Turkish Language Teachers' Perspectives on Listening Skills Education in Turkey and Northern Cyprus

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Abstract: Listening is a language skill that is acquired in childhood but can be improved throughout the educational process. It is of great importance in both educational and everyday life. The objective of this study is to identify the importance given to listening training by students, assess their listening skills, and determine what can be done to improve their listening skills to top levels. The study group consists of 50 Turkish language teachers from various primary and secondary schools in Turkey and Northern Cyprus. A 9-question interview form was used to collect data. The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis, frequencies, and percentages. Based on the results, most Turkish language teachers revealed that their students do not listen sufficiently to their teachers, and the reasons for this could be related to the school, teachers, curriculum, or the students themselves. Additionally, the teachers stated that it is essential to emphasize the importance of listening to students in the first place, and it could be beneficial to increase the number of listening activities in the course books and assess and evaluate listening skills more frequently.

Keywords: *Education, listening skill, secondary school teachers, Turkish language.*

Introduction

Listening skills were originally defined as the understanding of sounds (Hampleman, 1958), to its current interpretation as the processing and responding to spoken information using prior knowledge (Korkmaz, 2018). The impact of technological advances on listening has also been noted (Emiroğlu, 2013). Listening is essential for language development, effective communication and education, as it is integral from early language acquisition to the educational process where it facilitates comprehension and learning (Epçaçan, 2013; Gücüyeter, 2009; Kurudayıoğlu & Kana, 2013; Maden & Durukan, 2011).

The aim of the study is to draw attention to the importance of teaching listening skills in secondary schools. It highlights the need for improved listening training in educational settings, based on the observation that students often have inadequate listening skills. The research is important because it examines the different aspects that influence students' listening skills, from the school environment to curriculum design, and also assesses the current state of these skills among students. The study aims to contribute to the creation of more effective teaching techniques that can promote higher listening skills in students by highlighting the need for more focus on listening activities and assessment.

The identified research gaps in the existing literature on the teaching of listening skills in Turkish are addressed in the study through several key approaches. First, it fills an important gap by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of active Turkish language teachers. This teacher-centred focus is crucial as it can provide new insights into effective teaching methods and classroom challenges, areas that have been under-explored in previous research. In addition, the study introduces a unique comparative analysis by incorporating perspectives from both Turkey and Northern Cyprus. This aspect is particularly valuable as it provides insights into how regional differences affect the teaching of listening skills, a dimension not extensively explored in the current literature. In addition, the study evaluates the outcomes of the recently updated Turkish curriculum and its influence on the teaching of listening skills. This evaluation is essential for understanding the effectiveness of recent educational reforms and their practical implications in the classroom. The research contributes to a broader evaluation and comparison of educational systems by focusing on the personal

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experiences and suggestions of teachers from different regions. This approach is important for gaining a deeper understanding of how different educational contexts affect the teaching and learning of listening skills. Finally, the study appears to bridge the gap between theoretical research and practical classroom application by seeking practical solutions based on teachers' actual experiences. While previous studies have identified barriers and proposed theoretical solutions, this research emphasises practical implications and solutions, a crucial step towards improving the effectiveness of listening skills training in educational settings.

The problem sentence of this study is stated as, "What is the opinion of Turkish language teachers about listening skills and its training?" To answer this question, Turkish language teachers were asked their opinions on topics such as whether students listen to their teachers efficiently, reasons for not listening, students' listening problems, and ways to solve these problems. Additionally, they were asked about the outcomes of the updated Turkish curriculum and teaching activities, teaching activities in listening training, strategies, methods, and tools for listening teaching, the subjects preferred for listening teaching and the content of these subjects, the efficiency of listening activities in Turkish course books, whether evaluation of listening skills is carried out in Turkish course books and whether evaluating listening skills causes problems in Turkish exams.

Literature Review

In the study concerning the years 1998-2013 of Doğan and Özçakmak (2014), in which they assessed the postgraduate theses related to listening skills in Turkey, they revealed that the number of studies to assess understanding what you have listened to is comparatively less than understanding what you have read and that ignorance of listening skill hasn't changed for years. In his book in which Özbay (2013) evaluates Turkish curriculum, he pointed out that the listening skill is included in the curriculum much later than the other language skills and it is considered as a special branch and written as a different learning outcome.

In Turkish literature, when we analyze the studies on listening skills and its training, it is clearly seen that they mainly focus on listening strategies, methods, and techniques (Aytan, 2011; Ceran, 2015; Doğancı, 2019) and students' academic success and attitude more (Katrancı & Yangın, 2013; Kılınç, 2015). With these studies, Turkish education curriculum and course books were evaluated to gain listening training quality and to improve students' success and attitude levels. At the same time, improving the knowledge and competence level of teacher candidates before starting teaching and their views have been the subject of most of the studies (Ceyran, 2016; Kurudayıoğlu & Kana, 2013; Maden & Durukan, 2011). However, in this study, it was aimed to contribute to the literature to determine the experience and views of Turkish language teachers in charge and to obtain different results from the previous studies. The study is believed to be of great significance for obtaining substantial data sets both from Turkey and Northern Cyprus, enabling the evaluation of educational systems in various parts and identifying personal experiences and suggestions of Turkish language teachers teaching listening actively.

In Fisher and Frey's (2019) study, which was carried out abroad, the listening station approach was examined with the aim of making listening training more effective. The study emphasized the criticality of listening, the importance of improving cognitive skills, and peer learning in listening training. Additionally, Campbell's (2011) research mentioned the language trainer's experience and the result of his class. Marley and Szabo's (2010) study evaluated the effect of the manipulation strategy, which was specified to improve the quality of listening training. Furthermore, Wolvin and Cohen (2012) stated that to effectively train listening, it was necessary to focus on the five aspects of listening: cognitive, emotional, behavioral, contextual, and ethical. Richards (2005) categorized listening into two types, "understanding" and "acquisition," and revealed that the methods, approach, and materials used in training for both listening types could be differentiated. Bond (2012) pointed out the necessity of eliminating listening impediments that distract learning and offered listening activities and tools to overcome these distracts. Imhof (2008) emphasized the importance of creating a suitable learning-training environment for listening training.

Recently, there have been studies to test approaches, methods, and tools for listening training, but there are also other studies as well. For example, in Bodie and Worthington's study (2010), a scale was developed for listening types. All in all, it is observed that in the subject of studies on listening training in Turkish and abroad literature, the themes are similar, and common opinions are revealed. In the first place of these opinions, despite the fact that listening skill is the most used in people's life, it is either ignored or misperceived, considered a passive skill and not given enough time for the training of.

Recent studies in the field of language education have highlighted a number of barriers to the teaching of listening skills, as well as several approaches to overcoming these barriers. Rahman et al. (2023) study, which promoted process-based teaching to improve language acquisition, emphasised the need for a combined top-down and bottom-up approach to the teaching of listening skills at the tertiary level in EFL contexts (Rahman et al., 2023). Sitosanova's (2022) study highlighted particular difficulties in this area and focused on the specific problems encountered in developing listening skills in foreign language teaching. Sadaf (2022) found that listening skills are undervalued in Bangladesh, from secondary to higher education, and offered workable solutions to improve listening skills among Bangladeshi students. Vellanki et al. (2022) conducted a study that explored the difficulties of teaching metacognitive strategies in distance learning contexts in Oman. The study identified problems such as time constraints and unfamiliar

textbook contexts, and offered solutions such as virtual flipped classrooms and collaborative lesson planning. All of these studies highlight the difficulties of teaching listening skills and the need for different and flexible teaching methods to address these issues in different educational contexts.

Despite these extensive studies, a common theme emerges: the recognition of listening as a critical yet often neglected or misunderstood skill in language teaching. This study aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of Turkish language teachers in teaching active listening. By incorporating perspectives from both Turkey and Northern Cyprus, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in teaching listening skills. This approach not only contributes to the existing literature by providing a unique teacher-centred perspective, but also assists in the evaluation and comparison of educational systems, thereby enriching the discourse on effective listening instruction.

Methodology

The study was carried out in accordance with qualitative research and has constative features. A case study, which is one of the models of qualitative research, was selected as the basis for the study. Turkey and North Cyprus were the cases analyzed based on the listening skill and teaching.

Study Group

The study group for this study was made up of 50 teachers from primary and secondary schools in Turkey and North Cyprus. To choose these teachers, criterion sampling, which is a method of purposive sampling, was used. Turkish language teachers with at least 5 years of experience were included in the study. Additionally, Turkish language teachers who were easy to reach by researchers in terms of time, economy, and practicality were included in the study using convenience sampling. In the study group, 37 participant teachers were working in North Cyprus, and the remaining 13 were from Turkey. The opinions of teachers from 9 schools in Northern Cyprus and 5 schools in Turkey were collected.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used to specify the opinions of primary and secondary teachers regarding listening ability and education. While the draft form consisted of 5 questions, after consulting with 4 academicians in the field of Turkish language education and education programs, an interview form of 8 questions, 6 of which were main questions, was established. A pilot study was carried out with 2 Turkish language teachers to evaluate the clarity of the questions and the required time, and it was decided that the questions were suitable at the end of the pilot study. The questions' content was related to the following scopes, and detailed data were aimed to be obtained:

- Students
- Problems and suggested solutions
- Turkish language curriculum and outcome
- Teaching (method-technique, content, activity, course books)
- Assessment and evaluation

Data Analysis

For the analysis of study data, content analysis was applied. Each question was analyzed separately and codes were specified initially. Similar codes were then classified to form themes and finally, themes were correlated to obtain categories. Opinions that reflected categories were represented quantitatively, and frequencies, and percentages were presented. Since the questions were open-ended and required interpretation, no evaluation was made on the total number of participants, and the frequency of the 50 Turkish teachers in terms of mentioning themes and categories was provided.

In order to determine whether the data was analyzed reliably, a question was selected, the themes related to that question were analyzed separately by two researchers, and the consistency between them was checked. According to Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula of reliability = consensus / (consensus + disagreement), the question regarding "advancement and teaching activities related to listening skills in Turkish curricula" was analyzed, and two researchers agreed on 98 of the total 112 codes. Accordingly, the reliability coefficient was found to be 87.5% (98/98+14). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that the consistency coefficient should be at least 70 percent. Therefore, it can be argued that content analysis is reliable.

To maintain the integrity and ethical soundness of the study, ethical considerations were carefully followed throughout the research process. Firstly, informed consent was obtained from each participant. This included an explanation of the aims of the study, the steps involved and the freedom of participants to withdraw at any time without repercussions. Participants were assured that their names would remain confidential and that their responses would only be used for

the study. All data were anonymised prior to analysis to protect the confidentiality of participants and to prevent individual responses from being linked to specific individuals. Participants were also fully informed of the advantages and disadvantages of taking part. Although there were few physical risks associated with this study, consideration was given to the potential psychological distress that participants might experience as a result of reflecting on their work experiences. Participants were assured that they could skip any questions they felt uncomfortable answering and were made aware of this option. The benefits of participation were also emphasised, with a focus on how their input will enhance our understanding of the development and teaching of listening skills in the Turkish curriculum, and potentially influence future practice and policy in education. In addition, the study was designed to balance any potential risks to participants with the benefits to the scientific community and society at large. The research team adhered to relevant institutional and national standards on research ethics and data protection, demonstrating their commitment to the highest ethical standards throughout the research.

Findings

In this study, findings have been determined and presented under 8 themes based on content analysis, by examining teacher opinions and within the framework of research questions. The eight topics presented in the findings are related to students, teachers, and the curriculum. Particularly, the curriculum topic has been detailed and examined in terms of content, teaching strategies, methods-techniques, tools and equipment, and assessment.

Why Students Tune in or Out: Exploring Their Listening Behaviors

This research study highlights the challenges in promoting effective listening skills among Turkish primary and secondary school students, attributing a significant lack of attention (76%) and complete inattention (24%) to four main factors: teacher-related, student-related, curriculum-related and school-related. Teacher-related problems are associated with outdated teaching methods that lack engagement, use of technology and real-life application, leading to student confusion and disinterest. Pupil-related problems include a lack of appreciation of the importance of listening, negative perceptions of teachers or subjects, and difficulties in processing auditory information. Curriculum-related barriers focus on an overemphasis on reading over the development of listening skills, with content that is either too challenging or too simplistic, and a lack of engagement and choice. Finally, school-related problems stem from overcrowded classrooms and inadequate resources, as well as environmental discomfort such as poor classroom temperatures, which create an environment unsuitable for effective listening. Teacher opinions regarding these findings are as follows:

> *"Unfortunately, most of the teachers do not associate the subjects they teach with daily life. This causes students not to listen to their teachers." (T11)*

> *"Students are not aware of the importance of listening and do not act with this awareness."(T45)*

> *"Some of the listening texts in the books are not according to the level of the students and are not interesting."(T24)*

Improving Students' Listening Skills: Challenges and Solutions

A major problem is students' lack of understanding of the importance of listening, their unfamiliarity with effective listening practices, and their susceptibility to distraction. Many students also show low motivation, struggle to integrate new information with what they already know, and show resistance to traditional teacher-centred teaching methods. Problems include difficulties in identifying key points, retaining auditory information and understanding complex questions, exacerbated by external distractions and a lack of interest in certain topics or speakers. The opinions of two teachers regarding the mentioned problems are as follows:

> *"I think that teacher-centred education negatively affects distracted students." (T8)*

> *"Students can be successful if they establish a connection between what they have learnt and what they have learnt before. However, we see that most students cannot achieve this." (T50)*

Teachers suggest several strategies to address these challenges, emphasising the need to educate students about the value of listening and the characteristics of effective listeners. Recommendations include tailoring content to students' interests, using different motivational techniques, and encouraging students to relate new information to their existing knowledge. The use of real-life examples, audio-visual aids and technology is recommended to increase engagement and concentration. In addition, moving towards student-centred teaching methods, diversifying presentation styles and providing clear instructions to identify key information and improve comprehension are considered essential. Minimising distractions in the classroom and creating a listening environment are also recommended. The implementation of these strategies, according to teachers, could significantly improve students' listening skills and their overall learning experience. The opinion of a teacher who supports the above findings is as follows:

> *"Activities in the same style should be avoided as much as possible and different activities should be used to ensure that students listen without getting bored and having fun." (T12)*

Listening Skills in Turkish Curriculum: Outcomes and Activities

Teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of listening education in primary and secondary schools vary. Some teachers believe that the curriculum and classroom activities adequately support the development of listening skills, while others see shortcomings, citing a lack of emphasis on listening compared to other language skills. Criticisms include a mismatch between classroom activities and learning outcomes, a lack of engaging and compelling content, a lack of resources, under-utilisation of technology and a lack of varied auditory, visual and practical materials. The assessment of listening skills is also seen as limited and lacking in variety, with insufficient collaborative work, use of listening-specific media and activities to develop cognitive and imaginative skills. A teacher who considers the learning outcomes insufficient states the following:

> *"It has been observed that speaking, reading and writing are given more importance in the Turkish curriculum and listening skills are neglected. Therefore, it can be said that there are fewer listening activities." (T7)*

However, there is also recognition of the strengths of the curriculum in addressing listening skills, with many activities designed to meet specific learning objectives using a variety of methods and techniques. This approach is commended for its thorough assessment of listening skills and its contribution to the holistic development and assessment of pupils' listening skills. This reflects a balanced view of the curriculum's ability to promote essential communicative skills in Turkish language education. The teacher's opinion regarding this finding is as follows:

> *"Although some activities were not prepared according to the learning outcomes, it is possible to see that many activities were prepared according to the learning outcomes." (T40)*

Turkish Teachers' Strategies for Teaching Listening Skills

Most of the teachers stated that the teaching activities in the curriculum and textbooks were insufficient and explained the reasons for their opinions. According to the results, the majority of the teachers stated that there are many deficiencies in the teaching activities for listening skills and that various measures should be taken regarding these deficiencies. At the same time, Turkish primary and secondary school teachers, who stated that the teacher is one of the factors that most influences the attitudes, skills and academic success of the students, claimed that it is necessary to pay attention to and consider the interests and wishes of the students when planning teaching activities. The teacher's opinion on this finding is as follows:

> *"I think that the listening skill is not taught in an interesting way due to the insufficient use of technology and therefore it is not effective on students" (T46)*

Effective Strategies and Tools for Teaching Listening in Turkish Language Education

Teachers advocate a mix of teaching strategies, with 50% favouring presentation, 28% discovery learning and 12% research and investigation. This suggests an understanding of the need to engage students through different methods of inquiry and presentation. In terms of methods, there is a strong preference for mixed methods, indicating a shift towards more interactive and student-centred learning environments. The distribution of methods includes lectures (32%), discussions (24%), problem solving (18%), case studies and question and answer sessions (16%), demonstrations (8%) and project-based learning (4%). This variety shows a commitment to making students active participants in their learning. In terms of techniques to improve listening skills, critical listening is the most favoured (66%), followed by participatory listening (60%) and note-taking (48%). Other recommended techniques include creative listening (30%), brainstorming (28%) and activities such as cause and effect analysis (20%), group work (16%) and summarising and comparing (14%). Two teachers said:

> *"In order for students to organise what they listen to; they need to make use of the techniques of establishing cause and effect relationships or making comparisons and classifications." (T13)*

> *"By using the direct instruction method in listening education, we can ensure that students are informed, by using the discussion method, we can ensure that students comprehend, and by using the demonstration method, we can ensure that students practice." (T30)*

The importance of using a variety of tools and equipment to support listening learning is also highlighted. Audio-visual tools such as computers, documentaries and films are highly valued (80%), demonstrating the role of multimedia resources in engaging students and improving their understanding. Visual aids such as projections, pictures, photographs and maps are preferred by 72%, while written materials (smart boards, blackboards and books) are chosen by 58%. Auditory tools, including CDs and audio recordings, are used by 36%, reflecting the recognition of the different sensory channels through which students can effectively engage with content. This comprehensive approach to teaching and learning strategies reflects a nuanced understanding of how to develop listening skills in a dynamic and interactive educational environment. One teacher stated the following regarding the situation in question:

> *"Students do not like listening to the texts read by the teacher or their friends, but they like listening to the materials supported by visuals more. I think the listening activity done in this way will be more effective." (T34)*

Key Topics and Content Characteristics for Effective Listening Education

Teachers were of the opinion that listening education should include historical topics (76%), social topics (54%), cultural topics (42%), scientific topics (38%) and everyday topics (32%). The opinion of two teachers is this:

> *"Social issues such as education, health, migration etc. must be included." (T44)*

> *"Scientific issues should also be addressed in order to ensure that students become successful individuals."(T48)*

Teachers' opinions on the content of listening lessons are as follows 88% should enable the pupil to acquire listening skills, 78% should be interesting, 72% should be appropriate to the pupil's level, 50% should include sections from the pupil's life, 36% should be educational and didactic, 34% should be entertaining rather than boring, 32% should be purposeful, 30% should consist of stories, examples should be given frequently, 22% should be immersive, 20% should be instructive and of a quality that enhances the general culture, 14% should be dialogue, should include various methods and techniques, 12% should include proverbs, idioms and aphorisms, and should be consistent with national and moral values, 8% should aim to change their behaviour in a positive way, 4% should be appropriate to the students' needs and should not be too long. Two teacher opinions supporting the above findings are as follows:

> *"In listening education, the content should be more appropriate to the level of the students and should be of a type that will attract their attention." (T17)*

> *"A content that is both instructive and entertaining can be preferred." (T32)*

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Listening Activities in Turkish Textbooks

The findings on listening activities in Turkish textbooks reveal a complex picture of their current state and effectiveness. Half of the teachers consider these activities to be inadequate, while only a minority consider them to be adequate. The main criticisms include a lack of alignment with educational goals, insufficient integration with visual elements, and a failure to engage students effectively. The variety of methods and techniques is limited, and there's a notable gap in exploiting the richness of the Turkish language and its relevance to everyday life. This leads to poor retention and student engagement. In addition, the use of technology and visual aids is minimal, which, together with a lack of emphasis on critical thinking, reduces the dynamism and depth of the learning experience. The opinion of a teacher is as follows:

"The quality *rather* than the number of activities should be increased. When a listening text is opened in the classroom, it should attract the attention of students and even teachers. Of course, it is not possible to find this in most of the listening activities." (T8)

Despite an adequate number of activities, their quality and effectiveness in engaging students and contributing to language development are questionable. The content, while comprehensive and in line with national and moral values, often fails to engage or remain memorable. This is exacerbated by a lack of materials and teacher preparation, resulting in a fragmented learning experience and limited vocabulary development. In summary, while the curriculum aims to promote cultural and ethical awareness through carefully curated listening texts, significant improvements in the delivery and methodology of listening activities are needed to increase their effectiveness and impact on student learning. The teacher's opinion supporting this finding is as follows:

> *"I generally find the listening activities to be adequate. However, I believe that teachers need in-service training on how these activities should be implemented. This is because I see that many teachers struggle to apply some activities and are forced to skip them." (T26)*

Assessment and Evaluation Practices for Listening Skills in Turkish Lessons

In this section, the findings on the difficulties and needs in evaluating listening education in Turkish classrooms are presented. The interview with the teachers revealed that 62% believe that assessment and evaluation are not used in listening education, while 38% believe the opposite. The curriculum faces constraints such as limited time, which results in insufficient comprehensive learning and overly long lessons. Overcrowded classrooms further hinder personalised attention, with students often passive in a predominantly teacher-centred approach. A lack of essential materials and respectful listening by students complicates learning, while the role of assessment in listening skills is undervalued, often attributing learning deficits to students and overlooking the potential of improved teaching methods.

The importance of a multifaceted approach to assessing student performance in listening activities is emphasised, including marking for quantitative assessment, observation for engagement and comprehension, evaluation of comprehension and communication, measurement of retention, development of analytical and critical listening skills, and identification of errors. Such a comprehensive assessment is crucial for achieving the objectives of listening activities and for improving students' listening skills. The two contrasting teacher opinions regarding this finding are as follows:

"Yes, it is done. In listening education, questions related to the piece are usually answered, the piece is summarized, the meanings of unknown words are stated, proverbs and idioms are explained. Based on these, the student's success is determined." (T14)

"Listening education does not sufficiently utilize assessment and evaluation. This is because most teachers conduct assessments and evaluations to determine students' success. However, assessment and evaluation should be conducted to make education more qualitative and sustainable. For this, an assessment and evaluation based more on the process than the result should be carried out." (T29)

Discussion

This study highlights the critical need to focus on improving listening skills in native language education, as emphasized by Turkish educators. Similarly Ateş's (2018) study also points out the importance of listening in both educational and social settings, advocating for specialized teaching methods in this area. There is a unanimous agreement among Turkish teachers who participated in this research about the low levels of student engagement in listening activities. Similar observations were made by Başkan and Deniz (2015), who found that students often disengage from topics perceived as easy or uninteresting, yet show more effort for content deemed useful, indicating that the teacher's approach can significantly influence listening behaviours. This research suggests that listening challenges are widespread in the Turkish educational system, calling for substantial and broad-based reforms.

This study reveals Turkish teachers' self-awareness regarding their teaching methods as potential barriers to student engagement in listening. Recognizing their role in these challenges is key, pointing to the need for pedagogical variety and creativity to enhance listening skills. Research by Başkan and Deniz (2015) supports this, showing how dull teaching can negatively affect students' listening in class. While Calp and Calp (2016) focuses on the listener, content, and context as crucial to listening, he mainly blames listener distraction on the listeners themselves. Contrarily, this study emphasizes the educator's influence on the listening environment, challenging Calp and Calp's view and highlighting the complex nature of listening engagement. It suggests that effective listening involves both the teacher's approach and student participation, advocating for teaching strategies that cater to varied learning preferences to improve the listening and learning environment.

This research highlights the negative impact of curriculum gaps and lack of resources in Turkish schools on students' listening skills. Studies, like those by Uludağ and Odacı (2002), show a clear link between the quality of educational environments—including temperature, lighting, and cleanliness—and students' ability to listen effectively. Additionally, Tüzel (2014) finds that noise pollution significantly reduces students' listening comprehension. Given the advancements in science and technology, continuing to overlook these educational deficiencies is unacceptable.

The investigation also points out a critical gap in students' cognitive skills related to listening, calling for immediate action to improve these abilities. Seo (2002) emphasizes the need for cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies to boost listening skills, offering nineteen specific techniques to aid in this development. Aydın (2018) further stresses the importance of enhancing auditory and visual skills, especially as new technologies change the way we communicate. This underscores the urgent need to address educational shortcomings to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The observed deficiencies in students' auditory skills highlight the need for extensive research to overcome these challenges. Seo (2002) contributed significantly by outlining a series of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, identifying nineteen key strategies to improve auditory skills. Turkish educators involved in this research emphasize the importance of exploring cognitive aspects and the affective dimensions like motivation and awareness, as well as understanding auditory principles. This approach is supported within the academic community, as demonstrated by Karakuş Tayşi (2019), who found that listening anxiety can hinder comprehension, whereas a positive attitude towards listening can improve it. This suggests that enhancing auditory skills should not only focus on cognitive outcomes but also address affective factors. Additionally, research by Meskill (1996) and Vandergrift (2004) highlights the complex nature of listening, incorporating cognitive, perceptual, and significant psychological dimensions. Therefore, an integrated teaching approach that considers the cognitive, affective, and psychological aspects of listening is essential for effective auditory skill development.

The discussion on improving auditory pedagogy stresses the critical role of listening skills in education, despite their frequent undervaluation and the assumption that they develop naturally. Auditory skills, which begin developing in utero and are the first language skills to emerge, form the foundation for later verbal and literacy abilities. The impact of poor auditory development on other language skills is significant, as noted by Şahin (2013) and supported by Kardaş and Harre (2015), who argue that auditory skills underpin all linguistic abilities.

This study reveals Turkish educators' concerns over students' challenges with listening, particularly their unawareness of its importance. To address this, promoting the value of listening skills has been widely recommended. Karakuş (2002) and Kırbaş (2010) highlight listening as crucial for knowledge acquisition and academic success, respectively. Mackay (1997) succinctly states, "listening is the key to learning and success," underlining the essential nature of

auditory learning. Demirel and Şahinel (2006) advocate for students to engage with content outside the classroom to complement auditory and visual learning inside, emphasizing listening's pivotal role in education.

Educators broadly agree that the auditory components of the Turkish curriculum are lacking, a view reinforced by Aydın (2018) who criticized the reduced focus on listening and viewing skills in recent curriculum updates, reminiscent of the situation before 2006. Teachers note the absence of engaging listening materials, limited listening activities, and the repetitive nature of these activities. A critical issue highlighted is the infrequent or non-existent assessment of listening skills, which might lead students to undervalue these abilities, impacting their motivation to improve them. This underscores the urgent need for more focus on evaluating auditory skills.

Göçer (2019) addressed this gap by examining how students' listening comprehension can be assessed through written tests, advocating for rubrics to evaluate these skills systematically. This method proposes that listening skills can be assessed with the same precision and structure as reading comprehension, pointing to the necessity for a formalized assessment framework. Such a framework would ensure auditory skills are duly recognized and prioritized in educational settings.

Turkish educators' insights from this study highlight a positive correlation between auditory pedagogy and both individual and cooperative learning strategies. Karabay's (2005) research underscores the benefits of cooperative learning in auditory education, showing improved student outcomes in auditory assessments through group studies and collaborative activities. However, there's an identified gap in leveraging out-of-school environments for auditory learning, suggesting a need for broader use of methods like observation, interviews, and project-based learning to enrich auditory education further. Moreover, the study acknowledges the role of audio-visual and print media in auditory learning, with experimental studies (Arono, 2014; Chen et al., 2014; Mohsen, 2016; Safranj, 2015; Sejdiu, 2017) consistently demonstrating that multimedia-enriched environments, which incorporate visual, auditory, and textual components, significantly boost students' auditory skills and attitudes towards auditory learning. These investigations highlight the effectiveness of digital narratives, computer-based exercises, short films, and interactive multimedia, underscoring the advantage of multimedia-based activities over traditional auditory-only methods. This body of research advocates for an integrative approach that incorporates a rich mix of multimedia tools to improve auditory learning experiences.

The examination of auditory education content underscores the importance of incorporating a diverse array of topics, ranging from daily life to specialized subjects like science, culture, and history, to cater to varied student interests and needs, thereby enhancing engagement and inclusivity. Educators advocate for auditory texts that are concise, engaging, and feature conversational and student-focused narratives, alongside themes that reflect national values. Melanlıoğlu's (2013) findings echo the importance of case-based texts that foster language development, literary appreciation, and cultural understanding while embedding universal values. There's a clear preference for content that moves from tangible to abstract ideas and a consensus on the need for brevity in auditory materials. Despite these insights, educators express concerns over the limited quantity of auditory texts available, pointing to a significant gap in educational resources. This highlights the critical need for a broader and more varied collection of auditory materials that align with pedagogical best practices and adequately address the diverse interests and needs of students.

Conclusion

This research emphasises the critical importance of developing listening skills in mother tongue teaching, a view strongly supported by Turkish educators. It reveals a unanimous concern among teachers about students' lack of engagement in listening, which is often influenced more by teaching style than by content. Teachers acknowledge that their own teaching methods may contribute to this problem, suggesting the need for diverse and innovative pedagogical approaches. The study also points to the negative impact of inadequate educational infrastructure and resources on students' listening skills. It highlights the need to address not only the cognitive aspects of listening, but also the affective and psychological dimensions, recognising the complex nature of auditory comprehension. Despite the recognised importance of listening skills, they are often overlooked in curricula and teaching practices. The research calls for a more structured assessment of listening skills and suggests that the incorporation of multimedia and cooperative learning can significantly enhance the auditory learning experience. In summary, the study argues for a comprehensive and reflective approach to the teaching of listening, emphasising the need for a wide variety of auditory materials and teaching methods to meet the diverse needs and preferences of students, ultimately promoting a more effective listening and learning environment.

From a comprehensive evaluation and summary of the findings, two key insights emerge. Firstly, the approach to teaching listening should be improved by adopting a more practical, student-centred methodology that incorporates a variety of methods and techniques. This approach not only increases teacher productivity, but also promotes a more engaging and sustainable learning experience, enabling students to hone their listening skills through enjoyable and experiential learning. Secondly, it is vital to emphasise the importance of consistent assessment and evaluation in the development of listening skills. By integrating listening comprehension scores into the overall assessment, either

periodically or at the end of the semester, their influence on the final grade in Turkish can be solidified and made more effective.

Recommendations

Recommendations relating to the findings of the study are articulated here, with an emphasis on improving the quality of hearing education:

Increasing student awareness: Of paramount importance to the success of listening education, as inferred from the findings of the study, is the enhancement of students' awareness of the importance of listening skills. Teachers should model good listening behaviour demonstrating the profound impact of skilled listening on various facets of human interaction and personal development.

Resolving resource constraints: The study highlights the lack of essential equipment and materials as a significant barrier to effective listening training. It is advisable to extend support to educators struggling to access the necessary resources. This could include the provision of financial or logistical support, coupled with professional development opportunities aimed at enhancing their skills in using such resources. In addition, the integration of educational technologies can serve as a catalyst for educators who are reluctant to adopt technological tools, thus underscoring the need to promote technology-enhanced listening education paradigms.

Institutionalizing listening assessment: The lack of a formal listening assessment framework, particularly in the context of Turkish language education in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), calls for legislative and educational reforms. It is imperative to introduce and enforce legal and pedagogical measures that recognize and integrate listening skills as a critical component of language proficiency assessment, thereby ensuring a holistic assessment of language proficiency.

Professional development of educators: The key role of educators in shaping the quality of listening education warrants a focused approach to their professional development. It is recommended that educators participate in specialised professional development programmes focused on listening education. These programmes should not only provide theoretical insights, but also emphasise practical application, encouraging educators to go beyond conventional pedagogical methods. The introduction of innovative listening activities that go beyond the traditional curriculum should be a key component of these training sessions, thereby enriching teachers' repertoire of teaching strategies and fostering a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

In conclusion, future studies should aim to address the multifaceted challenges in listening education and take a comprehensive approach that includes educational policy reforms, resource allocation, technological integration, and continuous professional development of educators.

Limitations

While this study has provided valuable insights into the challenges and factors affecting listening skills development in Turkish language education, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings and implications. This study primarily relied on the perspectives of Turkish language teachers. While their insights are valuable, the exclusion of student perspectives and input from other stakeholders, such as parents or education policymakers, may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings. The study does not account for potential regional or contextual variations in the challenges faced by students in different parts of Turkey or within diverse educational settings. Variations in school resources, teacher quality, and curriculum implementation may impact listening skills differently. The data collection in this study appears to rely on self-reported opinions and observations of teachers. Self-report data may be subject to biases or inaccuracies, as participants may not always provide an objective view of the situation. The study predominantly presents qualitative data and opinions. While qualitative insights are valuable, the absence of quantitative data and standardized assessments of listening skills makes it difficult to quantify the extent of the challenges and their impact on students' abilities. The study acknowledges some external factors affecting listening skills, such as classroom environment and material availability. However, it does not delve deeply into the potential influence of socioeconomic factors, language proficiency, or the use of technology on students' listening skills development.

Ethics Statements

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Near East University. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Authorship Contribution Statement:

Korkmaz: Conceptualization, methodology, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, writing-original draft preparation. Güneyli: Writing-review and editing visualization, supervision, project administration. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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