not, they all agreed that most of their students have listening anxiety. Teachers reported different kinds of underlying reasons for the listening anxiety of their students. One of the main reasons for listening anxiety was stated as lack of listening practice. The statements of teachers regarding lack of listening practice also concur with those of the students. A majority of the students stated that they do not have enough listening practice and demanded for more listening practice. One of the students reflected their need for practice as follows: *[I think more listening-focused lesson should be developed and listening practice should be done once a week on a regular basis]*. Regarding the students’ and teachers’ perceptions about the necessity of listening practice, it can be suggested that teachers should allocate more time for listening practice on a regular basis at high schools. However, limited classroom hours at high school might not be enough to improve listening comprehension of a student, who is exposed to a listening material at high school for the first time. Therefore, listening skill should be focused on starting from the 2nd grade at primary schools. In this way, students can improve not only their listening comprehension in English but also gain familiarity with different kinds of spoken texts and varied accents before high school.

Another reason reported by teachers with respect to anxiety was trying to understand every single word in a spoken text, which is a strategy use related problem. Tendency of students to try to understand every word, even the unimportant ones, causes them to have listening anxiety and feel discouraged when they come across with an unknown or incomprehensible vocabulary item (Ur, 2008, p.13). Besides, teachers’ beliefs about that strategy use listening problem can be supported by the quantitative data results for item 30, which is about listening to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text. The results revealed that there is not a significant difference regarding the means scores of four groups of students and teachers, which means that most of the students (M=3.42) and

teachers (M=3.13) agree on students' tendency to listen to every detail. Moreover, qualitative data results gathered from students' answers were found to be in line with teachers' opinions in that most of the students have negative attitudes towards listening and English lesson.

Lastly, the cause of listening anxiety was also attributed to the type of listening material. The listening materials, which have uninteresting topics or consisting of long spoken texts, were found to have an impact on students' listening comprehension and increasing their anxiety levels. All in all, it can be concluded that although teachers' reported underlying reasons for anxiety might differ from each other, they all believe that listening anxiety of their students can be dealt via more listening practice, encouragement and teaching strategy techniques through time.

The fourth interview question was "What are the most common listening problems of students in the classroom? What are your classroom practices for dealing with these problems? In the first part of the study, teachers were asked to list the listening comprehension problems of their students for the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students taking four hours of English and 11th and 12th grade language class students taking 14 hours of English in a week separately. The data gathered from these lists showed that the listening comprehension problems of the students do not differ much with respect to the time spent for learning English at school. The findings revealed that teachers tend to think that students mostly have speaker and listener related problems as well as message and strategy use related problems. However, they did not state any task related listening problems. After the implementation of the questionnaire, teachers also stated some task related problems in the interview, which are difficulty in note taking while listening and holding a discussion after listening.

Some of the speaker related problems reported by the teachers were about students' having difficulty in understanding varied accents and speakers speaking too fast using connected speech. Actually, these problems can be discussed under the lights of results from the quantitative data. Item 18 was related with difficulty in understanding speakers speaking too fast. Speaking too fast or speaking with connected speech might be grouped as referring the same problem. The results showed that 9th graders differ significantly from the 10th, 11th graders and teachers in terms of the reported frequency of experiencing this problem. Although 9th graders do not experience these problems as often as their teachers think, upper graders and teachers reported to have this problem

more often. Further, item 28 was about having difficulty in understanding the varied accents and similarly upper graders stated to have this problem more often than the 9th graders. The reasons for this might be progressive dimension of the syllabi in terms of complexity of the skills and components through 12th grade.

Although teachers share similar view points about the speaker related factors affecting students' listening performance, it was found out that they suggest different kinds of practices. While some teachers try to avoid accent problem by providing and focusing on the same accent in their listening materials, others provide authentic listening materials with varied accents or teach varied pronunciation of the words. However, in real life communication, English is used as a lingua franca today and students will mostly speak with interlocutors speaking English as a foreign language rather than native speakers of English. Therefore, teaching native accents might not match with students' needs. In order to deal with accent problem, teachers might familiarize their students with two of the most common accents, which are British and American, and expose learners to various forms of accents in order to give them practice in understanding and coping with different kinds of accents (Ur, 2008, p.20). As for speakers having fast paced speech, teachers reported to read the text aloud themselves, and to pause and translate after each sentence.

According to teachers, students also experience message related problems, specifically, with long spoken texts and unknown vocabulary items. However, these problems can also be referred as listener related problems with reference to their consequences. These problems were reported to bring about negative attitudes towards listening and causing boredom, anxiety, tiredness, and loss of concentration of students, which are listener related problems. Nearly all of the teachers expressed that their students have difficulty in paying attention to and understanding the long spoken texts. In order to deal with this problem, they stated to divide long spoken texts into shorter sections. These intervals might be beneficial for students to deal with the overload of long listening texts (Wilson, 2008, p. 61). In addition, the interviewers said that they summarize and ask comprehension questions for each part individually. Moreover, unknown vocabulary items were reported to distract concentration of the students and to increase their anxiety levels. Therefore, teachers stated to implement a number of practices to deal with it. Their reported practices include teaching unknown vocabulary items and encouraging students predicting the unknown vocabulary items from the context. However, their sequences for

teaching unknown vocabulary items were found to be different. While some of the teachers pre-teach vocabulary items in pre-listening part, others teach them at post-listening part. Indeed, teachers can make use of both stages of the listening lesson plan for teaching unknown vocabulary items. In the current listening lesson plan, it was suggested to pre-teach critical vocabulary items prior to listening, and to provide practice for guessing the unknown vocabulary items through the context at post-listening stage (Field, 2008, pp.17-22). In addition to these implications, the interviewers also stated to deal with the listener related problems by boosting their confidence in listening via easier tasks, making the topic of the spoken text interesting through presenting enjoyable captioned videos and songs and help them familiarize with the text by providing background information for the listening text.

With regard to task related problems, most of the interviewers stated that their students are unwilling to carry out discussion after the listening text. Moreover, some of them also stated that their students have difficulty in taking notes while listening. Teachers believe that students have anxiety not only for listening but also for speaking. Furthermore, the reason for difficulty in having discussion at post listening stage was explained with respect to students' having speaking anxiety. The suggested solutions of teachers for this problem is motivating and encouraging their students by helping them with the sentence structure as well as unknown vocabulary items, teaching unknown vocabulary items prior to speaking tasks, and asking short and simple questions about the spoken text to boost their confidence towards speaking. Moreover, allowing students peer check before answering the questions in the class can also help them dealing with anxiety (Field, 2008, p. 21). Another task related problem stated by the interviewers was that students find it difficult to take notes for activity while listening because they do not know which parts are important and try to write down every detail. As a result, they miss some parts of the spoken text while focusing on every detail. In order to eliminate this problem, teachers reported to implement a number of activities to deal with these problems such as teaching note-taking strategies or letting students write down the words ignoring the spelling for them and correcting their mistakes after the listening. However, pre-setting the questions before the second play of the recording gives students a purpose to listen and it can also help learners take notes selectively by focusing on only the important parts in accordance with that purpose (Field, 2008, p.20). Another students' listening problem reported by one of the teachers was about strategy use, which can also be related with

note-taking problems. According to the interviewer, students also have difficulty in predicting the words from the context and getting the main idea of the spoken text as they focus on every detail. Many language learners have difficulty in getting the main idea of the spoken text as a result of assumption that “successful comprehension is total comprehension” (Ur, 2008, p.14). However, effective listening requires to detect and “skim” the unimportant items rather than word-by-word listening because these words are actually redundant. In our native language system, we can easily “switch off” ourselves about redundancy; however, foreign language learner is not able to do this because of paying attention to every word. As a result, s/he cannot benefit from having “natural rest” in case of redundancy and in order to get ready for the incoming speech. He is focusing on every detail too hard to get the main idea of the spoken text (Ur, 2008, p. 15). In order to identify the unimportant items and skim redundancy, a learner should have the ability of predicting what is coming next; however, prediction in foreign language requires “a reasonable grasp” of the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of the target language (Ur, 2018, p.16). In line with these suggestions, the interviewer stated to do vocabulary pre-teaching before each listening as a short-term solution, working on the skill of guessing vocabulary from context and practice with reading texts for a while to build up to the much more difficult skill of guessing the meaning of vocabulary items and listening at the same time.

All of the stated problems and practices by teachers reflect that the teachers are aware of the students’ listening comprehension problems and try to deal with them through presenting a number of activities. However, their practices are limited to the time they spent for listening. Therefore, as a fifth interview question, teachers were asked the following question: “How much time do you spend for listening activities?”. The majority of the teachers reported that they spent little or no time for the listening activities due to the time limitation. On the other hand, one of the interviewers stated that he tries to allocate one hour for listening every week. While teachers tend to spend a little time for listening practice due to the limited classroom hours, their students demanded for more listening practice because the majority of the students, regardless of their grades, think that lack of practice is one of the main factors that affects their listening performance negatively. The last interview question was “What are your opinions about the course books?”. Most of the teacher agreed on the fact that the course books are insufficient for listening practice. In addition, they stated that the levels of the course book materials do

not match with the levels of the students; therefore, many students find the activities difficult. As a solution, they reported to use extra materials with reference to the levels of the students. Teachers' opinions about the level of the course books also supports students' demands for listening materials which are appropriate for their levels. Reported inappropriate levels of course books for students can actually stem from the fact that students' current level of English does not match with that of course books which are designed for their expected proficiency levels.

5.3. Suggestions

In this section, pedagogical implications inferred from the findings of the study, and suggestions for further research were presented.

5.3.1. Pedagogical Implications

The findings from the present study revealed that students experience a number of listening comprehension problems, and most of these problems are detected by their teachers and dealt with a number of ways and activities. Hence, the teacher's role is highly important in detecting the listening comprehension problems of their students and applying the appropriate solutions for these problems. Indeed, teachers should expect the unexpected with respect to their students' listening problems because listening process cannot be directly accessed, and it is impossible to observe the problems of the students and the skills they use in the listening comprehension process except for deducing them by examining learners' response "(whether spoken, written or non- verbal)" about the listening input (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 7). Under the light of the data gathered from the responses from student and teacher participants of this study, possible pedagogical implications of this research can be discussed. With respect to the students' listening comprehension problems, teachers can deal with these problems by implementing short-term and long-term suggested solutions.

The most common factors and suggested solutions for the students' listening comprehension problems address different stages in a listening lesson plan and can be dealt with by implementing short term suggested solutions via designing a listening lesson plan. However, before designing a plan, it is necessary for teachers to select the suitable material for their learners. Because the type or genre of the material has an impact on the strategies and processes to be used (Wilson, 2008, p. 39). The majority of the students

reported that the levels of the listening material are not suitable for them and demanded materials which match with their levels. First of all, teachers should know the needs and levels of their students, and choose the materials accordingly. In order to identify the English proficiency levels of their students, a placement exam testing four skills of English can be applied at the beginning of each term. According to their levels, teachers can choose or adapt materials for the students.

Another problem reported by most of the high school students was feeling nervous when they do not know the vocabulary items in a spoken text and getting bored when they do not understand these words. However, this problem can be dealt at pre-listening stage of the lesson. Pre-listening stage is “critical” phase of the listening process (Richards, 1983). At pre-listening stage, teachers can provide the critical vocabulary items to their students and give some information about the setting, content and the speakers of the spoken text in order to activate their schemata and give purpose for listening (Field, 2008, p. 18; Wilson, 2008, p. 64). Regarding vocabulary teaching, it is important not to pre-teach all of the unknown words since, in real life, they may not know all of the words uttered by the interlocutor but still have to predict them. Besides, pre-teaching all of the vocabulary items unintentionally take the students’ attention to those words while listening rather than the general meaning of the text and result in memory load. Therefore, teachers should teach only critical words which are essential for listening (Field, 2008, p.17).

Students also reported that they have difficulty in understanding a spoken text which has uninteresting topics and stated their preference for authentic videos, songs or games as listening materials. They have a point in that non-authentic listening texts usually designed with the sentence structures found in writing rather than spoken language. Therefore, there are just a few hesitations or false starts which normally occur in spoken language and little “negotiation of meaning”. With these features, non-authentic texts do not prepare learners for real life listening. On the other hand, authentic materials include some features that can foster listening comprehension such as repetition or asking for clarification when the interlocutors miss a point. In addition to these features, authentic materials can be much more interesting and various for students (Nunan, 1999, p. 212). Therefore, authentic materials can be preferred for listening practice. Moreover, students also stated that they have difficulty in understanding varied accents, unclear pronunciation of some words, fast paced speech and stated preference for visual clues and

tape script while listening. In order to deal with these problems, captioned versions of the videos can also be used for the students in the second or third play of the recording. After listening once, they can see their mistakes gain some knowledge about the features of connected speech, identify the differences between the spoken and written form of the words and improve their listening performance with the help of captions. Besides, visual clues in videos can also facilitate listening comprehension and reduce anxiety. According to Hedge (2000), listener is able to see the speaker in real life listening situations; hence, the usage of audio without visual clues is “unnecessarily restricting” (p. 242). In addition to authentic videos, providing pre-listening information about the spoken text can also stimulate learners interest and activate their schemata about the topic. Teachers can activate students’ schemata by presenting some basic information about the context, the setting, topic, and the genre of the recording, critical vocabulary items, and speakers in order to help learners to create a general outline of the spoken text in their minds. However, the scope of information should match with that of the real life listening, and it should not be too extensive. Students might not be interested in listening the spoken text if they know too much about the content (Field, 2008, p. 18; Wilson, 2008, p. 64). Through activation of their schemata, students can make use of their background knowledge about the listening topic and try to predict what the speakers are going to say. Moreover, they can fill the message gaps resulting from poor quality of the recorder or the outside noise relying on their background information through prediction when they missed some parts of the listening. Activating learners’ background knowledge through pictures, asking questions about the topic or other activities might facilitate their adaption to the topic, predicting the content and the incoming sentences. Besides, such kind of knowledge also helps students listen “selectively” the important parts of the spoken text and decrease the memory and information processing load (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p.56; Wilson, 2008, pp.14-15).

To sum up, preparing students in pre-listening stage can motivate them, reduce their anxiety and build their confidence towards listening since they have already known some important words and clues about the spoken text. Knowing a little about the spoken text might be better for them than knowing nothing at all. Besides, they will have had a purpose for listening and doing listening exercises.

Some of the listening comprehension problems stated by learners are related with the listening stage of the lesson. Many students stated that some problems related with

listening process such as concentration problem, listening to every detail in the spoken text and difficulty in speaking about the topic. However, these problems can be overcome by pre-setting questions after second play of the recording. Through these questions, students will have a purpose to listen and be more concentrated on the recording in order to identify important points rather than listening to every detail (Field, 2008, p.20). After answering these questions, students' answers can be checked. However, many students stated that they have difficulty in speaking in the target language about the listening text. In order to deal with their speaking anxiety, they might be allowed to peer check before answering the questions in the class (Field, 2008, p. 21). Considering these solutions, it can be inferred that while listening activities have many advantages. They give purpose for listening and keep the learners focused. Furthermore, they provide feedback about whether students understand the recording or not. Thanks to this feedback, teachers can find out which parts of the spoken text should be practiced or clarified. (Wilson, 2008, p. 82).

Post listening activities can also help learners cope with their listening comprehension problems. Another problem commonly reported by the high school learners that their lessons are grammar focused and they do not learn the daily use of English. Indeed, that is a problem related with the early format of grammar focused English lessons. However, teachers can highlight the daily use of language through current trend of contextualized spoken texts which present the functional use of language such as apologizing, threatening, offering etc. Moreover, teachers can even pause briefly to practice them in isolation (Field, 2008, p. 21). Furthermore, a vast majority of the students stated that they had concentration problems. There can be so many underlying reasons for students having concentration problems such as unknown vocabulary items, poor quality of the recorders, lack of purpose to listen, length of a spoken text. Moreover, during listening, while the listener process one word, the other word is "incoming". Therefore, listener can experience an overload of words unless he adapts himself to the "rhythm" and "flow" of the natural speech. This cognitive overload might be another reason for students' losing their concentration (Wilson, 2008, pp. 14-15). However, providing background knowledge about the topic can help learners to avoid redundancy through listening "selectively" (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p.56). In addition, teachers can also use paused play for "chunking" the longer text and play it with various pauses. These various intervals might help students to deal with the overload of long listening

texts (Wilson, 2008, p. 61) and concentration problems. Moreover, students commonly reported that they want the tape script of the spoken text. The use of captioned videos allows learners to see the written forms of the spoken text. However, using captioned videos might not be always possible. For instance, teachers may want to practice telephone conversations or radio programs through audios. In that case of audios, teachers can benefit from playing the recording for the last time by giving the script to the students for the first time. The final play with the scripts of the spoken text can contribute to the students a lot for presenting them individual feedback about the parts they have unsuccessfully decoded and the “short weak quality function words” that have not noticed (Field, 2008, p. 22, Wilson, 2008, p.61). Furthermore, Wilson (2008) suggested that providing the script after the students have listened the spoken text at least twice, might help students find out and confirm what they heard as well as solving listening problems. In addition, it helps the students to recognize the difference between the written and spoken form of a word as well as recognition of some grammar points. Therefore, it was suggested that “the script can be a starting point for teaching” (pp.21-23), and teachers can benefit from it.

In conclusion, preparing listening activities in accordance with needs of the students can help students overcome most of the listening comprehension problems.

In addition to short-term solutions of these problems, some problems require long-term solutions. A great number of students also stated that there is a mismatch between the levels of the listening materials and their current levels of English. This mismatch can be dealt with adapting the listening materials according to their levels in the short run. However, this mismatch can also be discussed and dealt with under the light of the high school curriculum. Although students are expected to gain proficiency in Turkey from A1 level at 9th grade towards B2+ level at 12th grade and progress through levels and grades until graduating from the high school, they might not be progressing through these levels despite progressing an upper grade. As the complexity of the vocabulary and grammatical structures as well as intended skills increase as they progress to an upper grade, students having lower English levels than the expected ones might have difficulty in adapting these materials and can feel discouraged as a result of failure in comprehension. Therefore, English proficiency levels of students should not be determined according to their grades. Instead, at the beginning of each academic year, a placement exam testing four skills of English can be administered, and with respect to their scores, students can be placed to

the English classes formed according to CEFR English proficiency levels. In other words, forming English classes as A1, A2, B1 etc. levels rather than 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade English classes might be more effective for students' gaining English proficiency. The majority of the students also demanded for more listening and speaking practice and listen to authentic materials such as captioned videos, movies, songs and games rather than structured grammar focused recordings. In other words, students reported to need for real life listening materials rather than real like ones, and practice them as much as possible. Concerning the limited classroom hours for English, students can be encouraged to use self-access centers and do extensive listening through online educational platforms. One of these social educational platforms is EBA, which is led by The General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies in Turkey. EBA offers many modules like news, book, video, image, audio, magazine and document models which support individual and collective learning ([http-4](http://4)), and integrate technology with education. As for the special focus of this study, video and audio models of EBA, which contain foreign language listening passages and videos, can match the needs of today's students, digital natives. Students can benefit from EBA whenever and wherever they want. Besides, access to such kind of an educational platform can develop students' confidence, motivate them to learn English and foster their learner autonomy. Therefore, students can be encouraged to access EBA more often.

Besides, most of the students stated that they have difficulty in understanding varied accents. The responses of teachers from the interviews showed that while some teachers try to avoid accent problem by providing and focusing on the same accent in their listening materials, others provide authentic listening materials with varied accents or teach varied pronunciation of the words. However, in real life communication, English is used as a lingua franca today and students will mostly speak with interlocutors speaking English as a foreign language rather than native speakers of English. Therefore, teaching native accents might not match with students' needs. In order to deal with accent problem, teachers might familiarize their students with two of the most common accents, which are British and American, and expose learners to various forms of accents in order to give them practice in understanding and coping with different kinds of accents (Ur, 2008, p.20).

Additionally, some of the listening comprehension problems of the learners can be dealt by teaching some techniques and strategies. Ur (2008) stated that students'

tendency to trying to understand every word, even the unimportant ones, causes them to have listening anxiety and feel discouraged when they come across with an unknown or incomprehensible vocabulary item and hinders them getting the main idea of the spoken text (p.13). Therefore, teachers can be said to play an important role in teaching listening strategies for helping them overcome this problem. Moreover, a great majority of the students stated that one of the main factors affecting their listening comprehension performance is lack of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, they demanded for being instructed about vocabulary learning techniques to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Besides, with respect to the feedbacks from the learners in English classes, it can be said that most of the students in high schools do not know how to learn a vocabulary item, and they even ask whether they should write the same word for ten times or twenty times for retention. Therefore, it can be inferred that their inadequate vocabulary knowledge might be related with their lack of knowledge about how to learn a vocabulary item and how to enhance retention. Thus, teachers can also teach vocabulary learning techniques at the beginning of each term.

Moreover, most of the high school learners stated that they have difficulty in recognizing the words having features of connected speech and understanding speakers speaking too fast. These are the problems closely related with the bottom-up processing. Bottom-up processes involve both speech perception and word recognition (Rost, 2002, p. 96). In this way, bottom-up refers to the detailed analysis of the “heard” language from “sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meanings” in the aural comprehension process (Morley, 2001, p. 74). Even though the learners have the knowledge of all the words being used in linguistic input, they need to recognize the “assimilation, unstressed words and the changing speed of the input” for comprehension. Therefore, bottom-up processing plays an important role in listening comprehension (Rost, 2002, p. 96). On the other hand, top- down mode of language process demands listener to bring background knowledge to comprehend what is ‘heard’. Listener relies on his own prior knowledge and “global expectations” to make predictions and inferences in order to make sense of the incoming language data (Morley, 2001, p. 74). This view of listening deals with the “activation of the schemata” and background global knowledge depending on the contextual factors to make sense of incoming language data (Brown, p. 312, 2007). Therefore, top-down processing also plays an important role predicting the content relying on background knowledge and affects listening comprehension a lot.

According to the researches, both processes are used at the same time while listening (Wilson, 2008, p. 15). Hence, it is important to raise students' awareness about how their processing operations interact with the text (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p.89), and practicing bottom-up, top-down and interactive use of these processes through various exercises in the class. In addition, considering the fact that listening is an "internal" process (Wilson, 2008, pp. 21-23) and listening process cannot be directly accessed, and it is impossible to observe the problems of the students and the skills they use in the listening comprehension process except for deducing them by examining learners' response "(whether spoken, written or non- verbal)" about the listening input (Anderson and Lynch, 1988, p. 7), metacognitive strategy training for listening can be said to be of great importance for students in improving their listening comprehension. Vandergrift pinpointed the importance of metacognitive strategy training by stating:

"Students need to "learn to listen" so that they can better "listen to learn." Listening instruction is expanding from a focus on the product of listening (listening to learn) to include a focus on the process (learning to listen) (Vandergrift, 2004)."

"Skilled strategy use in L2 listening, then, is more than a question of numbers; it is a skillful 'orchestration' of a number of metacognitive and cognitive strategies used to control learning processes and achieve comprehension (Vandergrift, 2005)".

Metacognitive strategies are the skills such as "planning", "monitoring", "evaluating", and "problem solving" which are used by learners to "manage", "regulate", and "guide their learning." Moreover, the results of some researches showed that the difference between more-skilled and less-skilled L2 listeners largely stems from their use of metacognitive strategies (e.g. Bacon 1992; Goh 1998, 2000; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Vandergrift 1998, 2003 cited in Vandergrift, 2005). Therefore, teachers should raise their students' awareness about metacognitive strategies, and teach them metacognitive strategies by exposing them to the same sequence of metacognitive strategies via tasks which focus on comprehension practice-oriented and more communicative in orientation (Vandergrift, 2004).

Moreover, a great majority of the teachers in this study reported that they allocate little or no time for listening practice and focus on other skills due to the time limitation in classroom hours. However, all of the four skills are integrated, and it is even impossible, as stated by most of the teachers in the world, to focus on just one or two

skills and ignoring the others (Krashen, 1981, p. 100). It can be said that these four skills are not independent from each other but rather interdependent in language learning, all of which can be used to foster improvement in another skill. As for the listening, it is considered as the basis of second language acquisition (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 235), since it provides comprehensible input for the learner without which any learning cannot be realized. Therefore, it can be said that improving listening comprehension can be the initial step for any learning happen and development of other skills or components in the target language. In Turkish high school EFL context, four classroom hours of English might be limited for focusing on listening skill separately; however, teachers can benefit from listening activities as warm up or follow up activities while focusing on other skills of the language. Listening can even be used for providing background information or brainstorming about a topic prior to speaking, reading or a writing activity. For instance, students can watch a captioned video or audio to get background information about a topic to be discussed, written or read. Moreover, such kind of a warm up or follow up listening activity can motivate learners to learn. In addition, most of the students stated that they do not have enough exposure to listening and speaking skills; hence, they demanded for their teachers' use of English during the class rather than their use of L1. Most of the teachers tend to believe that L1 usage in teaching facilitates learning. However, in line with students' demands, an initial step for providing listening input for students can be also students' exposure to the language through the teacher's use of the target language in the class even at the very beginning of language learning, at primary schools.

In conclusion, it can be suggested that detecting listening comprehension problems of the students and dealing with them through activities and tasks in a metacognitive cycle, and raising their awareness about metacognitive strategies are important for improving listening comprehension performance of the language learners.

5.3.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of high school EFL teachers and students about listening comprehension problems of Anatolian high school students attending different grades in Turkish EFL context. Their English proficiency levels are expected levels determined in accordance with the curriculum by Turkish Ministry of Education. Therefore, a further study can investigate the current levels of EFL students at each

grade and compare them with their expected levels. Conducting this study with different language proficiency levels might yield valuable data for digging into the listening comprehension problems of high school students. In this study, there were 553 students and 8 teachers as the participants. The number of the teachers are limited since they were chosen as the English teachers of the student participants. Other studies might include more teacher participants in accordance with the number of teachers working in other high schools. Besides, students also mentioned about listening and speaking anxiety and having low motivations for the listening. Therefore, anxiety and motivation levels might be assessed in another study and the relationship between the anxiety or motivation levels and the reported listening comprehension problems can also be explored. Further studies may also investigate the impact of listening on improving speaking performance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-1. Student Version of Listening Comprehension Problems Questionnaire

APPENDIX-2. Turkish Version of Students' Open-ended Questions

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APPENDIX-1. Student Version of Listening Comprehension Problems Questionnaire

Bilgi ve Kabul Formu

Bu çalışma Eskişehir Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngilizce Öğretmenliği programında yüksek lisans yapmakta olan Şerife Aygün tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmamın amacı öğrencilerin İngilizce derslerinde yaşadıkları dinleme problemlerini belirlemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır ve elde edilen sonuçlar sadece bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek isterseniz, lütfen Şerife Aygün (serifeaygun@gmail.com) ile iletişim kurunuz. Çalışmaya katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

Yönerge: Aşağıdaki anket sizin yabancı dilde dinleme yaparken karşılaştığınız problemleri belirlemek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevabı yoktur. Aklınıza ilk gelen cevap sizin tutumunuzu en iyi şekilde yansıtan olacaktır.

Lütfen her bir maddeyi dikkatle okuyup, yaklaşımınızı temsil eden cevabı daire içine alınız. Lütfen tüm maddeleri cevaplandırınız.

Cinsiyetiniz: E / K

Yaş:

Okul:

Sınıf/ Bölüm:

Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizcede Dinleme Yaparken Karşılaşılan Problemler Anketi

Soru No	Sorular	Asla	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Her Zaman
1	Anlaşılır şekilde telaffuz edilmeyen kelimelerin anlamlarını anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Dinleme parçasını anlamadığımda gergin ve üzgün hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Sözlü parçayı dinledikten sonra konuyla ilgili tartışma yapmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Bir dinleme parçasının başlığından konuşmacıların ne söyleyeceğini tahmin etmekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Görsel ipuçları sözlü bir pasajı (parçayı) anlamamda yardımcı olur (resimler, diagramlar, tablolar, video vs.)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Uzun bir dinleme parçasının anlamını yorumlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Kısa cevaptan başka türlü cevaplar gerektiren soruları cevaplamakta zorlanırım (nasıl ve neden’li sorular).	1	2	3	4	5
8	Bir dinleme parçasını kasetten dinlemektense öğretmenim okurken dinlemeyi tercih ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Birkaç kelimeyi kaçırdığım, anlamadığım zaman parçanın geri kalanına konsantre olmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5

10	Dinleme metninin konusuyla ilgili kelimeleri dinleme öncesinde tahmin etmeye çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Sözlü parçanın özetini yazmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Dinleme parçasıyla ilgili dinleme öncesi bilgileri anlamama yardımcı olur.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Dinleyeceğim parçayı önceden görmek anlamama yardımcı olur.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Dinleme esnasında tablo ya da grafik doldurmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Bilinmeyen kelimeler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Tereddütlerle ve duraksamalarla dolu olan doğal konuşmaları anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Dinleme esnasında not almakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Konuşmacılar çok hızlı konuştukları zaman iyi anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Konuşulan parçayı anlamak için konuyla ilgili tecrübelerimi ve geçmiş bilgilerimi kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Bir dinleme parçasını anlamak için çok fazla çaba sarf ederim ve bu beni yorar.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Dinlerken duyduğum kelimeleri çabucak unuturum.	1	2	3	4	5
22	İlgilimi çekmeyen dinleme parçalarını anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Kalitesiz kasetlerden kaynaklı belirsiz sesler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Dinlerken “firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand” gibi belirteçlere dikkat ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Bir dinleme parçasının genel anlamını ilk dinlemede anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Kalitesiz sınıf şartlarından kaynaklı ya da dışardan gelen sesler dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Zor gramatik (dil bilgisel) yapılar dinlerken anlamamı engeller.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Konuşmacılar farklı şivelerle/aksanlarla konuştukları zaman iyi anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Konuşmacının vücut dilini görmeden sözlü bir pasajı (parçayı) anlamakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Konuşulan parçanın ana fikrini anlamak için her detayı dinlerim.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX-2. Turkish Version of Students' Open-ended Questions

- a) İngilizcede dinleme performansınızı etkilediğini düşündüğünüz başka faktörler var mı? Varsa lütfen yazınız.
- b) İngilizcede dinleme performansınızı geliştirmek için neler yapılabilir?

APPENDIX-3. English Version of Students' Open-ended Questions

- a) Do you think there are any other factors affecting your listening performance in English? If yes, please write down.
- b) What can be done to improve your listening performance in English?

APPENDIX-4. Teacher Version of Listening Comprehension Problems Questionnaire

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This study is being conducted by Şerife AYGÜN, who is currently enrolled in Anadolu University English Language Teaching MA program. The aim of this study is to explore high school students' listening comprehension problems from the teachers' point of view. The participation in the study is completely voluntary and the answers will be used only for scientific purposes. If you would like to get further information about the study, please, get in touch with Şerife AYGÜN at serifeaygun@gmail.com. Thanks for your participation in the study.

Name:

Signature

Background Questions:

How long have you been teaching English? 1-5.... 6-10... 11-15.... 16 more.....

What grades do you teach?.....

Do you teach a language class? What grade of language class do you teach?.....

Which department did you graduate from?

Department of English Language Teaching

Department of English Language and Literature

Department of American Culture and Literature

Department of Translation and Interpreting

Department of Linguistics

Teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems Part A

Dear Participant,

This part of the study aims to explore your perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems. Please consider the levels of your 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grade students and the levels of the 11th and 12th grade language class students and list their listening comprehension problems as many as possible.

9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

7.....

8.....

9.....

10.....

11th and 12th grade language classes

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

7.....

8.....

9.....

10.....

Teachers' perceptions of students' listening comprehension problems Part B

Instruction: The questionnaire below aims to explore your perceptions of high school students' listening comprehension problems. There is not a correct or incorrect answer for any of the items. The first item that comes to your mind will reflect your approach best. Circle the item that represents your approach. Please answer all the items.

Listening Comprehension Problems Questionnaire

Item No	Questions	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	My students find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
2	My students feel nervous and worried when they do not understand the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
3	My students find it difficult to hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My students find it difficult to predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Visual clues help my students understand the spoken text (pictures, diagrams, charts, video, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
6	My students find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
7	My students find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions).	1	2	3	4	5
8	My students find it more difficult to listen to a recorded spoken text than to my reading aloud.	1	2	3	4	5
9	When my students miss a few words, they find it difficult to concentrate on the rest of the passage.	1	2	3	4	5
10	My students try to predict the words that they associate with the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
11	My students find it difficult to write a summary of the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Pre-listening information about the text improves my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Tape scripts provided before listening exercises help my students understand the text.	1	2	3	4	5
14	My students find it difficult to fill a chart or graphic while listening.	1	2	3	4	5

15	Unfamiliar words interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My students find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	1	2	3	4	5
17	My students find it difficult to take notes while listening.	1	2	3	4	5
18	My students find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	1	2	3	4	5
19	My students use their experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5
20	My students spend great effort to understand a listening text and this makes them tired	1	2	3	4	5
21	My students quickly forget the words they hear while listening.	1	2	3	4	5
22	My students find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to them.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality tape recorder interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
24	My students pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.	1	2	3	4	5
25	My students find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Difficult grammatical structures interfere with my students' listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
28	My students find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with varied accents	1	2	3	4	5
29	My students find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	1	2	3	4	5
30	My students listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX-5. Teachers' Interview Questions

1. What is your opinion about the significance of listening skill for your students?
2. What are the readiness levels of Anatolian high school students when they are at 9th grades and 12th grades? Is there any difference regarding their levels of readiness?
3. What are the students' feelings about listening activities?
4. What are the most common listening problems of students in the classroom?
 - What are your classroom practices for dealing with these problems?
5. How much time do you spend for listening activities?
6. What are your opinions about the course books?

APPENDIX-6. Scales of the Items in the Listening Comprehension Problems

Questionnaire

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

Strategy	10	I try to predict the words that I associate with the topic.
	12	Pre-listening information about the text improves my listening comprehension.
	19	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.
	24	I pay attention to the topic markers such as firstly, as a conclusion, on the other hand, while listening.
	30	I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.

APPENDIX-7. Sample Interview Notes

R: What is your opinion about the significance of listening skill for your students?

T: “As far as I am concerned, listening is the most crucial skill for gaining a new language.

The importance of this skill; however, is not be able to be understood well. We all begin to learn our native language by listening our parents and someone near us. When it comes to learn a foreign language, this is not the case in our country. We start to learn a foreign language by writing. Can we teach a baby writing before speaking?”

R: What are the readiness levels of Anatolian high school students when they are at 9th grades and 12th grades? Is there any difference regarding their levels of readiness?

T: “The 9th grade students are never ready to listen to a text; however, their levels change through 11th and 12th grades as we made practice.”

R: What are the students’ feelings about listening activities?

T: “Most of my students feel so nervous about listening activities that they do not even want to expose any listening practice”.

R: What are the most common listening problems of students in the classroom?

- What are your classroom practices for dealing with these problems?

T: “The general listening problems of the students are having listening anxiety, being worried, unwillingness for listening, misinterpreting the text, inadequate pre- listening activities and so on. I think presenting background information about the listening text might help reducing the listening anxiety levels of the students. Prior to listening, I tell them what the listening text is about and provide some background information about the spoken text.”

“Natural speech with pauses and varied accents in authentic recordings confuse my students. I give them clues and tell them that some words are used interchangeably in British and American English, so I allocate some time for teaching the words that are differently pronounced in British and American English.”

R: How much time do you spend for listening activities?

T: “Not really because it is time consuming and needs to be dealt with properly”

R: What are your opinions about the course books?

T: “Course books do not match with the levels of students, and students’ levels are quite different with reference to their TEOG results. Some of them did not even have an English teacher until high school.”

APPENDIX-8. Sample Student Answers to the Open-Ended Questions

A) Do you think there are any other factors affecting your listening performance in English? If yes, please write down.

a) 9th graders (Freshman)

1. “Kelimelerin telaffuzunu bilmediğimiz zaman zorluk çekiyoruz. Bunu önlemek için kelime bilgimizi artırmalı, telaffuzları iyi öğrenmeliyiz.”
[We experience difficulties when we do not know the pronunciation of the words. In order to deal with it, we must improve our vocabulary knowledge, and learn the pronunciation of the words well].
2. “Kelimeler anlaşılabilir, yüksek sesle ve aksansız söylendiğinde, kelimeleri daha iyi anlayabileceğimi düşünüyorum.
[I think I can understand the words better when they are uttered clearly, loudly and without an accent]”.

b) 10th graders (Sophomore)

1. Dinlemelerde daha yavaş konuşan insanlar olmalı”
[People in the spoken texts should speak slower].
2. “Anlaşılması kolay parçalar seçilmeli
[Listening texts which can be understood easily should be chosen].

c) 11th graders (Junior)

1. İngilizce konuşurken cümleler baskılayarak akıcı söylenmelidir. Ağız içi konuşmalar anlamamı zorlaştırır.”
[The sentences should be uttered in a stressed and fluent way. Slurred speech [connected speech] interferes with my listening comprehension].
2. “Konuşmacıların çok hızlı konuşması ve kullandıkları İngilizce’nin anlaşılır olmaması”
[Speakers’ speaking too fast and their unintelligible use of English].

d) 12th graders (Senior)

1. “Biz yaklaşık olarak 4. Sınıftan beri İngilizce öğreniyoruz ama bize İngilizce’yi günlük hayatta kullanılabilecek şekilde öğretmiyorlar biz karşımızdaki insana grammar anlatmayacağız sonuçta
[We have been learning English since the 4th grade; however, we have not been taught English for daily use. We are not going to teach grammar to the person whom we speak to].
2. “Anlamaya, anlatmaya konuşmaya yönelik değil dilbilgisine bağlı kalarak İngilizce öğretilmesinin hiçbir faydası olmadığını düşünüyorum.
[I think it is no use to teach English grammar focused rather than comprehension and speaking].

B) What can be done to improve your listening performance in English?

a) 9th graders (Freshman)

1. “Üç yıldır İngilizce müzikler dinliyorum ve söylüyorum. Bunlar telaffuzumun gelişmesini sağladı.”
[I have been listening to and singing songs in English for three years. They have improved my pronunciation].
2. “Dinleme metinlerinin daha sade ve anlaşılır olması bizim daha çok ilgilenmemizi sağlar ve ilgilendiğimiz şeyi anlayarak yaparız bunun da gelişmemize katkı sağlayacağını düşünüyorum”.
[I think that listening texts’ being plain and comprehensible draw our interest more, and we do things that we are interested in a comprehensive manner which will contribute to our improvement].”

b) 10th graders (Sophomore)

1. “Daha çok İngilizce metin dinlenmeli, pratik yapılmalı”
[More listening practice should be done].
2. “Anlaşılması kolay parçalar seçilmeli”
[Listening texts which can be understood easily should be chosen].

c) 11th graders (Junior)

1. Yeterli bir şekilde dinleme yapmadığımız için kulağımız alışmıyor. Daha çok dinleme yapılabilir. Ve dinlediğimiz parçanın yazılı bir şekilde elimizde bulunması gerekir. Ve yazılı metni görüp yanlışlarımızı tahlil edebiliriz. Ayrıca dinleme metinleri daha eğlenceli metinler olabilir.”

[We are not able to familiarize with listening due to the inadequate practice for listening. More listening practice can be done. And the tape script must be provided while listening. And we can analyze our mistakes with reference to the tape script. In addition, the spoken texts should be more enjoyable].

2. “Yabancı diziler izlenebilir. Sesli hikaye kitapları dinleyebiliriz. Bu şekilde dinleme performansımızı geliştirebiliriz.”

[Authentic videos might be watched. We can listen to audio stories. In this way, we can improve our listening performance.]

3. “Sık sık yabancı şarkılar dinlenmeli. Çok fazla yabancı şarkı dinlediğim için iyi yapabiliyorum.

[We should often listen to songs in foreign language. I can do well thanks to listening to songs in foreign language much.]

4. “Haftalık ders programının bir saatinde dinleme uygulamaları yapsak daha iyi olur.”

[It would be better to spare one hour in a week for listening practice].

5. “Haftada bir dersin kısa bir bölümünde dinleme yapılabilir”

[Listening practice can be done in a short part of the lesson weekly].

6. “Bence daha çok dinlemeye yönelik olan bir ders geliştirilmeli ve düzenli olarak en az haftada bir dinleme çalışması yapılmalıdır.”

[I think more listening-focused lesson should be developed and listening practice should be done once a week on a regular basis].

7. “İngilizce cümle kurmakta ve İngilizce bir şeyler konuşmakta hala zorlanıyoruz. Bunun için ayrı çalışmalar istiyoruz. Daha yavaş metinlerden başlanabilir ve dinleme performansımızı geliştirmek adına normal okul saatlerinde ayrı bir çalışma yapılabilir. Bu çalışmalar sayesinde dinleme performansımız gelişebilir.

[We still have difficulty in forming sentences and speaking in English. Hence, we want practice for this issue. It can be started from the spoken texts with

slower paced speech, and listening practice can be done in classroom hours in order to improve our performance. Thanks to these practices, we can improve our listening performance.]

8. “Dinleme metinleri dinlemek yerine haftanın belirli saatlerinde alt yazılı filmler izlenebilir.”

[Instead of listening to the spoken text, subtitled movies can be watched in scheduled classroom hours weekly.]

9. “Daha çok pratik yapma fırsatımız olsa bir nebze ilerletebiliriz diye düşünüyorum. Dizi, film, şarkı gb şeyleri dinleyerek veya izleyerek geliştirilebilir.”

[I think we can achieve an improvement to some extent if we do more practice for listening. It can be improved through things such as watching series, movies or listening to songs.]

d) 12th graders (Senior)

1. “Ortaokul hocamızın hikaye ve görsel şeylerle ders anlatması benim hala o konuları hatırlamama yardımcı oluyor. Görsel şeylerden yararlanılmalı.

[In middle school, my English teacher’s presenting the subjects using visual aids and stories still helps me recall those subjects. Visual aids should be used].

2. “Yabancı video, müzik veya diyalogları dinlemek ve okumak bize yardımcı olabilir.

[Watching videos in foreign language and listening to music and conversations can help us].

3. “Derste diyaloga girilmesi olabilir. Çünkü bir bebek yaşadığı ortamın dilini 3-4 yılda kapar ama biz 12 senedir görüyoruz hala anlamıyoruz. Konuşmuyoruz, sadece formül görüyoruz, tabi anlamayız ve konuşamayız.

[We can have conversations in the class taking into account of the fact that a child can acquire the spoken language around him. However, we cannot understand English despite learning it for 12 years. We cannot speak, we learn only formulas, as a result neither can we understand nor can we speak.]

4. “Anlamaya, anlatmaya konuşmaya yönelik değil dilbilgisine bağlı kalarak İngilizce öğretilmesinin hiçbir faydası olmadığını düşünüyorum.
[I think it is no use to teach English grammar focused rather than comprehension and speaking].
5. “İngilizce dersi dilbilgisi işlenerek devam etmekte konuşmaya ağırlık verilmeli derslerde. Dinleme, okumaya dayalı derslerin işlenmesi gerekir.
[English lessons have been carried out by focusing on grammar, speaking should be focused during lessons. English lessons should be carried out focusing on listening and speaking skills].
6. “Bize gramer öğretiliyor ama İngilizce bilmiyoruz, konuşamıyoruz. İlk önce konuşmayı öğrenek daha sonra grammar öğrenek daha başarılı olunur bence.”
[We have been instructed grammar but we do not know English and we cannot speak it. I think we can be more successful if we learn to speak prior to grammar].



T.C.
İSPARTA VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 27749142-44-E.988731
Konu :Araştırma İzni (Şerife AYGÜN)

15/01/2019

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlimiz Yalvaç İlçesi Atatürk Anadolu Lisesi İngilizce öğretmeni Şerife AYGÜN "Anadolu Lisesi Öğretmen ve Öğrencilerinin Dinlemeyi Anlama Problemleri ile ilgili yaptığı Uygulamalar" konulu tez çalışmasını, Yalvaç İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğüne bağlı Atatürk Anadolu Lisesi, Şehit Latif Keçeci Anadolu Lisesi ve Necip Fazıl Kısakürek Anadolu Lisesindeki öğrencilere yönelik Tez çalışması uygulamak istediği ile ilgili adı geçen İlçenin 08/01/2019 tarihli ve 4827151 sayılı yazısı ve ekleri ilişikte sunulmuştur.

Söz konusu tez çalışmasını yukarıda adı geçen kişinin, yasal mevzuat çerçevesinde okul idaresinin denetiminde, eğitim-öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde ve gönüllülük esasına riayet ederek Yalvaç İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğümüze bağlı okullarda yapmasını Müdürlüğümüzün teklifi üzerine,

Olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Dr. Ahmet YILDIRIM
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
15/01/2019

Ömer Faruk ATEŞ
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı



T.C.
YALVAÇ KAYMAKAMLIĞI
İlçe Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 49783142-449-E.1173533
Konu : Araştırma izni

17.01.2019

DAĞITIM YERLERİNE

İlgi: İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğünün 15.01.2019 tarih ve 1031260 sayılı yazısı.

İlçemiz Atatürk Anadolu Lisesi İngilizce Öğretmeni Şerife AYGÜN tarafından, Yalvaç Atatürk Anadolu lisesi, Şehit Latif Keçeci Anadolu Lisesi ve Necip Fazıl Kısakürek Anadolu lisesindeki öğrencilerine yönelik "Anadolu Lisesi Öğretmen ve Öğrencilerinin Dinlemeyi Anlama Problemleri ile ilgili yaptığı Uygulamalar" konulu tez çalışmasının uygun görüldüğü ile ilgili Valilik Makamının 15/01/2019 tarihli ve 988731 sayılı Onayı ilgi yazı ekinde alınarak ekte gönderilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize ve gereğini rica ederim.

Ayşe NAZ
Müdür a.
Şube Müdürü

Ek: Valilik Onayı (1 sayfa)

Dağıtım :

Atatürk Anadolu Lisesi Müdürlüğü
Şehit Latif Keçeci Anadolu Lisesi Müdürlüğü
Necip Fazıl Kısakürek Anadolu Lisesi Müdürlüğü