T.C.
Marmara University
Institute of Educational Sciences
Department of Foreign Language Education
English Language Teaching

TURKISH EFL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS

Abdullah PEKEL

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Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bilim Dalı

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN AKADEMİK DİNLEMEDE YAŞADIKLARI SORUNLAR

Abdullah PEKEL

(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)

Danışman
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Zeynep ÇAMLIBEL ACAR

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THESIS APPROVAL

The thesis entitled "Turkish EFL Students` Academic Listening Comprehension Problems" completed by Abdullah PEKEL was defended successfully on 10.07.2019 and certified by examining committee members as thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

	Name Surname	Signature
THESIS SUPERVISOR	Assistant Professor Zeynep Çamlıbel Acar	.....
JURY MEMBER	Assistant Professor Selma Karabınar	.....
JURY MEMBER	Assistant Professor Sibel Tatar	.....

ONAY

Abdullah Pekel tarafından hazırlanan 'İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Türk Öğrencilerin Akademik Dinlemede Yaşadıkları Sorunlar' konulu bu çalışma, 10 Temmuz 2019 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda jüri tarafından başarılı bulunmuş ve yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

	Adı Soyadı	**İmza**
TEZ DANIŞMANI	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Zeynep Çamlıbel Acar	.....
JÜRİ ÜYESİ	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Selma Karabınar	.....
JÜRİ ÜYESİ	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Sibel Tatar	.....

CURRICULUM VITAE

2005	Adana İncirlik High School
2009	Graduation from Çukurova University Faculty of Education English Language Teaching Department
2011	Language Instructor at Marmara University School of Foreign Languages
2015	Admission to Marmara University Institute of Educational Sciences Department of Foreign Languages English Language Teaching Master's Program

CONTACT INFORMATION

Marmara University School of Foreign Languages

abdullah.pekel@gmail.com

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

2005	Adana İncirlik Lisesi
2009	Çukurova Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bilim Dalından mezuniyet
2011	Marmara Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda öğretim görevlisi
2015	Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Anabilim Dalı İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans Programına giriş

İLETİŞİM BİLGİLERİ

Marmara Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu

abdullah.pekel@gmail.com

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Son olarak aileme bana gösterdikleri sonsuz destek ve güven için minnettarım.

ABSTRACT

TURKISH EFL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS

by

Abdullah Pekel

This study aims to investigate the L2 listening comprehension problems that Turkish EFL students come across in academic settings in a higher education context. The primary goal of the research is to explore the types and frequency of L2 listening problems based on students' reports. Another objective of the study is to investigate students' attitudes towards L2 listening skill within the framework of their academic and future needs. Reasons for the stated L2 listening comprehension problems and students' suggestions about overcoming the problems were also within the scope of the study.

The study was carried out at the foreign languages school of a public university in Istanbul and utilized both qualitative and quantitative data types. A total of 227 students from three CEFR levels, A level (n=96), B level (n=89) and C level (n=42), participated in the study on voluntary basis. Students' perceptions of L2 listening, the L2 listening problems they face, possible reasons for these problems and their suggestions were elaborated through a survey and a self-report. The qualitative data were analyzed by developing codes and themes and the quantitative data were digitized by the researcher and analyzed on a statistical software.

Findings revealed that problems related to processing, phonology, affective domain and vocabulary knowledge were among the leading challenges in L2 listening comprehension for the participants. Likewise, reasons for these problems aggregated around these dominant problem areas. Students' suggestions focused on self-study habits, use of media, listening materials and specific listening activities.

Key words: L2 listening, listening problems, students' solutions, academic listening

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN AKADEMİK DİNLEMEDE YAŞADIKLARI SORUNLAR

Abdullah Pekel

Bu araştırmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin ikinci dilde dinlediğini anlama ile ilgili yaşadığı sorunları yükseköğretim bağlamında araştırmaktır. Araştırmanın başlıca hedefi öğrencilerin dönütlerine dayanarak kendilerinin karşılaştıkları ikinci dilde dinlemede yaşadıkları sorunların türlerini ve sıklığını saptamaktır. Çalışmanın diğer bir amacı öğrencilerin akademik ve geleceğe yönelik ihtiyaçları çerçevesinde ikinci dilde dinleme becerilerine olan tutumlarını incelemektir. Öğrencilerin bildirdikleri dinlediğini anlamayla ilgili sorunların sebepleri ve bu sorunları aşabilmek için önerdikleri çözümler de bu çalışmanın kapsamı içerisindedir.

Çalışma, İstanbul'da bulunan bir devlet üniversitesinin yabancı diller yüksekokulunda yürütülmüş ve çalışmada hem nitel hem de nicel araştırma verileri kullanılmıştır. CEFR A seviyesinden (n=96), B seviyesinden (=89) ve C seviyesinden (n=42) olmak üzere toplam 227 öğrenci çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Öğrencilerin ikinci dilde dinleme hakkındaki tutumları, dinlediklerini anlama sorunları, bu sorunların olası nedenleri ve öğrencilerin bu sorunları çözme önerileri incelenirken ikinci dilde dinlediğini anlama sorunları farkındalık anketi ve bireysel raporlar kullanılmıştır. Nicel data, örüntüler ve sınıflandırmalar saptanarak incelenmiş ve sınıflandırılmıştır. Nitel data ise araştırmacı tarafından sayısallaştırılmış ve istatistiksel veri analizi yazılımı kullanılarak güvenilirlik incelemesi tamamlanmıştır.

Bulgular, ikinci dilde dinlediğini anlama sorunlarının başlıcalarının duyduğunu işleme, fonoloji, duyuşsal alan ve kelime bilgisi eksikliği ile ilgili sorunlar olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Benzer bir biçimde, öğrencilerin bildirdiği sorunların sebepleri bu baskın sorunlar etrafında toplanmaktadır. Öğrencilerin çözüm önerileri ağırlıklı olarak bireysel çalışma alışkanlıkları, medya kullanımı, dinleme malzemeleri ve belirli dinleme çalışmalarına yoğunlaşmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: ikinci dilde dinleme, dinlediğini anlama sorunları, öğrenci önerileri, akademik dinleme

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS APPROVAL.....……..v

ONAY.....vi

CURRICULUM VITAE.....vii

ÖZGEÇMİŞ.....viii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....ix

ÖNSÖZ.....x

ÖZET……...……...xi

ABSTRACT…….xii

TABLE OF CONTENTS……....xiii

LIST OF TABLES…….xvii

LIST OF FIGURES…….....xx

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.Background to the Study……..1
1.2.Aim of the Study……..2
1.3.Significance of the Study……3
1.4.Limitations……...4

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. L2 Listening……....6

2.1.1. Features of L2 Listening……..6

2.1.2. Factors Influencing L2 Listening…….....7

2.1.3. Listening Theories……...8

2.1.3.1. Bottom-up and Top-down models…….....8

2.1.3.2. Interactive model…….....…….....9

2.1.4. Approaches to L2 Listening…….....9

2.1.5. Studies on L2 Listening…….10

2.1.5.1. Studies on L2 Listening Problems…….16

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Setting…….21

3.2. Participants…….24

3.3. Data Collection……..26

3.3.1. Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report……...27

3.3.2. Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire…….28

3.4. Data Analysis…….29

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1. Students' Attitudes Towards L2 Listening……31

4.2. Qualitative Results on Academic Listening Problems …….35

4.2.1. Processing Problems…….35

4.2.2. Phonology Problems…….36

4.2.3. Affective Problems……...37

4.2.4. Vocabulary Problems……...38

4.2.5. Study Habits Problems…….39

4.2.6. Grammar Problems……..40

4.2.7. Material-Related Problems…….....…….40

4.2.8. Environmental Problems……41

4.3. Quantitative Results on Academic Listening Problems……42

4.3.1. Statement 1…….41

4.3.2. Statement 2…….43

4.3.3. Statement 3……44

4.3.4. Statement 4……45

4.3.5. Statement 5……46

4.3.6. Statement 6……48

4.3.7. Statement 7……49

4.3.8. Statement 8……50

4.3.9. Statement 9……51

4.4. Qualitative Results on Reasons of Listening Problems……52

4.4.1. Study Habit Reasons……..52

4.4.2. Processing Reasons……53

4.4.3. Phonological Reasons……54

4.4.4. Vocabulary Reasons……...55

4.4.5. Affective Reasons……..55

4.4.6. Grammatical Reasons……56

4.4.7. Environmental Reasons…….56

4.4.8. Text Related Reasons……57

4.5. Quantitative Results on Reasons of Listening Problems…….58

4.6. Qualitative Results on Students' Suggestions to Listening Problems ……66

4.6.1. Suggestions Regarding Self-Study……...66

4.6.1.1. Developing Self-Study Habits……...67

4.1.1.2. Self-use of Media……...67

4.6.2. Suggestions Regarding Classroom Instruction…….68

4.6.2.1. Suggestions for Listening Materials in Class……68

4.6.2.2. Suggestions for Improving General Listening Skill in Class……69

4.6.2.3. Suggestions for Specific Listening Activities in Class…….70

4.6.2.4. Suggestions for Students Themselves During Listening Sessions in Class……70

4.6.2.5. Suggestions for Environmental Changes in Class…….71

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1. Attitudes Towards Listening……72

5.2. Academic Listening Problems……74

5.3. Reasons of Academic Listening Problems……..80

5.4. Students' Suggestions……..82

5.5. Educational Implications…….84

5.6. Research Implications…….88

REFERENCES……..90

APPENDICES……...97

Appendix A…….....97

Appendix B…….....98

Appendix C…….....105

Appendix D…….....109

Appendix E…….....113

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1. Distribution of the Participants According to CEFR Levels…….24

Table 3.2. Distribution of the Participants' Age…….25

Table 3.3. Distribution of the Participants According to Their Age of L2 Start……...….26

Table 3.4. Distribution of the Participants According to Type of High School…….26

Table 4.1. Importance of Listening to English for Students……...32

Table 4.2. Difficulties in Listening to English in the Courses……....33

Table 4.3. Ranking of Skills in Terms of Difficulty……...33

Table 4.4. Ranking of Listening Areas in Terms of Difficulty……..34

Table 4.5. Processing Problems…….36

Table 4.6. Phonology Related Problems……....37

Table 4.7. Affective Problems……...38

Table 4.8. Vocabulary Problems……...39

Table 4.9. Study Habits Related Problems……....40

Table 4.10. Grammar Related Problems……...40

Table 4.11. Material Related Problems…….41

Table 4.12. Environmental Problems……42

Table 4.13. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 1 Across Three Proficiency Levels 43

Table 4.14. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 2 Across Three Proficiency Levels 44

Table 4.15. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 3 Across Three Proficiency Levels 45

Table 4.16. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 4 Across Three Proficiency Levels 46

Table 4.17. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 5 Across Three Proficiency Levels 47

Table 4.18: Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 6 Across Three Proficiency Levels 48

Table 4.19: Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 7 Across Three Proficiency Levels 49

Table 4.20. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 8 Across Three Proficiency Levels 50

Table 4.21. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 9 Across Three Proficiency Levels 51

Table 4.22. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Students' Study Habits.....53

Table 4.23: Reasons for Listening Problems Related to Processing the Aural Input.....54

Table 4.24 Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Phonetics.....54

Table 4.25. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Vocabulary.....55

Table 4.26. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding the Affective Domain.....56

Table 4.27: Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Grammar Knowledge.....56

Table 4.28. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Environmental Factors.....57

Table 4.29. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Texts.....57

Table 4.30. Reasons for the Problem Statement 1……...58

Table 4.31. Reasons for the Problem Statement 2……...…59

Table 4.32. Reasons for the Problem Statement 3……...60

Table 4.33. Reasons for the Problem Statement 4……...61

Table 4.34. Reasons for the Problem Statement 5……...62

Table 4.35. Reasons for the Problem Statement 6……...63

Table 4.36. Reasons for the Problem Statement 7……...64

Table 4.37. Reasons for the Problem Statement 8……...65

Table 4.38. Reasons for the Problem Statement 9……...66

Table 4.39. Students' Study-Habits Related Suggestions …….……..67

Table 4.40. Students' Suggestions for Using Media …….….68

Table 4.41 Students' Suggestions Regarding Listening Materials……..69

Table 4.42 Students' Suggestions Regarding Developing General L2 Listening Skills…….69

Table 4.43 Students' Suggestions Regarding Specific Listening Activities in Class…….70

Table 4.44. Suggestions Regarding Students Themselves during Listening Sessions

in Class ……...71

Table 4.45. Suggestions on Environmental Changes……..71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 1 for All Students.....43

Figure 4.2. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 2 for All Students.....44

Figure 4.3. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 3 for All Students.....45

Figure 4.4. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 4 for All Students.....46

Figure 4.5. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 5 for All Students.....47

Figure 4.6. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 6 for All Students.....48

Figure 4.7. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 7 for All Students.....49

Figure 4.8. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 8 for All Students.....50

Figure 4.9. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 9 for All Students …51

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Listening is the first linguistic skill that is developed and utilized by children during the period of first language (L1) acquisition. Thanks to its unique feature, it serves as an essential gateway to L1 acquisition. Unlike L1, L2 listening often requires deliberate effort for comprehension of the aural message as well as involving additional challenges among which are limitations relating to overall exposure to L2, cultural and contextual familiarity. Thus, listening is a vital receptive language skill that contributes to the success of communication in any setting in L1 and L2. It is a multidimensional process, and our knowledge regarding how it works is limited. Due to its indirect nature, it is not possible to observe the processes involved in listening, hence for some, it is the most difficult skill to learn (Vandergrift, 2004).

Listening has been thought of as a passive skill for a long time, drawing little attention to its development as part of a conscious effort (Osada, 2004). It was traditionally believed that constant exposure to the target language in aural mode would be sufficient to develop better listening comprehension skills; however, simply listening to an utterance and being able to respond to it are different processes (Hasan, 2000).

That fact that listening comprehension is a complex process which often involves conducting listening practice across diverse situations, and in different types of listening texts, modes of presentation as well as different types of tasks (Berne, 1998). The processing of spoken language puts a heavy load on listeners as they have to comprehend the text, keep the relevant information in memory, make its connection with the incoming input, and modify their comprehension of the text in consideration of the previously retained knowledge and the incoming information (Thompson, as cited in Osada, 2004).

Janusik and Wolvin (2009), in their study carried out in the U.S. higher education context, found that college students spend 24% of their time listening, 20% speaking, 9% writing and

8% reading as far as their daily communication activities are concerned. Considering the substantial need for the listening skill in academic contexts, the success of listening comprehension is likely to contribute to the quality of communication and academic activities. Thus, understanding the processes involved in listening comprehension as well as the learners' attitutes towards the listening skill and their challenges is a step towards informing educators and assisting learners in their efforts to develop their L2 listening skill.

1.2. Aims of the Study

This study aims to help bridge the gap between L2 listening research and practice within the scope of a Turkish higher education context. By using qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study attempts to explore students' perceptions about listening by investigating their attitudes towards L2 listening skill and the difficulties that they experience in L2 listening.

The major focus of this study is to investigate students' perceived L2 listening comprehension problems. It is hoped that elaborating on types of challenges will raise the students' awareness of the processes they go through while carrying out L2 listening activities.

Another purpose of the study is to elaborate on students' reasons of their L2 listening comprehension problems. Besides discussing various listening comprehension problems, students were encouraged to actively think about the reasons for the problems that they reported.

An additional purpose of the study is to gather students' suggestions on to the ways these reported problems can be overcome. The different types of suggestions provided by students in order to address their learning problems are hoped to shed light on students' expectations from the institution and the teachers, the materials as well as themselves.

The final aim of the study is to compare and contrast problems, sources of problems and the solutions to the problems reported by students at different proficiency levels.

In order to the meet these research aims, the following research questions are addressed:

1 – What are EFL preparatory school students' perceptions of and attitudes towards the listening skill in EFL?

2a - What are the major academic listening problems as reported by EFL preparatory school students?

2b- Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the types of academic listening problems?

3a – What are the reasons of the academic listening problems as reported by the EFL students?

3b - Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the reasons of academic listening problems?

4a – What are the solutions to the academic listening problems as reported by the EFL students?

4b - Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the solutions for academic listening problems?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Listening, specifically in L2 English, is a vital skill in academic contexts where the medium of instruction is largely or completely in English. A significance of the study is that it strives to unfold students' views about L2 listening in general as well as explore their perceptions about listening comprehension problems they experience in the Turkish higher education setting. Despite the increasing focus placed on L2 listening research, students' attitudes towards the skill has remained relatively understudied (Graham, 2006). Given the scarcity of research with the focus on L2 listening comprehension problems, the current study hopes to make a contribution to the field in understanding students' current states and needs towards developing their L2 listening skills. In practical terms, by determining common L2 listening problems, it is possible to assist students. This study is also significant in that it aims to explore L2 listening problems experienced by students in the Turkish higher education context across three CEFR proficiency levels (A, B and C).

Students were also asked to actively think about and reflect on possible reasons for and solutions to their L2 listening problems. The likely reasons for the problems and students'

solutions are within the scope of this study. In other words, there are no studies within L2 listening field that focus on sources of problems as reported by students themselves. Moreover, no study was conducted to gather students' solutions and suggestions for their L2 listening problems. In the present study, students' active participation and taking-on-responsibility in their learning is encouraged by seeking out their opinions and feedback about L2 listening experiences.

Besides the contributions to research through the results derived from the study, the researcher hopes to inform educators and curriculum planners about students' perceptions of L2 academic listening and their perceived challenges in L2 listening comprehension as well as their reported reasons for these problems and suggestions for tackling them. The study intends to inform teachers, curriculum and course designers by highlighting the problems students report to experience in L2 listening, and provide educational implications so that necessary measures can be taken. Specific academic and instructional decisions can be taken by educators and students in order to help direct the learning process and reach the educational objectives.

Overall, the study is hoped to help bridge the gap between research and classroom instruction by raising the awareness of students about their learning process and the development of their L2 listening skill.

1.4. Limitations

It is important to make note of the following limitations of this research:

1. The study explores and relies on students' self reports regarding the listening comprehension problems they come across in an academic setting and their possible reasons. In other words, the problems and reasons described in this thesis may or may not fully reflect the kinds of problems students actually face during L2 listening tasks and their real reasons. Thus, the study focuses on students' self-reports rather than actual / real challenges in L2 listening.
2. The study is carried out at a language preparatory school of a public university in Istanbul, with the contribution of 227 participants. A study with a larger scope which includes multiple public and private institutions might provide more comprehensive data from which to draw conclusions.

3. The questionnaire utilized in the study has a focus on the L2 listening problems regarding bottom-up processing. Thus, an open-ended survey is used in order to overcome this limitation and collect data about top-down processing problems as well as bottom-up processing.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section examines the existing literature on features of L2 listening comprehension as well as problems regarding thereof.

2.1. L2 Listening

It is possible to argue that a learner has unique challenges to overcome before fully mastering the listening skill in L2. The traditional lack of focus on L2 listening might stem from the difficulties its nature poses to learners and teachers: it lacks the visibility the reading or the tangibility of the speaking carry (Field, 2008a). In order to comprehend an aural input in L2, one has to meet more processing requirements, thus carry the added cognitive and psychological burden created by the task (Rost, 2014). Vandergrift (2003) indicates that language teachers have to be aware of the role of listening in language acquisition, the pragmatics behind the way the listeners use the aural input and the types of knowledge areas at play for a successful comprehension process. Considering the complex nature of L2 listening, it is sensible to elaborate on the features of it as well.

2.1.1. Features of L2 Listening

Although individuals considerably rely on the listening skill for input for a variety of purposes in different settings, we do not know much about how exactly listening occurs (Hasan, 2000). Research on listening has mostly depended on reading research (Bonk, 2000). Even though there are similarities between reading comprehension and listening comprehension, it is important to remember that the skills required for listening comprehension are considerably different from those required for reading comprehension (Osada, 2004). According to Buck (2001) there are three characteristics of speech: it is ciphered into aural form, it happens realtime and it is not the same as written language in terms of linguistics.

Listening is a very important skill in language classrooms, and it is a significant source of input for learners (Nunnan, 1998). Thus, a lot of research focused on understanding the

process of listening and the factors which affect listening (Mendelshon, 2001). Flowerdew and Miller (2005) stress the differences between listening and reading. One of these objectives can be regarded as establishing distinct features of listening as a medium of input. These differences include; phonological changes and assimilations, hesitations, fillers, fragmented utterences instead of full sentences, tone, frequency of discourse markers etc. (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005).

Another distinct feature of listening skill is its instantaneous nature. Besides simultaneously decoding the aural input, the listeners also have to retrieve their top-down knowledge to comprehend the input, which is a complicated process for most learners of L2 (Kissling, 2018).

2.1.2. Factors Influencing L2 Listening

As L2 listening drew more attention of researchers (Vandergrift, 2008), authors focused on various aspects of L2 listening. Vandergrift & Goh (2012) point out that L2 listeners who are not advanced cannot process the aural input completely and automatically as any L2 listening activity has to be carried out with the limited language knowledge at L2 listeners' disposal. They indicate that various factors play a role in L2 listening comprehension.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) indicate that the factors thought to influence L2 listening require more empirical evidence to form a cause and effect relationship between these factors and L2 listening success. Some of these factors are categorized as cognitive factors, affective factors and contextual factors by these authors.

Their categorization of the cognitive factors includes vocabulary knowledge, syntactic (grammar) knowledge, discourse knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, metacognition and prior knowledge. Stær (2009) found that there should be explicit focus on improving vocabulary knowledge of L2 learners, as this is a major contribution to their listening comprehension in L2. Vocabulary knowledge is indicated as one of the most important factors by L2 learners; however, Vandergrift & Goh (2012) stress that this suggestion, for the most part, has not been studied empirically.

Similarly, syntactic knowledge is a contributing factor to the success of L2 listening, yet the role of syntactic knowledge in L2 listening is to be explored in depth (Mecartty F. , 2000). The knowledge of discourse markers such as 'first of all', 'what's more', 'finally' as a

facilitating factor in L2 listening has been a limited area of study, and has been regarded as an aid to organization of aural input.

Learners' control of the listening activity and the comprehension process is called metacognitive knowledge. Prior knowledge has been supported to be a contibuting factor in comprehension in overall L1 and L2 language skills (Vandergrift, 2005).

Other researchers provided different categorizations of factors that influence L2 listening, such as Goh (1999) for example, who categorized the factors as text, listener, speaker, task and environment. Still, other researchers such as, Nowrouzi, Tam, Zareian, & Nimehchisalem (2015) analyzed perception, parsing and utilization components of listening.

2.1.3. Listening Theories

L2 listening comprehension is facilitated when a combination of knowledge areas are simultaneously activated. There are prominent models explaining the dynamics of L2 listening comprehension, which will be reviewed below.

2.1.3.1. Bottom-up and Top-down Models

L2 listening comprehension was thought to be developed through exposing learners to the target language, and the attempts to discuss various elements contributing to listening comprehension success have been recent. Bottom-up model puts forward the view that a listener reaches understanding by deciphering meaningful units starting from the smallest (phonemes) to the whole text (the whole utterance) in a linear fashion (Nunnan, 1997). As a part of this process, Vandergrift (2011) stresses the importance of decoding and rapid word recognition in relation to L2 listening comprehension. Cross (2009) categorizes the typical difficulties the learners face in bottom up model as process problems, text problems and intrusion problems (L1 interference). This model is useful when the listener`s L2 listening ability is not advanced enough (Kuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016) to consistently control other dynamics and knowledge areas, such as background knowledge and metacognitive knowledge.

Top-down model, on the other hand, assumes that the listener formulates the meaning by employing their preexisting knowledge and context where the listening activity occurs (Nunnan, 1997). Listeners employ their background knowledge and metacognitive knowledge in the L2 listening comprehension process (Vandergrift, 2011). As metacognition is regarded

as one of the contributing factors in L2 listening comprehension, The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was developed by Vandergrift et al. (2006) to further research the role of metacognitive knowledge in L2 listening comprehension. In other words, prior knowledge and text familiarity is among contributing factors in L2 listening comprehension (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011) and their role is explored by various researchers in different academic and non-academic settings.

2.1.3.2. Interactive model of Listening

Vandergrift (2011) reports that bottom-up and top-down processes often operate simultaneously and collaboratively, and that listeners' likelihood of successful comprehension increases when they mobilise multiple processing skills such as planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluation. Thus, the interactive model is regarded as a plausible model, where both bottom-up and top-down processing is used during listening comprehension activity depending on the task and the level of proficiency of the listener. Field (2004) argues that consistently weighing in only one processing skill for all situations and tasks would not be effective and that dependence on bottom-up models and top-down models vary across learners, listening texts and tasks. According to Field (2004), "The truth may well lie between the two – and may, like most strategic activity, be highly variable from one learner to another, from one text to another and from one task to another." (p. 375)

2.1.4. Approaches to L2 Listening

L2 listening skill has received varied levels of attention in L2 teaching throughout decades as far as L2 curriculum and classroom practices are concerned. Interest in this receptive skill evolved from none in the grammar translation method, into a combination of various approaches in the integrated approach today. The following listing of these approaches discussed below were adopted from Flowerdew & Miller (2005).

The grammar translation method heavily focused on reading and writing skills while listening or speaking skills did not get any systematic attention. In fact, L1 was widely used for instruction. This method is still practiced but its use is not advocated by research or the literature (Richards & Rodgers, 1999).

The audio-lingual method based its activites on intensive drills and habit formation in L2. As high-level oral competence was required, this approach heavily focused on listening and speaking skills through patterns, imitation and memorization. The approach focused on linguistic skills in the order of listening, speaking, reading and writing; however, the latter two received more attention while continuous exposure to listening and speaking activities were maintained (Rivers, 1982).

The direct-method was developed as a response to the grammar translation method. Unlike the previous method, the direct method employed L2 in instruction and classroom interaction. Although stress placed on listening was greater than the other skills, this approach did not systematically teach how to listen and develop listening strategies as well as being largely effective for low-level language learners (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005)

The listening activities in the direct method include input from a range of sources and offer various listening comprehension situations. According to this approach, the learners are aimed to actively engage in the listening activity as a process, making use of linguistic and non-linguistic cues (Littlewood, 2002).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) brings functional and structural aspects of a language together, thus listening skill is fostered through a focus on listening for functional information and specific purpose (Littlewood, 1981). As Savignon (1991) indicates, CLT approaches the teaching practice in terms of competence in communication as well as ways to develop the language at the same time by focusing on not only the targets but also the processes in classroom.

2.1.5. Studies on L2 Listening

A growing body of research investigated various aspects of L2 listening comprehension over decades. These aspects included, but were not limited to, metacognition, medium of listening, listening strategies and L1 interference. Goh & Aryadoust (2015) indicate the possibility of subskill divisibility in listening, which can potentially enable educators as well as learners to focus on specific listening subskills to reach a richer comprehension ability in L2. In their research, Goh & Aryadoust (2015) used The Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) listening test data provided by the English Language Instıtute at the University of Michigan. The test data included the exam data of 916 test takers from 76 countries. The item

analysis and factor analysis of the test data resulted in various listening subskills. The researchers reported that subskill divisibility is possible in the following areas: understanding and responding to unexpected statements, understanding details and explicit information, making propositional inferences and drawing conclusions (p.124). They concluded that the tasks that require the students to use various facets of listening skill might assist students on every level of L2 listening comprehension.

In addition to that, Marx, Heppt & Henschel (2017) make a distinction between academic and everyday listening comprehension in L2 and stress that there are various unique aspects of both types of listening. 459 high school students participated in Marx et al. (2017)'s study. Of the participants, 173 were L1 German speakers and 286 were L2 German speakers. The participants were given a computer based listening test, where samples of academic and everyday speeches were featured. Students were also tested for vocabulary with Culture Fair Intelligence Test – Scale A and for syntactic knowledge on a computer based syntactic knowledge test. The data obtained from the tests were analyzed for patterns of differential item functioning (DIF), which happens when students with similar skills but from different groups has varying chances of success on an item. They concluded that syntactic knowledge correlates stronger with everyday listening while vocabulary knowledge correlate stronger with academic listening than everyday listening. It shows that there might be unique differences between academic and everyday listening comprehension; however, the differences were not significant. Since the focus of this study is on the problems students experience during the L2 listening comprehension activities in an academic setting, the following section will provide more detailed account of recent studies regarding L2 listening and related problems of academic L2 listening comprehension.

Research on L2 listening comprehension has focused on many diverse areas in an attempt to explore aspects of listening comprehension and help learners achieve higher proficiency in L2 listening. Strategy use in L2 listening comprehension is one of the areas investigated by researchers. Goh (1998) investigated 16 ESL high- and low-proficiency students in a university in Singapore. The researcher focused on types of frequency and types of listening comprehension strategies and tactics by using data that came from immediate retrospective verbal reports and students' entries written in their listening diaries for a period of 8 weeks. Goh (1998) concluded that high-proficiency students were better at employing listening comprehension strategies than the low-proficiency students. The researcher also points out

that direct strategy training may equip students with the tools that can help them in l2 listening comprehension. Thus, curriculum should include both direct strategy training and awareness raising activities. Zhang and Goh (2006) investigated 278 Singaporean secondary school studens' knowledge and use of listening and speaking strategies. The researchers used Metacognitive Awareness Inventory in Listening and Speaking Strategies (MAILSS) and aimed to explore students' perceptions about the listening as well as speaking strategies and whether they use these strategies frequently. They concluded that the participants in their study believe, to a large extent, that strategy use is useful for them in l2 listening and speaking performance; however, the use of these strategies by the participants were limited. Newton (2016) advocates the focus on teaching of listening strategies to encourage students to deliberately activate comprehension strategies as well as making sure that such strategies are well established in L2. In his study, he reviews literature and counterpoints Swan & Walter (2017) in that skill training provides students with more learning opportunities even if the requirement for skill training is found debatable.

Yeldham & Gruba (2016) report that strategy training in L2 helps students handle the use of bottom-up and top-down processing skills with greater control. Their study was designed as a longitudinal multi-case studies, including four Taiwanese university students with low proficiency in L2 English. The 3-week listening course adopted direct approach to strategies instruction as well as Vandergrift's metacognitive approach. After the course period, students were given a 5000 word-level vocabulary levels test, two listening tests which were administered pre- and post instruction and the group embedded figures test for assessing cognitive style of learners. In order to collect qualitative data, the recall protocols were also used. They concluded that development of listening strategies involves a combination of cognitive and personal factors, thus might vary for each learner. They also indicated that strategies instruction can increase awareness of students towards a balanced use of bottom-up and top-down listening strategies rather than relying on one processing skill extensively.

Pan & In'nami (2018) found that low-proficiency learners often relied on bottom-up processing while the strategy repertoire is extensive including strategies like planning, bottom-up processing, monitoring and evaluation and top-down processing strategies for intermediate and high-proficiency learners. The researchers used the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) listening test data of 170 Taiwanese university students. The test aimed to measure students' bottom-up and top-down processing skills as

well as strategy use in L2 listening. The student test data was analyzed with principal component analysis as well as MANOVA and ANOVA analyses. They found that certain strategies, such as voice and imagery inference, approaches and top-down strategies, were used in similar frequency by students irrespective of their proficiency level; however, other strategies like planning, monitoring and bottom-up processing were used by advanced learners more often.

Background knowledge is another aspect that is under investigation in L2 listening comprehension. Becker (2016) reported that low level and high level students' performance were similarly better in L2 listening tasks that required bottom-up skills. He reported that this might be because students did not have to depend on background and/or cultural knowledge. For his study, the researcher analyzed an Academic English Language Program (AEP) listening test data of 132 ESL students from 10 different countries, and examinees' scores for questions intended to measure local and global listening comprehension were compared to an ANCOVA test. He found that the comprehension of text to answer the questions that require students to make inferences and identification of detailed information were varied among the proficiency levels while local comprehension skills were found the easiest by all proficiency groups.

Li, Chen, Wu, Kuo & Tseng (2017) conducted a study on the effects of cultural familiarity on L2 listening comprehension. The participants were 65 high school ninth grader L2 students in Taiwan. The researchers used two listening passages, one of which was familiar to the students in terms of its topic and the other was not. Then the researchers analyzed the multiple-choice listening comprehension test score of the participants based on these passages. According to the analysis of the test results, the participants' scores did not differ substantially, thus the researchers concluded that there was no effect of background knowledge on listening comprehension performance. This finding contradicts with the research results of Vandergrift & Baker (2015).

Some other researchers focused on the role of phonology and vocabulary. Derwing, Thomson & Munro (2012) stress the positive impact of targeting the pronunciation features which students cannot easily develop naturally by exposing themselves to L2 aural input. In their longitudinal study about listening perception, they gave 20 Mandarin and 20 Slavic language speaker ESL students five tasks with two-month intervals in 10 months' time. The research

focused on the development of five problems when listening instruction was not explicit. They found significant differences between native speakers and Slavic speakers on sentence stress and as well as between native speakers both Slavic and Mandarin speakers on can/can't distinctions. Thus, they concluded that certain features of pronunciation in L2 can develop naturally over time without emphasis and that educators should dedicate their time on features of pronunciation that is not easily or naturally acquired.

The fact that the students come up with multiple word options for each word they hear aggravates the difficulty in comprehension. Researchers showed that similar to L1 listeners, L2 listeners can benefit from large vocabulary knowledge in order to detect and solve potential bottom-up listening comprehension problems such as phonemic restoration (Ishida & Arai, 2016). 30 L1 English speakers and 30 Japanese L2 English speakers took part in the study and listened words and non-word recordings in two sessions. The words or non-words also included replaced phonemes for the listeners to detect. According to their analysis of the students' phonemic restoration, they concluded that missing phonemes were restored by both L1 and L2 speakers; however, L1 speakers performed better as they were able to effectively integrate both bottom-up and top-down processing skills that are available to them as well as depend on larger vocabulary size.

Kissling (2018) also investigated efficacy of pronunciation instruction. In her study, the researcher recruited 116 novice L2 Spanish learners at a private university in the United States whose native language were English. The researcher gave students a sentence-level dictation task pretest earlier in the semester. The pronunciation instruction was delivered as in four 20-minute modules in 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th week of a 14-week semester. An identical posttest was given to the students at the last week of the semester. The data were analyzed through mixed-effects models. Kissling (2018) reports that the students tend to prioritize their top-down information when their bottom-up comprehension suffers which is called `lexical effect` by Field (2004). As a result, they end up with what they think they hear instead of what actually is said. Thus, she concluded that pronunciation instruction assisted students to parse the target language more accurately and increased the intelligibility of L2.

Vocabulary knowledge has been recognized as an important factor contributing to students' linguistic performance. Vandergrift et al. (2015) emphasize that size of L2 vocabulary is the most significant predictor of L2 listening comprehension success. In their study, the

researchers analyzed data from 157 7th grade students in French immersion program. The data collections tools included tests for L1 listening comprehension, L2 listening comprehension, L1 vocabulary, L2 vocabulary, auditory discrimination ability, metacognitive awareness of listening, and working memory. The data was analyzed through path analysis and correlational analysis. They concluded that background knowledge and topic familiarity play a distinguishable role in L2 listening comprehension and highlighted the contributing factor of vocabulary development for L2 listening comprehension success. There are also other studies that support this view (Teng, 2016; Wang & Treffers-Daller, 2017).

While body of research focused on the various aspects of vocabulary knowledge, such as breadth and depth in reading skill, few studies focus on such aspects of vocabulary knowledge in relation to L2 listening. Foomani (2015) investigated the role of depth of vocabulary knowledge in lexical inferencing and overall listening proficiency. The researcher recruited 56 upper-intermediate TOEFL applicants in Iranian context. The participants were assigned three proficiency tests (TOEFL-PBT), a depth of vocabulary knowledge test and a lexical inferencing task. The data were analyzed through a regression analysis. He concluded that the depth of vocabulary is a contributing factor in lexical inferencing success and that the depth of vocabulary and listening proficiency correlate with each other.

Matthews (2018) studied the role of aural vocabulary knowledge on L2 listening comprehension and L2 proficiency using data from 247 tertial level L2 students. An aural vocabulary knowledge test was given to the students. In the test, three aural vocabulary knowledge levels were based on the frequency of the vocabulary. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) was utilized for measuring listening comprehension of the students. A discrete-point vocabulary test and an integrative reading test were assigned to the students in order to establish L2 proficiency level. Inferential statistics were employed for the analysis of the data. The researcher stresses that most frequent word families are required to be mastered by L2 learners so that their level of comprehension of L2 listening can be improved.

Affective domain is another factor that is progressively investigated by researchers. Ross (2014) reviewed the literature of psychology, neurolinguistics, pragmatics, bilingualism and language pedagogy and attempted to outline specific challenges L2 listeners come across. The researcher associates L2 acquisition with risk taking attitudes of learners, which emphasizes

the importance of affective and personality factors in gaining L2 skills. Similarly, in his review of body of research on L2 listening, Yeldham (2017) indicates the possibility of supporting L2 learners by exploring various aspects of L2 listening comprehension and stresses that L2 listening research carries the potential to offer individualized personal solutions to learners in the same classroom through their digital devices.

L2 Listening is also linked with computer / mobile assisted language learning. Çakmak and Erçetin (2017) indicated that the utilization of mobile phones for carrying out listening tasks enables students to make use of listening text, visual cues and textual support, thus facilitating word recognition and assisting students in comprehension. In their study, the researchers collected data from 88 students in four groups, each of which consisted of 22 students. Each group had access to a different presentation of the same listening text: no access to glosses (visual help), textual-only group, pictorial-only group, textual-plus-pictorial group. The data were analyzed through a mixed ANOVA analysis. The results showed that the students without any visual help in listening (no-gloss group) did not have a considerably lower performance in text recall. They concluded that offering text gloss (textual help) while listening in vocabulary learning yielded better results than the others.

Digital devices such as computers and more importantly, mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets are studied in terms of how they are used extensively by learners and teachers as a medium of instruction and listening tools in academic settings. In his study, Godwin-Jones (2018) reviews literature on language learning and informal language learning and stresses that the availability of resources on the internet accessible by computers and mobile devices offer a vast amount of informal learning opportunities and support students' autonomous learning efforts.

2.1.5.1. Studies on L2 Listening Problems

Viewing the challenges listeners come across in L2 listening as a diagnostic tool seems to be a plausible approach towards addressing and overcoming them. Anderson & Lynch (1988) point out that being able to identify the topic of speech is one of the major contributors of successful comprehension, enabling the listener to create a response that is in line with the input (p.6).

Listening is a multidimensional process, and our knowledge regarding how it works is limited. In other words, there exist gaps between L2 listening research and practice.

Understanding L2 listening further and its full analysis might require conducting listening practices across diverse situations, and using different types of listening texts, modes of presentation as well as different types of tasks (Berne, 1998). In his study, Berne (1998) investigated the relationship between L2 listening research, pedagogical theory and practice through a survey given to 270 language teachers in the United States. The results were analyzed via descriptive and qualitative analyses. He reported that teachers strongly believe that development of L2 listening skills is vital to the development of the students' overall L2 proficiency. The gaps between L2 listening pedagogy theory and practice were also highlighted.

Just stressing the importance of listening comprehension skill is not enough. It is crucial to analyze the best way to diagnose and attempt to solve listening problems (Hasan, 2000). The researcher investigated 88 university level EFL students' perception of listening comprehension problems in Syrian context. The students were given a questionnaire with a five-point scale for indicating the frequency of the problems given in the questionnaire. The students were also given open-ended response questions about the challenges they come across in L2 listening comprehension. The data were analyzed by calculation of frequencies and percentages. Hasan (2000) reports inadequate/ineffective learner strategies, nature and the content of the listening text, the task itself, variations in speaker's natural speech, and listener attitudes as potential sources of L2 listening problems. He concluded that the students in the study were not adequately equipped with skills and strategies that can contribute to their L2 listening comprehension. The researcher also highlighted the importance of development of bottom-up and top-down processing skills avoiding the dependence on a single processing skill as well as raising the awareness of students about the factors influencing their L2 listening comprehension.

Additionally, one of the most frequently reported difficulties in comprehending aural texts by listeners is the speech rate that is beyond listeners' speed of processing (Osada, 2004). Osada (2004) also maintains that the boundaries of words and sentences are visible to readers as they are marked by spaces and punctuation; however, spoken language lacks these visible cues, and recognizing these boundaries by processing the phonological features of the spoken text is left to listeners.

Nowrouzi et al. (2015) studied students' listening comprehension problems in Iranian EFL context. 100 Iranian tertiary level EFL learners participated and survey method was utilized in their study. The Listening Comprehension Processing Problems Questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The data were analyzed with a statistical analysis software. They concluded that it was possible to categorize the participants listening comprehension problems in three groups: perception, parsing and utilization. Similarly, one of the most frequently reported difficulties in comprehending aural texts by listeners is the speech rate that is beyond their speed of processing (Osada, 2004). Lynch (1998) says that listeners have abundant resources to process aural input in L1; however, they are required to allocate more resources to process vocabulary and grammar in L2 because of the limited capacity and resources at their disposal.

As for affective factors influencing comprehension in L2 listening, anxiety caused by various factors while carrying out a listening comprehension activity has shown to impact comprehension negatively (Bekleyen, 2009). In her study, Bekleyen (2009) investigated the listening anxiety among 71 first-year EFL teacher candidates in Turkish higher education context. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), background questionnaire, interview and final course grades were used as data sources. Students' responses to the both scales were analyzed via statistical analysis software. She found that students with a higher score of FLCAS also have a higher score of FLLAS. These results correlated negatively with their final grades. She concluded that anxiety has a negative influence on L2 listening comprehension performance. Rost (2014) supports this finding and also indicates that the cognitive burden that L2 aural input placed on the listener can create stress, which often leads the listener to underperform in L2 listening comprehension.

Another factor thought to affect comprehension in L2 listening is accent variations in the aural input. Unfamiliarity with various accents in L2 is a contributing factor whereas unfamiliarity with accents might pose difficulty to the listener due to the extra effort required to be used for comprehension. Ockey and French (2016) explored the relationship between accent familiarity and comprehension. In their study, data were drawn from the listening section data of 21,726 TOEFL test-takers from 148 countries. The listening section featured lecture style texts with one US, four Australian and four British speakers and these speakers were randomly assigned to the participants. The researchers developed the Strength of Accent

Scale. The participants were assigned this scale upon the listening test for data collection. The data were analyzed via one-way ANOVA analysis. The researchers found that listening comprehension scores went down as the accent became stronger; however, they also stressed that these findings should not be over-generalized and similar studies should be carried out in other listening scenarios such as dialogues and conversations as well as with listening texts in varied contents.

Overall, although L2 listening problems about various aspects of L2 listening such as vocabulary knowledge, strategy training and use, processing, background knowledge, cultural familiarity, phonology, affective domain, autonomous and informal learning are studied by some researchers, there need to be more studies conducted. As discussed above, studies focusing on students' own perceptions and awareness about various facets of L2 listening, listening comprehension problems and their feedback about potential solutions to the difficulties they come across are scarce. Similarly, studies exploring these aspects of L2 listening from learners' perspective need to investigate learners in different contexts, age groups. With these points in mind, this research is designed and implemented in an attept to fill this research gap by providing information on students' ideas within Turkish higher education context.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore Turkish EFL learners' L2 listening attitudes and comprehension problems in an academic setting. The data encompasses the learners' perceptions of and feedback regarding their listening skill during their studies at an English Language Preparatory Program. Specifically, the following research questions were asked:

1 – What are EFL preparatory school students' perceptions of and attitudes towards the listening skill in EFL?

2a - What are the major academic listening problems as reported by EFL preparatory school students?

2b- Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the types of academic listening problems?

3a – What are the reasons of the academic listening problems as reported by the EFL students?

3b - Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the reasons of academic listening problems?

4a – What are the solutions to the academic listening problems as reported by the EFL students?

4b - Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the solutions for academic listening problems?

In order to find answers to these questions, a study with a mixed methods design was planned through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

In terms of methodology, when conducting qualitative research, four criteria need to be considered. These are credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability. In this thesis, several precautions were taken to fulfill these criteria. To ensure credibility, triangulation was done, in other words qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were

used to verify data. Transferability is ensured through the thick description of research context and participants. As for confirmability, the researcher collected the data as neutrally as possible introducing the open-ended survey first so as not to influence participants and being present in class throughout the data collection process to monitor and clarify any misunderstandings. Finally, inter-rater consensus was sought to fulfill the dependability requirement.

3.1. Setting

The data was collected at the language preparatory school of a state university in Istanbul, Turkey. The school of foreign languages offers compulsory study in one of the English, French or German foreign language programs for students who will study in foreign language-medium departments. The data collection was carried out in the English Language Program in 2017 spring academic term. The English program offers courses in three CEFR levels for students who fail the English Language Proficiency Examination developed and administered by the school at the beginning of the academic year. The three CEFR levels include A level, which is the lowest linguistic proficiency level, followed by B level, which is the intermediate linguistic proficiency level, and C level, which is the highest linguistic proficiency level. The students are placed into these levels according to their scores in the proficiency test. In this sense, the proficiency examination carried out at the start of the academic year serves as a placement test for the new students. The students who fail in fall, winter and spring examinations have the option to take language classes in the summer school which is an 8-week intensive English program or wait for the following examination period.

The English as a foreign language program lasts for 30 weeks and is completed in two academic terms. The courses are delivered for 24 hours per week. Integrated skills teaching approach is adopted throughout the program. Thus, each language skill is planned to receive a similar emphasis in the classroom. The teachers follow an EFL coursebook appropriate to different proficiency levels. Listening comprehension activities are carried out in accordance with the school curriculum and the coursebook offers listening comprehension practice within activities that integrate skills.

The coursebooks used in all proficiency levels are New Language Leader published by Pearson Education, and the coursebook on the corresponding level is used in each proficiency

level (See Appendix). Each unit in the coursebook is on a separate theme and starts with awareness raising questions, images related to the unit's theme and relevant quotes from famous people. The coursebook aims to helps students use the four skills in the target language, and the classes are designed to facilitate the use of language skills in an integrated manner.

Lowest proficiency level (A level) students start the semester with New Language Leader Elementary Coursebook. Vocabulary section is introduced to students first. Thereafter, a reading text follows the introduction section. The reading section is followed by a grammar section. A listening comprehension activity follows this section. The listening texts are based on while-listening comprehension activities and range from radio show excerpts to short dialogues. Teachers are instructed to play the listening text twice during listening activities and exercises. The types of listening comprehension questions provided in the coursebook exercises are also varied. There are gap-filling, true-false, matching, multiple choice, open-ended type of questions for the students to answer. The questions are introduced in this stage focus on bottom-up skills. There are questions regarding the speech, such as the numbers, places. There are also questions about the number of speakers, matching their names and the order in which the speakers talk. After this section, there is a speaking section where students are expected to use structures and vocabulary from the listening and reading with their partner. an integrated speaking section is introduced to the students. The following part of the unit starts with another related vocabulary section. A reading section follows the vocabulary section. Another related grammar topic is introduced in the following section. A speaking section related to the reading section is introduced to the students. After the speaking section, listening and pronunciation sections are introduced. In the listening section, students are expected to answer detail questions as well as questions intended to measure overall understanding. The last section in the unit is the writing section. In this section, students are asked to write a text in a topic related to that of the second reading such note, story, journal, a paragraph or the likes.

Mid-proficiency level (B Level) students start the semester with New Language Leader Pre-intermediate Coursebook. A speaking section is introduced to students as the first task. This section includes questions based on guesses about the target topic. The answers are introduced through listening. The next section is reading. Students are expected to read the text and answer reading comprehension questions. This section is followed by listening

section. The listening texts are based on while-listening comprehension activities and range from radio show excerpts to lectures and dialogues. Teachers are instructed to play the listening text twice during listening activities and exercises. The types of listening comprehension questions provided in the coursebook exercises are also varied. There are gap-filling, true-false, matching, multiple choice, open-ended type of questions for the students to answer. There are also questions regarding the main idea or the topic of conversation in this stage. There are also questions about the number of speakers, matching their names and the order in which the speakers talk. Thereafter, vocabulary and grammar sections follow the introduction section. After the vocabulary and grammar sections, an integrated speaking and writing section is introduced to the students. The speaking section is designed about talking about the experiences of the students regarding the topic of reading and elaborating on the topic further with a partner. Students may be asked to write a paragraph about their speaking topic. The next task is an integrated reading and speaking task. Students are asked to read a text and answer reading comprehension questions. The students are also expected to talk about their experience or opinion related to the topic of the reading with their partner. This section is followed by an additional vocabulary and grammar section. Another speaking section where students further elaborate on their opinion regarding the topic. The last section in the unit is the writing section. In this section, students are asked to write a text in a topic related to that of the second reading such note, story, journal, a paragraph or the likes.

Highest proficiency level (C level) students start the semester with New Language Leader Intermediate Coursebook. Vocabulary and pronunciation sections are introduced to students first. A listening comprehension activity follows the introduction section. The listening texts are based on while-listening comprehension activities and range from radio show excerpts to lectures and dialogues. Teachers are instructed to play the listening text twice during listening activities and exercises. The types of listening comprehension questions provided in the coursebook exercises are also varied. There are gap-filling, true-false, matching, multiple choice, open-ended type of questions for the students to answer. The questions are introduced in two stages; the first stage focuses on the gist of the listening text. There are questions regarding the main idea or the topic of conversation in this stage. There are also questions about the number of speakers, matching their names and the order in which the speakers talk. Thereafter, a reading text follows the introduction section. After the reading section, an integrated speaking section is introduced to the students. The speaking section is designed

about forming an opinion on the topic of reading and elaborating on the topic further with a partner. The following part of the unit is an integrated listening and speaking activity. Students are asked warm-up questions regarding another related topic and listen to a longer recording such as an interview or lecture. This is also a while-listening comprehension activity where students are expected to answer detail, sequence, specific vocabulary, attitude or functional language questions. The second stage focuses on details about the speech, such as the numbers, places, functions of speech, reasons of a particular problem and so on. The integrated section is followed by a grammar section and a second reading section. The last section in the unit is the writing section. In this section, students are asked to write a text in a topic related to that of the second reading such note, story, journal or an essay or the likes.

The students are also instructed to carry on similar listening comprehension tasks for weekly assignments and self-study purposes. The completion rate of the assignments and the progress of students can be monitored by the classroom teachers; however, these assignments are not graded or scored. Thanks to the online module offered by the coursebook, students have the option to do these listening comprehension exercises in the online study platform. The students' platform accounts are provided by the coursebook publisher in the beginning of the fall semester.

3.2. Participants

Participants of the study were randomly selected students studying in the three proficiency levels of the English language program. 227 students volunteered to participate in the study (107 male and 120 female), who were originally from various regions in Turkey. In terms of CEFR levels, 96 of the students (42%) were studying at A level, 89 of the students (40%) at B level and 42 of the students (18%) were C level students when the research was carried out. (see Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. Distribution of the Participants According to CEFR Levels

CEFR level	n	%
A level	96	42
B level	89	40
C level	42	18

In terms of age, a great majority of the students (89%) were in 17-20 age range. About 10% of the students belonged to 21-23 age range category. 3% of the students were in 24-27 age range category. There were no students in 28-30 age range category while there was only one student in 30+ age range category (see Table 3.2.).

Table 3.2. Distribution of the Participants' Age

Age range	n	%
17-20	201	89
21-23	20	9
24-27	5	3
28-30	0	0
30+	1	0.4

After attending the language school, participants are to be enrolled in various undergraduate programs offered by the faculties in the university. Within the body of the current study, close to half of the students were registered at departments of; Informatics, Translation, Political Sciences and International Relations, Economics, Business, Banking and Insurance, Public Relations, Journalism, Hospitality Management and Tourism. About one third of the participants were registered at the Faculty of Engineering, which included programs of Computer Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Material Science and Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Electronics Engineering and Bioengineering. The department distribution of the remaining participants were in Dentistry, Nutrition and Dietetics, Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, Health Care Management, Medicine Chemistry and Physics, Theology, Sociology, Movie Design, Radio-Television and Cinema departments.

The participants were also asked to provide information about when they started learning English as a foreign language. As can be seen in Table 3.3, a great majority of students initiated their foreign language studies when they were somewhere between 5 and 13 years old. Thus, it can be said that a great number of students (91%) started learning English in either their primary or secondary school education. Only two students indicated that they started learning English between ages 14 and 16. A very small number of students (3%) reported that they started learning English between ages 17 and 20. 2% of the students said that they started learning English when they were 20 years old or older, while 6 (3%) students did not answer this question.

Table 3.3. Distribution of the Participants According to Their Age of L2 Start

English starting age range	n	%
5-10	122	54
11-13	85	38
14-16	2	1
17-20	7	3
20+	4	2

Background information regarding the high school type that the participants graduated from was also gathered. 210 (93%) students reported that they attended public high schools while 12 (5%) of the students indicated that they attended private high schools. Five students (2%) did not answer this question. As for the specific types of high schools the participants attended, the distribution is provided in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Distribution of the Participants According to Type of High School

Type of High School	n
Anatolian High School	122
Other (Teacher Training, Military, Study Abroad)	32
Science High School	27
Anatolian Vocational High School	26
Anatolian Theological High School	6
Social Sciences High School	3
Multiprogram High School	1
No Answer	9

As can be seen in Table 3.4, the largest portion of the students were graduates of Anatolian High Schools (n=122). This is followed by a range of high schools focusing on special training such as Teacher Training and Military High Schools (n=32). 27 of the students were graduates of Science High Schools. Similarly, 26 of the students came from Anatolian Vocational High Schools and six students indicated that they attended Anatolian Theological High School. Three students came from Social Sciences High School while one student was a graduate of a Multiprogram High School. A small number of students (n=9) did not provide any information for this part of the questionnaire.

3.3. Data Collection

The data were collected during class hours in the last quarter of 2017 spring semester. The teachers who were teaching in the classrooms where the data were to be collected were briefed about the intent and procedures of the research prior to the start of their classes. Two major data collection tools were utilized in the study; namely the Listening Comprehension

Problems Self-Report and the Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire. Initially, the students were given a consent form that explained the purpose of the study, the procedures, assurance that they had the option not to participate and asked for their voluntary consent. The participants who opted-in participating in the study first filled out the Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report. Then, they were given the Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire to fill out. The participants took 15 to 20 minutes to complete both tools in the same lesson. The researcher was present in the classroom during the data collection process at all times in order to respond to any questions that might come from the students. The classes where the data were collected were chosen on convenience sampling method, and the researcher's classes were excluded from the research. The data collection instruments will be discussed in detail below.

3.3.1. Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report

The Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report yielded qualitative data to answer the research questions. The self-report can be found in Appendix 1. It has an open-ended essay format that asks students questions about the problems they experience while carrying out academic listening comprehension activities in English as L2. The self-report was adopted from Gao (2014) and included three aspects regarding the students' listening experiences in English: the specific problems, the reasons for these problems and suggestions to overcome these problems. The following questions were asked to the participants in the self-report:

1. What are the comprehension problems you encounter while doing listening activities in academic settings?
2. What are the reasons to these problems?
3. What might be the solutions for these problems?

With these items, students were expected to reflect upon their listening experiences in English as a foreign language. The students were given the questions in English, but had the option to respond in Turkish. They all wrote their answers in L1 so that they would be better able to express themselves. This was the first data collection task in the study so as to increase the chance to obtain students' feedback free from any external influence. In other words, students were not influenced or restricted with pre-prepared categories to choose from.

3.3.2. Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire

As the other data collection tool, the Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire was used. A copy of the Questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2. The questionnaire was in English, and this original version was thought to be linguistically hard for the participants hence was translated and backtranslated into Turkish. Adopted from Gao (2014), the questionnaire consists of three sections. Section I gathers personal information of the participants. This part is slightly changed in order to accommodate the needs of extra information sections such as specific types of high schools in Turkish educational system. The items cover information on sex, age, CEFR level, the age the students started learning English, department to be studied after the completion of the English Preparatory Program, and previous educational background. Section II asks the participants about their views and opinions regarding the listening skill and specifically, listening in English as their L2. The students were asked to rate the difficulty of four statements regarding listening in various phases of English courses. Statements had to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 refers to *not important at all,* or *very easy*, and 5 means *very important,* or *very hard*. The first item in this section inquired the opinions of students regarding listening comprehension for different purposes across varied situations. The second item was about difficulties the participants had in listening to English. The third item asked the students to rank the four linguistic skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in the order of difficulty, from easiest to the hardest. The fourth, and the last, item asked students to rank certain problem areas in L2 English listening comprehension from the least problematic to the most.

In Section III, the participants are asked to indicate the frequency with which they face the given nine listening problems on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 refers to *never* and 5 means *always*. In addition, for each problem given in the questionnaire, there are also reasons provided from which participants chose the ones that are valid for themselves. There is also the 'Other' option for the students who have other reasons than the ones listed in the questionnaire.

The original questionnaire's Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is reported to be 0.776 by Gao (2014). Cronbach's Alfa coefficient of the Turkish version of the Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire is found to be 0.884 in this study. Thus, the questionnaire is regarded to be a reliable measuring tool for the study.

3.4. Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was conducted to explore the students' perceptions towards the listening skill as a whole as well as the type of problems they encounter regarding listening comprehension, possible reasons for these problems and their own suggestions to minimize these problems. More than 250 surveys and questionnaires were distributed to students, and the incomplete ones were excluded from the data analysis process. Thus, a total of 227 students' responses were analyzed in the study. In the data analysis process, the surveys were numbered and the data entered into a word processor software. The data were then analyzed for emerging patterns and themes. The major coding and categorization was based on listening comprehension problems, reasons and solutions. The minor and more specific sub-themes were grouped into larger categories. This process continued until all of the data were processed. Then, a second rater, who was also an ELT instructor, assisted in the process of organizing the documents, clarifying ambigious statements of the students as well as coding and categorizing the responses. The themes and data distributions in the researcher's and second rater's analyses were then compared with each other and inter-rater reliability was found to be over 90%. The inconsistencies were solved through discussion to reach a consensus.

The data obtained from the questionnaire were used in order to uncover the students' perceptions of listening, problems regarding listening comprehension, and possible reasons for the given listening problems. Data drawn from Section I provided information regarding participants' personal and educational background. The data that came from Section II informed the research in terms of students' perceptions of and attitudes towards the listening skill in EFL across CEFR levels. Section III provided data about students' opinion about nine specific listening problems, their frequency in the context of academic listening as well as their reasons. The data were entered into a spreadsheet file using a software. The data were then analysed and categorized by the researcher, who was assisted by a second rater. The second rater, who was also an ELT instructor, assisted in double-checking the numbers and the overall data for accuracy. The data were then converted to tables. After this process, the items in the tables were analyzed for their frequency counts and percentage calculations.

The qualitative data and the quantitative data were constantly compared for the overlapping problem areas. The problem areas stated in the questionnaire were matched with

corresponding ones in the survey and evaluated together side by side in the data analysis process. By nature, the qualitative data included a broader range of problem areas in L2 listening compared to the limited problem areas represented in the survey.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study aimed to investigate EFL learners' problems regarding listening comprehension in an academic setting. The scope of the study also extends to the possible reasons of the problems reported by the students themselves as well as their suggestions to tackle these problems. The results of the questionnaire Section II and Section III and the survey address the relevant research questions of the study and will be presented in this chapter, based on the research questions.

4.1. Students' Attitudes Towards L2 Listening

Students were asked about their perceptions of and attitudes towards the listening skill in L2 English via the Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire. They were asked to answer four types of questions considering their experiences in listening in English.

The first item included five statements and explored the importance that the participants attached to the listening skill. Almost all of the students (97.8%) indicated that listening to English is quite important or very important for their university study. Similarly, a great majority of the students (97%) said that listening to English is quite important or very important for their future needs. 93% of the students stated that in the process of listening, pronunciation is quite important or very important for them. Correlatively, the vast majority of the students (93.8%) thought that listening vocabulary is quite important or very important for them in the process of listening. 79% of the students reported that in the process of listening, the skill of translating from English into Turkish is quite important or very important to them. Overall, as can be seen in Table 4.1, the students think that listening in L2 as well as its related components, are important.

Table 4.1. Importance of Listening to English for Students

	Statements	Not important at all		Of little importance		Neither important not unimportant		Quite important		Very important	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	For my university study, listening to English is…	0	0	0	0	5	2.2	91	41	129	56.8
2	For my future needs, listening to English is …	0	0	2	0.8	5	2.2	79	35	140	62
3	In the process of listening, pronunciation is . . .	0	0	0	0	15	7	111	49	99	44
4	In the process of listening, vocabulary is…	1	0.4	2	0.8	11	5	95	42	117	51.8
5	In the process of listening, the skill of translating from English into Turkish is...	3	1	9	4	35	16	86	38	94	41

The second group of items included difficulties in L2 listening. Results show that only about one third of the students (31%) indicated that they found it hard or very hard to listen to English during the course, while half of the students found that it is neither easy nor hard. More than half of the students (56%) indicated that they found it easy or very easy to understand their teacher's spoken English, while one third of the students (34%) thought that it was neither easy nor hard to understand the teacher's spoken English. A big number of the students (68%) responded that they found it easy or very easy to understand their peers' spoken English, while %22 indicated that it was neither easy nor hard. With this information at hand, it is possible to say that students feel quite at ease when listening to their peers and understanding them. As for the last statement, about one third of the students (30%) indicated that they found pronunciation hard or very hard. Close to half of the students (42%) reported that they found pronunciation neither easy nor hard while close to a third of them (28%) said that they found pronunciation easy or very easy. (see Table 4.2.).

Table 4.2. Difficulties in Listening to English in the Courses

	Statements	Very easy		Easy		Neither easy nor hard		Hard		Very hard	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	In my opinion, listening to English is…	9	4	32	15	113	50	65	28	8	3
2	I think my teacher' s spoken English is … to understand.	36	16	90	40	77	34	21	9	3	1
3	I think my peers' spoken English is … to understand.	54	23	102	45	50	22	15	7	6	3
4	For me, understanding pronunciation is …	10	5	54	23	95	42	62	28	5	2

In the next item, students were asked to rank the L2 skills from hardest to easiest. In the students' rankings, the listening skill was placed as second hardest. As can be viewed in Table 4.3, about half of the students categorized reading skill as the easiest language skill for them, followed by writing, listening and speaking. More than one third of the participants (37%) think that speaking is the hardest language skill for them. Listening skill is the second hardest skill as reported by 27% of the participants.

Table 4.3. Ranking of Skills in Terms of Difficulty

Language Skill	hardest to easiest	
	n	%
Speaking	83	37
Listening	62	27
Writing	50	22
Reading	13	6

In the last item of the self-report Section II, the students were asked to rate the difficult areas for them while listening to English. More than a quarter of the students (26%) reported that vocabulary posed great difficulty for them during listening. This is followed by pronunciation (19%) and memory (19%). Slightly more than a fifth of students (17%) indicated that grammar is an area of difficulty in listening while few students (5%) reported background knowledge to be an area that poses difficulty while listening (see Table 4.4.).

Table 4.4. Ranking of Listening Areas in Terms of Difficulty

Listening areas (hardest to easiest)		n	%
1	Vocabulary	58	26
2	Memory	44	19
3	Pronunciation	43	19
4	Grammar	38	17
5	Background knowledge	12	5

4.2. Qualitative Results on Academic Listening Problems

This section will provide results about research questions 2a and 2b, namely 'What are the major academic listening problems as reported by EFL preparatory school students?' and 'Are there similarities and/or differences among students at different proficiency levels regarding the types of academic listening problems?' Through the analysis of students' feedback regarding the open-ended questions on problems they encounter while carrying out academic listening activities, the following eight categories of problems were formed by the researcher. In the order of their frequency of mentioning, these problem areas are related with: processing, phonetics, affect, vocabulary, study habits, grammar, materials and the environment.

4.2.1. Processing Problems

There is a range of processing-related problems that make it difficult for the listeners to comprehend the listening text. As displayed in Table 4.5, 192 comments were made about processing related problems, which was the highest among all categories. Five main problem areas seem to surface in relation to processing. Students report that they cannot understand the overall meaning, they miss the details while focusing on the gist, or vice versa, cannot filter words and do parsing while listening, cannot follow the listening text and cannot retain overall meaning after listening. More than a third of all students (35.23%) indicate that they have difficulties understanding the overall meaning of the listening text. This is followed by missing the details of the text while focusing on the gist, or missing the gist while focusing on the details of the text (26.87%). The third problem reported by the students is difficulty in filtering individual target words and parsing (11.45%). Students indicated that they feel like the speakers 'swallow' certain words, or they cannot fully comprehend the input due to the voice changes in connected speech. They also reported that it can also be hard to hear individual words even when they are familiar with them. Another item in this category is the inability to follow the listening text (9.25%) This specific problem, as reported by the students, involves not being able to form relationship between information in the listening text and losing the track of text while listening. The last processing problem is the inability to retain overall meaning after listening (1.76%). An A level student indicated the problem as, "*I*

miss out the incoming words while I am thinking about the meaning of the word I don't know."

When comparisons are made across language proficiency levels, close to half of the B level students (40.44%) reported that they have difficulty understanding the overall meaning of a given L2 listening text. A level students followed them (37.49%) for the same problem. The percentage of the C level students is half as lower (19.04%). The percentages for the problem of missing details while focusing on the gist or vice versa among levels are observed to be similar even though there seems to be an increase in the percentage from the lowest level (25%) to the highest (30.95%). Inability in filtering words and parsing is a problem for %14.58 of A level students and %11.90 of C level students while B level students have the lowest percentage (7.86%) for this problem. One other problem is difficulty in keeping up with the listening text. A level has the highest percentage for this problem (17.70%), followed by B level students with a much lower frequency (4.49%). C level students did not indicate any difficulty in this area. As for retaining the information after listening, 7.14% of the C level students reported it to be a problem as well as few B level students (1.12%). A level students did not mention this problem.

Table 4.5. Processing Problems

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
Problems	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I can't understand the overall meaning	36	37.49	36	40.44	8	19.04	80	35.23
I miss the details while focusing on the gist / I miss the gist while focusing on the details	24	25.00	24	26.96	13	30.95	61	26.87
I can`t filter words and do parsing	14	14.58	7	7.86	5	11.90	26	11.45
I can't follow the text	17	17.70	4	4.49	0	0	21	9.25
I can`t retain overall meaning after listening	0	0	1	1.12	3	7.14	4	1.76
Total	91	94.79	72	80.89	29	69.04	192	84.58

4.2.2. Phonology Problems

Being mentioned 92 times, phonetics is the second mostly cited problem area of the students in all levels. Two major ideas appear in relation to phonological problems (See Table 4.6.). Close to a third (29.51%) indicated that unfamiliar accents hamper their comprehension in L2 listening. This includes the inability to comprehend the familiar vocabulary because of an

unfamiliar accent. Another vocabulary problem category is the inability to understand vocabulary in aural form. 11.01% of the total number of students reported this as a factor that challenges their L2 listening comprehension. They indicated that this specific problem made it difficult for them to distinguish between words while listening. An A level student indicated the problem as, "*I have trouble comprehending pronunciation of certain speakers.*". As another A level student points out, "*I do not understand anything because the speech is very fast and accented.*"

When language proficiency levels are compared, unfamiliarity with accents was reported as a problem by one-third of B level (35.95%) and C level (30.95%) students while slightly less than a quarter of A level students (22.91%) reported this problem. Inability to understand vocabulary in aural form seemed to be a problem for 14.60% of B level students, followed by C level students (9.52%) and A level students (8.33%).

Table 4.6. Phonology Related Problems

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
Problems	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I can't understand unfamiliar accents	22	22.91	32	35.95	13	30.95	67	29.51
I can't understand spoken vocabulary	8	8.33	13	14.60	4	9.52	25	11.01
Total	30	31.25	45	50.56	17	40.47	92	40.52

4.2.3. Affective Problems

Reported 45 times by learners, affective problems constitute the third largest problem category. Concentration problems are observed to be the most prominent in this category; 15.85% of the total number of students indicated difficulties in concentration while listening. Stress is another apparent factor for the students (3.96%) (See Table 4.7.) A B level student indicates the problem as, "*I get extremely excited during exams and important situations.*". As another B level students says, "*I get bored while I am listening.*"

According to the Affective Problems table, about a fifth of B level students (19.10%) reported that they had concentration problems while listening. This is followed by A level (14.58%) and C level students (11.90%). Students indicated that exam anxiety, as well as other factors, are among these problems. Similarly, B level students indicated the highest percentage for the

stress factor (6.74%) while only a few C level students (2.38%) and A level students (2.08%) reported stress as a factor that affects their comprehension negatively. Students typically reported that their stress level increased when there were too many unknown words.

Table 4.7. Affective Problems

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
Problems	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I can't concentrate while listening	14	14.58	17	19.10	5	11.90	36	15.85
I feel stressed while listening	2	2.08	6	6.74	1	2.38	9	3.96
Total	16	16.66	23	25.84	6	14.28	45	19.82

4.2.4. Vocabulary Problems

L2 Listening problems related to vocabulary knowledge were mentioned 31 times and form the fourth largest category by the participating students. About one-sixth of the total number of students (13.65%) indicate that limited vocabulary knowledge, or the lack thereof, constitutes difficulties in L2 listening in an academic setting (See table 4.8.). Some relevant problems can be listed as inadequate vocabulary knowledge, not understanding unfamiliar words from context, and lack of technical vocabulary knowledge about a given topic. An A level student expressed the problem as, "*I specifically have trouble understanding listening texts about unfamiliar topics because I don't know much vocabulary about them.*" Another student from B level indicated the problem as, "*I think the problem is that I don't know much vocabulary, and that leads to difficulties when I don't understand the text and start to misinterpret the message.*"

When compared across the CEFR levels, there appears to be an increase in the percentage of vocabulary problems as the level goes up. While only 6.32% of the A level students indicated this problem, B level students (12.35%) and C level students (16.66%) indicated this problem as a more major problem. It is striking that the students in the most advanced level of the English program indicated inadequate vocabulary knowledge as a bigger problem than the lower levels.

Table 4.8. Vocabulary Problems

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
Problems	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I don't understand the words while I listen.	13	6.32	11	12.35	7	16.66	31	13.65

4.2.5. Study Habits Problems

This category is related with study habits and study background as a factor that poses difficulty in L2 listening. Student reports indicated that this theme was mentioned by only 10 students and hence was not seen as a major problem. Only 3.08% of the total number of the students indicated that having limited note taking skills was a problem in L2 listening. Other factors such as lack of listening practice, unfamiliarity with academic listening activities in English and insufficient amount of study constituted less than one percent of the total number of students (See Table 4.9). An A level student indicates the problem as, "*I traditionally have a problem with English. I lack the background for it and can't catch up with it relying on my current study habits.*". As another student from B level put it, "*Maybe the problem is me. I don't know how to study listening.*"

When proficiency levels are compared, it is striking that more advanced C level students constitute the highest percentage for indicating limited note-taking skills as a problem. They were followed by B level students (2.24%) and A level students (1.04%) to lower extent. Insufficient listening practice was mentioned by only one B level student. The last two problems (i.e. unfamiliarity with academic listening activities and not studying enough in general) were reported by one student each, both in A level.

Table 4.9. Study Habits Related Problems

Problems	A Level n=96		B Level n=89		C Level n=42		Total n=227	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I cannot effectively take-notes while listening	1	1.04	2	2.24	4	9.52	7	3.08
I have insufficient listening practice	0	0	1	1.12	0	0	1	0.44
I am not familiar with academic listening activities in English	1	1.04	0	0	0	0	1	0.44
I do not study enough in general	1	1.04	0	0	0	0	1	0.44
Total	3	3.12	3	3.37	4	9.52	10	4.40

4.2.6. Grammar Problems

As the sixth category, being reported by only eight students, grammar related problems in L2 listening appear to be less of a concern among students in all levels. Only 3.52% of students indicated that inadequate grammar knowledge created difficulties while listening in English. A student from B level indicated the problem as, "*The main reason is that we lack grammar and vocabulary knowledge. We might misinterpret the text when the speaker uses an unknown grammatical structure.*". As another student from A level puts it, "*I don't understand which tenses are used in the listening.*"

When looked across CEFR levels, 2.08% of A level students, 5.6%1 of B level students and 2.38% of C level students reported inadequate grammar knowledge in English, as a problem in L2 English (See Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Grammar Related Problems

Problems	A Level n=96		B Level n=89		C Level n=42		Total n=227	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I can't understand the grammar in L2 listening texts	2	2.08	5	5.61	1	2.38	8	3.52

4.2.7. Material-Related Problems

Eight students mentioned problems that were categorized as material-related problems. These problems include the challenges regarding topics and length of the listening texts as perceived and reported by the students, all in low frequencies, indicating that they are minor problems.

Only 2.20% of the total number of students indicated that unfamiliar topics made it difficult to understand a given L2 listening text. 0.88% of the students reported that the topics were not interesting, thus posed a kind of challenge towards L2 listening comprehension. 0.44% of the students indicated that the listening texts were long and this made the listening activity challenging. A C level student indicated the problem as, "*I have trouble understanding the recorded listening materials while I can understand my classmates and friends relatively easier.*"

When levels were compared, 3.12% of the A level students indicated that unfamiliarity with the topics posed difficulty in listening, followed by B level students (2.24%). C level students did not cite this problem. Two A level students (2.08%) reported that they were not interested in the topics in listening texts, while B and C level student did not make a remark about this problem. Only one A level student indicated that the listening texts are long, that constituted difficulty in their comprehension of the listening text (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11. Material Related Problems

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
Problems	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I am not familiar with topics	3	3.12	2	2.24	0	0	5	2.20
I am not interested in the topics	2	2.08	0	0	0	0	2	0.88
I find long texts difficult	1	1.04	0	0	0	0	1	0.44
Total	6	6.25	2	2.24	0	0	8	3.52

4.2.8. Environmental Problems

Problems due to factors other than students themselves, texts and knowledge areas such as vocabulary and grammar, are grouped in this category. The percentage and hence the role of environmental problems is reported to be infinitesimal in participants' L2 listening comprehension. About three percent of the students indicated that they experienced problems in L2 listening. One type of problem is related to the sound system as well as acoustic clarity of the listening text. The other problem area is noise which can be any kind of noise coming from in or outside of the classroom (0.88%) (See Table 4.12). As a student from C level puts it, "*The outside disturbing voices and noise coming in the class make it difficult to understand the text.*"

CEFR comparisons showed that more C level students (4.76%) than B level (2.24%) and A level students (1.04%) indicated technical problems as part of the difficulties they experience in L2 listening. Additionally, only few students in B level (2.24%) reported distracting noise as a difficulty in their L2 listening comprehension success. Other levels did not list noise as a problem.

Table 4.12. Environmental Problems

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
Problems	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
The audio is not clear	1	1.04	2	2.24	2	4.76	5	2.20
There is distracting noise in the environment while listening	0	0	2	2.24	0	0	2	0.88
Total	1	1.04	4	4.49	2	4.76	7	3.08

4.3. Quantitative Results on Academic Listening Problems

This section will present the quantitative results regarding listening problems and comparisons between CEFR levels. In addition to the Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report, The Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire was employed to collect data regarding academic listening problems in English. The participants were asked to respond to nine statements regarding L2 listening comprehension problems taking their experience in the English Preparatory Program into account. Detailed results of each statement will be provided in the following pages.

4.3.1. Statement 1: *"When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in breaking the stream of speech into separate chunks and words."*

About half of all the participants (48.01%) indicated that they sometimes experience this problem, while more than one third (31.27%) reported that they often came across the stated problem in L2 listening (Figure 4.1). Thus, it can be regarded as a frequently encountered important problem in L2 listening.

Figure 4.6. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 1 for All Students

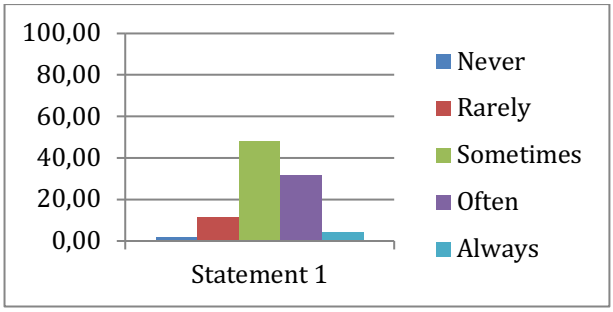


Table 4.13. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 1 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	3	1.32	26	11.45	109	48.01	71	31.27	9	3.96
Level A	1	1.04	26	27.08	51	53.25	22	22.91	5	5.20
Level B	2	2.24	9	10.11	38	35.95	35	39.32	3	3.37
Level C	0	0	4	9.52	20	47.61	14	33.33	1	2.38

When CEFR levels are considered, 51 A level students (53.25%) 38 B level students (35.95%) and 20 C level students (47.61%) sometimes experience difficulty in breaking down the stream of speech into smaller units. 35 B level students (39.32%) and 14 C level students (33.33%) indicated that they *often* experience this problem. 26 A level students reported that they rarely come across this problem (27.08%). In other words, level B and C students experienced this problem more often than A students (see Table 4.13).

4.3.2. Statement 2: "*When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in identifying which words the speaker emphasizes.*"

Among all participants, 110 participants (48.45%) are of the opinion that they sometimes have problems with identifying the emphasized words in speech, while 47 participants (20.70%) indicated that they often encounter the stated problem (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.7. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 2 for All Students

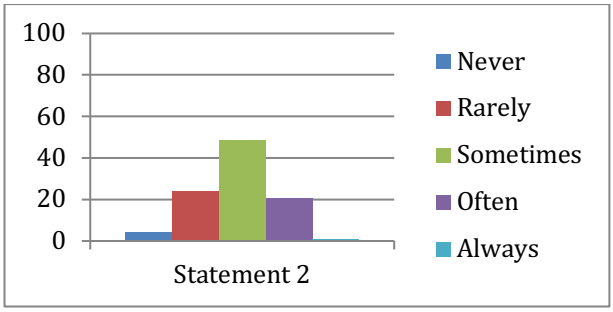


Table 4.14. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 2 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	9	3.96	54	23.78	110	48.45	47	20.70	2	0.88
Level A	2	2.08	25	26.04	43	44.79	22	22.91	1	1.04
Level B	4	4.49	19	21.34	50	56.17	15	16.85	1	1.12
Level C	3	7.14	10	23.80	17	40.47	10	23.80	0	0

When it comes to CEFR level comparisons, 25 A level students (26.04%) indicated to "rarely" have difficulty in identifying the stressed words in speech. Close to half of the same level students (44.79%) reported to sometimes have this problem while 56.17% of B level students and 40.47% of C level students indicated that they sometimes suffer from this problem. About one fifth of A level students (22.91%), 16.85% of B level students and 23.80% of C level students are of the opinion that they often come across this problem. About more than one fifth of A level students (26.04%) said that they rarely experience this specific problem. As for B level students, slightly more than one-fifth (21.34%) reported to rarely experience this problem while in the C level, 10 students (23.80%) reported to rarely experience the problem. Overall, it can be observed that A level and C level students experience this listening comprehension problem more frequently than B level students (see Table 4.14).

4.3.3. Statement 3: "*When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in holding a chunk of speech or meaning in my memory.*"

In total, 100 students (44.05%) reported that they sometimes come across memory retention problems in L2 English listening. 62 participants (27.31%) indicated that they often come across this problem and 12 participants (5.28%) reported to always experience the stated

problem. Overall, this problem is frequently experienced by around one third of the students (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.8. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 3 for All Students

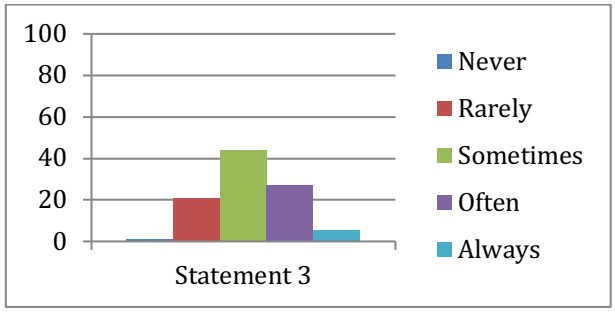


Table 4.15. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 3 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	2	0.88	47	20.70	100	44.05	62	27.31	12	5.28
Level A	0	0	20	20.83	46	47.91	24	25.00	3	3.12
Level B	2	2.24	19	21.34	37	41.57	34	38.20	7	7.86
Level C	0	0	8	19.04	17	40.47	14	33.33	2	4.76

When levels are compared, it can be seen that most of the A, B and C level students indicated to sometimes have memory retrieval problems in similar percentages. 24 A level students (25.00%) reported to often experience this problem. When B level students are considered, 38.20% of them indicated to often face this difficulty in L2 listening. 33.33% of C level students indicated to often experience the stated problem in L2 listening comprehension. In addition, 7 of B level students (7.86%) always were influenced by this problem. It is important to highlight that B level students indicated to experience this problem more frequently compared to A and C level students (see Table 4.15).

4.3.4. Statement 4: "*When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in catching the ends of words (-s, -ed etc).*"

About half of all participants (45.37%) indicated that they sometimes experience this problem while 41 students (18.06%) often encountered it. Only a small number of students (5.28%) reported that they always experience the stated problem. Thus, we can say that overall, this problem is either *often* or *always* experienced by around one fifth of the students (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.9. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 4 for All Students

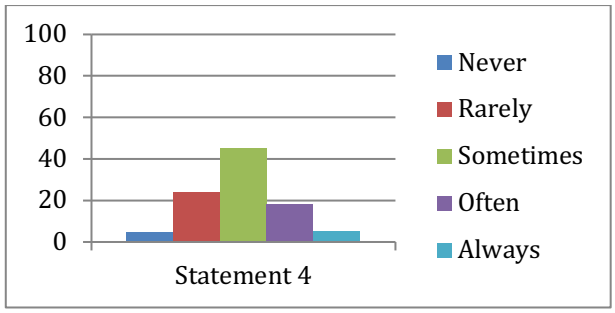


Table 4.16. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 4 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	10	4.40	54	23.78	103	45.37	41	18.06	12	5.28
Level A	4	4.16	19	19.79	47	48.95	18	18.75	2	2.08
Level B	4	4.49	24	26.96	37	41.57	18	20.22	6	6.74
Level C	2	4.76	11	26.19	19	45.23	5	11.90	4	9.52

When all CEFR levels are considered, almost 20% of A level students indicated that they *rarely* encounter this problem in L2 listening. The number of B level students who reported to rarely experience this problem is 24 (26.96%) while above one fourth of the C level students (26.19%) reported that they rarely experience this problem. Close to half of A level students (48.95%) reported to sometimes experience the stated problem. Similarly, over a quarter of the B level students (41,57%) indicated that they sometimes experience this problem and the number of C level students who say that they sometimes come across this problem while listening is 45.23%. About 18 A level students (18.75%) reported to often have this problem while listening. Equally, slightly over one fifth (20.22%) of B level students said that they often have this problem in L2 listening. Unlike A and B level students, the percentage of C level students who reported to often have this problem remained around one-tenth (11.90%), yet the number for always increased to about 10% (see Table 4.16).

4.3.5. Statement 5: "*When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in recognising words, even though I know them in written form.*"

Among all of the participants in total, 85 participants, (37.44%) reported to rarely have this problem in L2 listening, while 80 participants (35.24%) indicated that they sometimes experience this problem. 27 participants (11.89%) said that they often experience this specific

problem. According to the data provided by the students, this item is not a strong problem in listening comprehension for them; since students' answers mostly lied in the never, rarely and sometimes side of the Likert scale (Figure 5.5).

Figure 4.10. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 5 for All Students

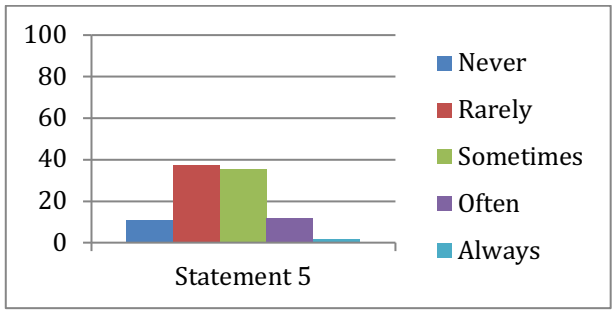


Table 4.17. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 5 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	24	10.57	85	37.44	80	35.24	27	11.89	4	1.76
Level A	8	8.33	34	35.41	35	36.45	14	14.58	1	1.04
Level B	10	11.23	33	37.07	32	35.95	10	11.23	3	3.37
Level C	6	14.28	18	42.85	13	30.95	3	7.14	0	0

When CEFR levels are compared altogether, it can be seen that 34 (35.41%) A level students indicated that they rarely have problems in recognizing words when they hear them. When it comes to B level students, 37.07% of them indicate to rarely have this problem in L2 listening while close to half of C level students (42.85%) reported that they rarely encounter this problem in L2 listening. This problem is sometimes experienced by 36.45% of A level students, 35.95% of B level students and 30.95% of the C level students. reported that they sometimes experience this problem. The number of A level students who often experience this problem was reported as 14.58%. Less than one-fifth of B level students (11.23%) said that they often experience this problem in L2 listening comprehension. A small amount of C level students (7.14%) reported that they often have this problem. Among the three proficiency groups, C level students seemed to be the least concerned with this issue, since a very small percentage reported to frequently experience the problem (see Table 4.17).

4.3.6. Statement 6: "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in recognising phrases (e.g. *catch up with*)."

When all the levels are considered, 40.96% of all students said that they sometimes come across this problem. One-fourth (24.66%) of the students indicated that they often encounter this problem while listening and close to 6% indicated that they always experience difficulty in recognising phrases in L2 listening. Overall, about one third of the students either often or always experience this problem in all levels (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 6 for All Students

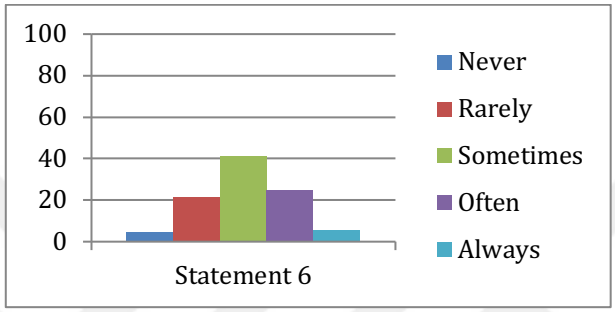


Table 4.18: Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 6 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	10	4.40	49	21.58	93	40.96	56	24.66	13	5.72
Level A	3	3.12	34	35.41	39	40.62	27	28.12	6	6.25
Level B	4	4.49	14	15.73	39	43.82	26	29.21	5	5.61
Level C	3	7.14	18	42.85	15	35.17	3	7.14	2	4.76

When we look at the CEFR levels separately, 35.41% of A level students indicated that they rarely have this problem while listening. Only 15.73% of B level students reported to rarely encounter the problem in the statement. When we look at the C level students, 42.85% of them reported that they rarely experience the stated problem. Close to half of A level (40.62%) and 43.82% of B level students said that they sometimes came across the stated problem while 35.17% of C level students indicated that they sometimes come across the problem in L2 listening. This problem is more frequently experienced by A level students (28.12%) and B level students (29.21%) than C level students (7.14%). In this respect, C level students seem to experience this problem much less than the other levels (see Table 4.18).

4.3.7. Statement 7: "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in identifying the sounds of the words correctly."

Half of the students (50.22%) reported that they sometimes encounter this specific problem. Slightly less than one-fifth of the students (18.94%) said that they often experience this problem while listening (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 7 for All Students

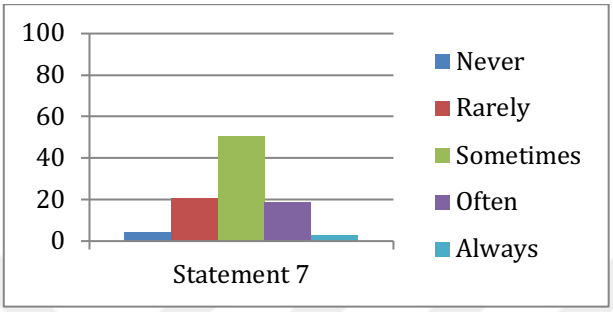


Table 4.19: Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 7 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	9	3.96	47	20.70	114	50.22	43	18.94	6	2.64
Level A	4	4.16	16	16.66	46	47.91	25	26.04	1	1.04
Level B	4	4.49	18	20.22	50	56.17	11	12.35	4	4.49
Level C	1	2.38	13	30.95	18	42.85	7	16.66	1	2.38

When different CEFR levels are separately considered, it can be seen that almost half of A level (47.91%) and more than half of B level students (56.17%) reported that they sometimes experience this problem while less than half of C level students (42.85%) responded in this direction. This problem is often experienced by 26.04% of the A level, 12.35% of B level and 16.66% of the C level students. Less than one-fifth of the A level students (16.66%) said that they rarely came across the stated problem. Around one-fifth (20.22%) of the B level students reported that they rarely experienced this difficulty while listening. 30.95% of the C level students said that they rarely have this problem. The problem is reported around similar percentages for sometimes; however, A level students experience this problem more often (26.04%) while fewer B level (12.35%) and C level students (16.66%) reported this as often (see Table 4.19).

4.3.8. Statement 8: "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in catching the next bit of speech, because I'm still concentrating on what was just said."

This problem was observed to be a frequently faced one as reported by students across all levels since 58.14% of all the students either often or always experience this problem (Figure 4.8). 40.08% of all the participants in three CEFR levels combined indicated that they often experience this problem while listening. 27.31% of all the students reported that they sometimes have the stated difficulty. Close to one-fifth (18.06%) of the students said that they always experience this problem in L2 listening comprehension. When all levels are considered separately and individually, about half of the students in all levels often or always experience this problem in listening, and this item can be considered as a strong problem area in L2 listening.

Figure 4.8. **Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 8 for All Students**

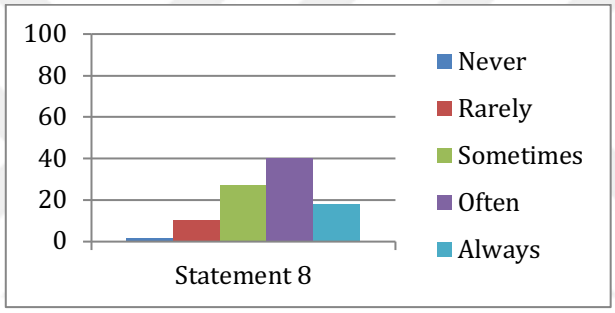


Table 4.20. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 8 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	4	1.76	23	10.13	62	27.31	91	40.08	41	18.06
Level A	2	2.08	7	7.29	26	27.08	38	39.58	19	19.79
Level B	1	1.12	8	8.98	29	32.58	34	38.20	17	19.10
Level C	1	2.38	8	19.04	7	16.66	19	45.23	5	11.90

Looking at the CEFR levels comparison chart, it can be seen that 39.58% of A level, 38.20% of B level students indicated that they often have this problem. C level students also indicated this problem as a frequent one. More than half of the C level students (45.23%) reported that they *often* have this problem in L2 listening. This problem was sometimes experienced by 27.08% of A level students, 32.58% of B level students and 16.66% of C level students. Almost one-fifth (19.79%) of A level students and 19.10% of B level students said that they always experienced this problem while 11.90% of C level students indicated this as a problem

they always experienced in L2 listening. Here, distribution of choices/answers of C level students is different from A and B level students. They gave milder answers compared with A and B levels (see Table 4.20).

4.3.9. Statement 9: "*When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in making sense of the grammar.*"

This problem is found to be the least frequently experienced one among the total number of students. 30.83% of the students reported that they *rarely* experience this difficulty. 41.85% students indicated to sometimes come across the stated problem. 16.29% of the students often experience this problem. All in all, about one fifth of the students in all levels either often or always experience this problem (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9. **Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 9 for All Students**

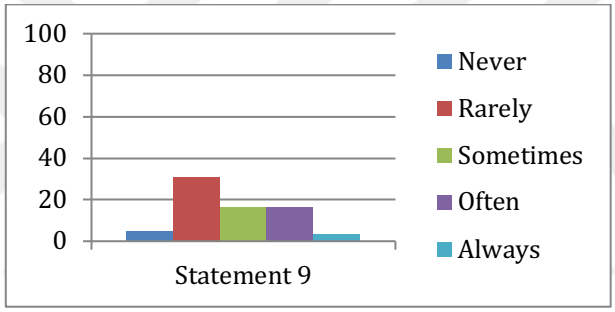


Table 4.21. Percentage Frequency Distribution for Problem Statement 9 Across Three Proficiency Levels

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	11	4.84	70	30.83	95	41.85	37	16.29	7	3.08
Level A	4	4.16	30	31.25	40	41.66	13	13.54	4	4.16
Level B	5	5.61	26	29.21	38	42.69	18	20.22	2	2.24
Level C	2	4.76	14	33.33	17	40.47	6	14.28	1	2.38

When CEFR levels are separately and comparatively considered, close to half of the A, B and C level students indicated that they sometimes experience this problem, i.e. 41.66%, 42.69% and 40.47%, respectively. 31.25% of the A level, 29.21% of B level and 33.33% of C level students reported that they "rarely" have this problem in L2 listening. This problem is often experienced by 13.54% of A level students, 20.22% of B level and 14.28% of C level students. It can be observed that the answers are quite similar across all levels (see Table 4.21).

4.4. Qualitative Results on Reasons of Listening Problems

This section will present the qualitative data regarding the reasons of listening problems and comparisons between CEFR levels. To gather qualitative data on the reasons for their listening comprehension problems, the second question of Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report was used. Results regarding the self-report section will be presented in the following pages.

4.4.1. Study Habit Reasons

This category of reasons is among highly rated. About a quarter of the total number of students (23.78%) reported that they did inadequate amount of individual and in-class L2 listening comprehension activities leading to comprehension difficulties. This reason was followed by the lack of familiarity with listening activities in L2 (7.92%). Similarly, 6.16% of the students indicated that they did not know how to study listening. A small number of students (3.96%) pointed to the lack of study in general as a reason for their listening comprehension problems.

When a comparison is made across the CEFR levels, B level students reported the highest percentage (28.08%) for the lack of individual and in-class listening practice as a reason. This is followed by C level (23.78%) and A level students (19.79%). A striking percentage of C level students (23.80%) reported the lack of familiarity with L2 listening activities as a reason for their listening comprehension problems. The percentages of the other two levels for this reason remained much lower; 7.86% for B level and 1.04% for A level. A level students reported the lack of knowledge as to how to study listening (9.37%) as another reason, which is a greater percentage than B (3.37%) and C (4.76%) levels combined. Also, A level students reported that they do not study in general (6.25%) more so than B (3.37%) and C (0%) levels (see Table 4.22).

Table 4.22. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Students' Study Habits

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I lack individual and in-class listening practice	19	19.79	25	28.08	10	23.80	54	23.78
I'm not familiar with English listening activities	1	1.04	7	7.86	10	23.80	18	7.92
I don't know how to study listening	9	9.37	3	3.37	2	4.76	14	6.16
I don't study enough	6	6.25	3	3.37	0	0	9	3.96
Total	35	36.45	38	42.69	22	52.38	95	41.85

4.4.2. Processing Reasons

Processing reasons range from understanding individual words to keep track of the listening text and understanding overall mening of the text. 15.85% of the students indicated that they had comprehension problems, because they were not able to catch up with the text while listening. They also reported reasons due to not parsing the utterance because of speed and voice changes in connected speech (6.16%). 5.28% of the students said that they find it hard to reach an overall understanding of a given listening text because they need to listen to it multiple times (See table 4.23).

When we look at the results across CEFR levels, B level students (22.47%) reported the highest percentage for not catching up with the text as a reason for the listening problems. This level was followed by A level (12.49%) and C level (9.52%). Strikingly, about one fifth of C level students (16.66%) mentioned difficulties related to speed and voice changes while percentage of A level (5.20%) and B level (3.37%) students remained much lower. Similarly, C level students reported that they need to listen to texts multiple times more often (9.52%) than A (5.20%) and B level students (3.37%).

Table 4.23: Reasons for Listening Problems Related to Processing the Aural Input

Reasons	n=96 A Level f	%	n=89 B Level f	%	n=42 C Level f	%	n=227 Total f	%
I can't catch up with the text. a. I miss details or the gist b. I miss the final parts, or c. the incoming utterances while trying to comprehend the previous ones	12	12.49	20	22.47	4	9.52	36	15.85
I can't do parsing because of speed and voice changes.	5	5.20	2	2.24	7	16.66	14	6.16
I need to listen multiple times in order to understand the text.	5	5.20	3	3.37	4	9.52	12	5.28
Total	22	22.91	25	28.08	15	35.71	62	27.31

4.4.3. Phonological Reasons

Phonetics is among the categories that were reported highly by the students as reason for the L2 listening comprehension problems. The highest rated reason reported is unfamiliarity with different accents. 19.82% of the total number of students indicated that the presence of various accents constituted difficulty in L2 listening comprehension for them. Similarly, limited pronunciation knowledge is reported to be a reason for the listening comprehension problems (6.60%).

When it comes to similarities and differences across CEFR levels, A level students (23.95%) reported accent variety as a more important factor than C (21.42%) and B (14.60%) level students. Lack of knowledge about pronunciation was indicated as a reason by mostly C (9.52%) and B level students (8.98%) while the percentage of A level students remained relatively low (3.12%) (see Table 4.24).

Table 4.24 Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Phonetics

Reasons	n=96 A Level f	%	n=89 B Level f	%	n=42 C Level f	%	n=227 Total f	%
I can't understand text because of accent unfamiliarity	23	23.95	13	14.60	9	21.42	45	19.82
I lack pronunciation knowledge of words	3	3.12	8	8.98	4	9.52	15	6.60
Total	26	27.08	21	23.59	13	30.95	60	26.43

4.4.4. Vocabulary Reasons

Almost a quarter of the total number of students (25.55%) reported that inadequate vocabulary knowledge is one of the leading reasons behind their difficulties in academic L2 listening comprehension. Their answers included lack of general vocabulary knowledge, technical vocabulary knowledge and spoken vocabulary knowledge.

A high degree of similarity in the percentages of the students across proficiency levels is observed; close to one third of B level students (28.08%), a quarter of C level students (26.19%) and about a quarter of A level students (22.91%) reported the lack of vocabulary knowledge among the reasons of listening problems. (See Table 4.25).

Table 4.25. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Vocabulary

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I don't have adequate vocabulary knowledge	22	22.91	25	28.08	11	26.19	58	25.55

4.4.5. Affective Reasons

Affective factors were listed among the reasons for L2 listening comprehension problems. 17.61% of the total number of students indicated that lack of focus due to exam anxiety, too many unfamiliar words or boredom is the leading reason for the difficulties in L2 listening. 1.32% of the students indicated feeling of stress during listening activities carried out in the classroom.

The percentages across CEFR levels range, from highest to lowest, B level (20.22%), C level (19.04%) and A level students (14.58%) in terms of losing concentration due to various reasons. Despite having been reported by a small number, B level (2.24%) and A (1.04%) students indicated the feeling of stress during regular listening activities in the classroom (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.26. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding the Affective Domain

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I lose concentration because (exam anxiety, too many unfamiliar words, or boredom)	14	14.58	18	20.22	8	19.04	40	17.61
I feel stressed while listening during class time	1	1.04	2	2.24	0	0	3	1.32
Total	15	15.62	20	22.47	8	19.04	43	18.94

4.4.6. Grammatical Reasons

Only 7.04% of the total number of students reported inadequate grammar knowledge as a reason for the challenges they experienced in L2 listening lessons.

When results are compared across CEFR levels, 8.33% of the A level students reported this problem while B level students (7.86%) and C level students (2.38%) listed this problem in smaller percentages. Hence, although all proficiency levels remained in the one-tenth percentile this reason was mentioned by fewer C level students (see Table 4.27).

Table 4.27: Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Grammar Knowledge

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I don't have adequate grammar knowledge	8	8.33	7	7.86	1	2.38	16	7.04

4.4.7. Environmental Reasons

The students indicated that environmental factors played a part, even small they may be, as a reason for the difficulties they experienced in L2 academic listening. 5.28% of the overall number of the students reported that they were affected negatively by technical problems in the sound system and the lack of acoustic clarity of the listening texts. Less than one percent of students (0.88%) indicated distractors as reasons for listening problems.

When the results are compared across CEFR levels, the highest percentage for reasons related to technical problems was reported by C level students (14.28%), followed by B level

(3.36%) and A level students (3.12%) Distractors in the listening environment is reported by only one student each from A level and B level (see table 4.28).

Table 4.28. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Environmental Factors

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
technical problems related to sound system, recording or volume of the text	3	3.12	3	3.36	6	14.28	12	5.28
there are distractors in the environment	1	1.04	1	1.12	0	0	2	0.88
Total	4	4.16	4	4.49	6	14.28	14	6.16

4.4.8. Text Related Reasons

The percentage of text related reasons given for problems remained relatively low among students. 2.20% of the students indicated that the length of the L2 listening texts affect their comprehension negatively. 2.20% of the total number of the students listed unfamiliar topics among the reasons for difficulties in L2 listening comprehension.

When it comes to comparisons across CEFR levels, 4.76% of C level students reported that the texts are long, and that is among the reasons for their listening problems. C level was followed by B level (2.47%) and A level (1.04%). In terms of their opinions about the listening topics as a reason for listening problems, 3.59% of B level students indicated that the topics were not interesting or familiar, which was followed by C level (2.38%) and A level (1.04%) students (see Table 4.29).

Table 4.29. Reasons for Listening Problems Regarding Texts

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
texts are too long	1	1.04	2	2.47	2	4.76	5	2.2
topics are not interesting or familiar	1	1.04	3	3.59	1	2.38	5	2.2
Total	2	2.08	5	5.61	3	7.14	10	4.40

4.5. Quantitative Results on Reasons of Listening Problems

The results below were obtained through Section III of the Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire. This part of the questionnaire explores the reasons for the given nine problem statements.

The first statement was "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in breaking the stream of speech into separate chunks and words". When looked at the responses of the participants in all levels together, two-thirds of the participants (66.51%) indicated that they do not have large enough listening vocabulary, given as one of the leading reasons for Statement 1. A big percentage of the students (59.91%) reported that they "don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech." as an important reason for this problem. Similarly, about the same number of the students (59.59%) said that they did not have a large enough vocabulary, and this was one of the prominent reasons for the stated listening comprehension problem. Around one third of the students (34.36%) indicated that they did not know the rules of sentence stress in English. As can be seen in the students' responses, vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation play an important role in listening comprehension. This sequence is almost the same within all CEFR levels. It can be observed that the percentage of students who list lack of vocabulary slightly increases as the proficiency level goes up from A level to C level. The percentages for other reasons given to Problem Statement 1 remain more or less the same for all CEFR levels (see Table 4.30).

Table 4.30. Reasons for the Problem Statement 1

Reasons for difficulty in breaking speech into chunks and words	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary	60	62.5	61	68.53	30	71.42	151	66.51
I don't have a large enough vocabulary	58	60.41	50	56.17	25	59.52	133	59.59
I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech.	56	58.33	55	61.79	25	59.52	136	59.91
I don't know the rules of sentence stress in English.	33	34.37	32	35.95	13	30.95	78	34.36
I don't know	12	12.5	9	10.11	2	4.76	23	10.13
Other	7	7.29	11	12.35	2	4.76	20	8.81

Looking at the second statement, **"**When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in identifying which words the speaker emphasizes.", more than half of the students (59.91%) indicated that they were not familiar with different accents of English. Half of the students (51.10%) indicated that they do not know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech. As another significant reason, slightly less than half of the students (48.45%) reported that they did not have a large enough listening vocabulary. One third of the students (33.92%) reported that they did not know the rules of sentence stress in English. Thus, it can be said that listening vocabulary and different accents of English are observed as major reasons for having difficulty distinguishing emphasized words in speech. Although there are not great differences between CEFR levels, the percentages tend to decrease as the levels increase for the prominent reasons (see Table 4.31).

Table 4.31. Reasons for the Problem Statement 2

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for difficulty identifying the words the speaker emphasizes	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am not familiar with different accents of English.	62	64.58	52	58.42	22	52.38	136	59.91
I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech.	53	60.41	43	48.31	20	47.61	116	51.10
I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary.	50	52.08	40	44.94	20	47.61	110	48.45
I don't know the rules of sentence stress in English.	32	33.33	31	34.83	14	33.33	77	33.92
I don't know	13	13.54	12	13.48	5	11.90	30	13.21
Other	6	6.25	4	4.49	2	4.76	12	2.28

As for the third problem statement, **"**When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in holding a chunk of speech or meaning in my memory", around one third of students in all levels indicated that they struggle with retrieving information from the listening text. Half of the students (51.10%) indicated that they could not concentrate when listening to English. Similarly, %49.77 of the students reported that they were not familiar with English phrases. Close to half of the students (42.29%) said that they could not identify where the chunk starts and finishes. Also, more than one-third of the students (39.64%) indicated that they felt nervous when listening to English. A third of the students (37.88%) said that they did not have a good short-term memory for English. About one fifth of the students (22.46%)

reported that they could not distinguish sounds that do not exist in Turkish and similar sounds.

Beside the first reason, for other reasons B level students gave slightly higher percentages. Students in all levels indicate concentration problems as the leading reason for the difficulty holding chunk of speech in memory. B level students appear to suffer from concentration (51.68%), unfamiliarity with English phrases (53.93%), affective factors (42.69%) and reduced retention of information in short term memory (41.57%) and distinguishing sounds unique to English language (28.08) issues more than A and B levels. C level students seem to suffer the least in terms of distinguishing sounds that exist in English but not in Turkish. It is striking that fewer C level students (9.52%) indicate it as a challenging reason for this problem as opposed to A level and B level students (see Table 4.32).

Table 4.32. Reasons for the Problem Statement 3

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for difficulty holding chunk of speech in memory	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I can't concentrate when listening to English.	49	51.04	46	51.68	21	50	116	51.10
I am not familiar with English phrases.	49	51.04	48	53.93	16	38.09	113	49.77
I can't identify where the chunk starts and finishes.	44	45.83	33	37.07	19	45.23	96	42.29
I feel nervous when listening to English.	36	37.5	38	42.69	16	38.09	90	39.64
I don't have a good short-term memory for English.	35	36.45	37	41.57	14	33.33	86	37.88
I can't distinguish between sounds that don't exist in Turkish and similar sounds.	22	22.91	25	28.08	4	9.52	51	22.46
I don't know.	19	19.79	15	16.85	9	21.42	43	18.94
Other	8	8.33	4	4.49	4	9.52	16	7.04

As for the top reasons for the problem statement four: "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in catching the ends of words (-s, -ed etc)", about half of the students (42.73%) indicated that they could not concentrate when listening to English. Similarly, close to half of the students (42.73%) reported that they did not know how the pronunciation of words changed in connected speech. As one of the reasons for this listening problem, around one fourth of the students (24.66%) indicated that they did not know enough grammar. 15.41% of the students reported that they could not identify sounds that were unique to English

language. Pronunciation changes in connected speech seems to affect close to half of the students overall in all levels.

Close to half of the students reported concentration issues as a reason for the listening comprehension problems they indicated. Fewer C level students (33.33%) are observed to evaluate this as a reason as opposed to A level (40.62%) and B level (49.43%) students. Similar difference can be observed about the changes in connected speech. 40.47% of the C level students indicated this as a reason for the problem while about half of the A level students (42.70%) and B level students (46.06%) see the lack of awareness about sound changes in connected speech as a reason for this problem (see Table 4.33).

Table 4.33. Reasons for the Problem Statement 4

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for difficulty in catching ends of the words	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I can't concentrate while listening to English.	39	40.62	44	49.43	14	33.33	97	42.73
I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech.	41	42.70	41	46.06	17	40.47	97	42.73
I don't know enough grammar.	22	22.91	25	28.08	9	21.42	56	24.66
I can't identify the sounds that don't exist in Turkish.	13	13.54	17.97	16	6	14.28	35	15.41

To the fifth statement, "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in recognising words, even though I know them in written form" about half of the students (52.42%) indicated that they were not familiar with different accents of English as a reason. Listening vocabulary is indicated to be a strong reason in all levels. Close to half of them (43.61%) said that they do not have a large enough listening vocabulary. One third of the students (35.24%) reported that they did not know how the words had to be pronounced correctly. As another reason, one third (34.36%) of the students indicated that they did not know how the pronunciation of words changed in connected speech. 9.96% of the students indicated that they could not distinguish between sounds that did not exist in Turkish.

More than half of A (57.29%) and B level students (52.80%) reported to struggle with different accents while listening. C level students (%40.47) are observed to be affected by this reason less than A and B level students. Although there seems to be no dramatic difference in terms of percentages of pronunciation changes in connected speech and knowledge regarding pronunciation, they affect around at least one third of students in all levels. The striking

difference here is that close to half of C level students (42.85%) indicated the lack of knowledge about pronunciation as a reason, which is observed to be a lower percentage in A (33.33%) and B level students (33.70%). C level students are observed to indicate the difficulty in distinguishing the English sounds that do not exist in Turkish as a reason to this problem (%4.76) while this percentage is relatively higher in A (9.37%) and B level students (12.35%). Although in lower percentages, A (9.37%) and B (12.35%) level students reported the inability to distinguish sounds that did not exist in Turkish more often than C level students (4.76%) (see Table 4.34).

Table 4.34. Reasons for the Problem Statement 5

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for the difficulty in recognizing words in oral form	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am not familiar with different accents of English.	55	57.29	47	52.80	17	40.47	119	52.42
I don't have a enough 'listening' vocabulary.	46	47.91	36	40.44	17	40.47	99	43.61
I don't know how the words should be pronounced correctly.	32	33.33	30	33.70	18	42.85	80	35.24
I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech.	36	37.5	29	32.58	13	30.95	78	34.36
I don't know.	11	11.45	11	12.35	7	16.66	29	12.77
I can't distinguish between sounds that don't exist in Turkish and similar sounds.	9	9.37	11	12.35	2	4.76	22	9.69
Other	6	6.25	3	3.97	4	9.52	13	5.72

As reasons for the sixth statement "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in recognising phrases (e.g. *catch up with*)", half of the students (53.74%) are of the opinion that they do not have a large enough vocabulary. Around one third of them (31.27%) indicated that they did not know how the words should be pronounced correctly. Similarly, about one third of the students (29.95%) reported that they did not know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech. A quarter of the students (25.11 %) said that they experienced this difficulty because they did not have a good short-term memory for English. 14.09% of the students indicated that the could not distinguish the sounds that did not exist in Turkish.

With more than half of the students in all levels, vocabulary knowledge is observed to be a major reason for this listening comprehension problem. C level students (59.52%) indicated this as the most prominent reason. It is also reported to be the most significant reason by A

(53.12%) and B level students (51.68%). Around one third of A (29.16%), B (32.58%) and C level (33.33%) students indicate pronunciation and word changes in connected speech as other reasons for this listening comprehension problem. Students also indicated the lack of short term of memory for English in varying percentages. A quarter of A (25%) and B level students (28.08%) indicated this as a reason while 16.66% of C level students indicated lack of good short term memory for English as a reason. Also, B level students (17.92%) reported the inability to distinguish sounds that did not exist in Turkish more often than A level (12.5%) and C level (9.52%) students (see Table 4.35).

Table 4.35. Reasons for the Problem Statement 6

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for difficulty in recognizing phrases	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I don't have a large enough vocabulary.	51	53.12	46	51.68	25	59.52	122	53.74
I don't know how the phrases should be pronounced correctly.	28	29.16	29	32.58	14	33.33	71	31.27
I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech.	28	29.16	30	33.70	10	23.80	68	29.95
I don't have a good short-term memory for English.	24	25	25	28.08	8	19.04	57	25.11
I don't know.	16	16.66	15	16.85	7	16.66	38	16.74
I can't distinguish between sounds that don't exist in Turkish and similar sounds.	12	12.5	16	17.97	4	9.52	32	14.09
Other	6	6.25	4	4.49	2	4.76	12	5.28

As a response to the seventh statement, which is "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in identifying the sounds of the words correctly" statement, half of the students (50.66%) said that they were not familiar with different accents of English. As the second most frequently opted reason, they reported that they did not know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (41.04%). As close to half of the students in all levels reported in this direction, different accents seem to be a strong reason for this difficulty. Word changes in connected speech and not having a large listening vocabulary are other reasons at least one third of students reported to be affected negatively in listening comprehension. Another reason for this listening comprehension problem reported by about more than one third of the students (37.88%) is that they did not have a large enough listening vocabulary. About one third of the students (29.51%) indicated that they did not know how the words had

to be pronounced correctly. About one fifth of all students (18.94%) indicated the difficulty in distinguishing the English sounds that do not exist in Turkish as a reason to this problem.

As for reasons across CEFR levels, A level students indicated the higher percentage (56.25%) than B (47.19%) and C level (45.23%) students in relation to the lack of familiarity with different accents as a reason for the Problem Statement 7. In terms of lack of knowledge about sound changes in connected speech, A and B level students reported this reason in similar percentages, 41.66% and 42.69% respectively, the percentage of C level students' responses were slightly lower (38.09%). Lack of listening vocabulary was reported in similar percentages by A (38.54%), B (38.30%) and C level students (35.71%) as a reason for this problem. While more than one third of C level students (40.47%) said that they did not know how the words should be pronounced correctly, about a third of A level students (33.33%) and about a quarter of B level students (20.22%) said that lack of knowledge about pronunciation is a reason for this specific listening comprehension problem. Additionally, the inability to distinguish sounds that do not exist in Turkish was among these reasons. While B level students have a higher percentage for this reason (25.84%), A (13.54%) and C level students (16.66%) remained below the total average (18.94%) (see Table 4.36).

Table 4.36. Reasons for the Problem Statement 7

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for difficulty in identifying sounds of words correctly	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am not familiar with different accents of English.	54	56.25	42	47.19	19	45.23	115	50.66
I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech.	40	41.66	38	42.69	16	38.09	94	41.04
I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary.	37	38.54	34	38.20	15	35.71	86	37.88
I don't know how the words should be pronounced correctly.	32	33.33	18	20.22	17	40.47	67	29.51
I can't distinguish between sounds that don't exist in Turkish and similar sounds.	13	13.54	23	25.84	7	16.66	43	18.94
I don't know.	10	10.41	16	17.97	7	16.66	33	14.53
Other	7	7.29	4	4.49	4	9.52	15	6.60

When it comes to the reasons for the problem statement 8, which is "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in catching the next bit of speech, because I'm still concentrating on what was just said", more than half of the students (54.18%) said that they spend a long time trying to identify unfamiliar words or phrases. Similarly, more than half of the students

(53.74%) reported that they translated from English to Turkish when listening and this was one of the reasons for this problem. More than one third of the students (39.20%) reported that they felt nervous when listening to English. A similar number of students (38.32%) indicated that they did not have a large enough listening vocabulary. Also, about one third of the students (30.39%) said that they did not have a good short-term memory for English. About a quarter of the students (24.66%) indicated they did not have enough information about the listening topic.

The most significant reason reported by students was spending a long time trying to identify unfamiliar words or phrases. More than half of B level students (60.67%) indicated this as a major reason while the percentages of both A and B level students remained 50%. Another major reason for this listening problem is translating from L2 to L1. B (57.30%) and A level (54.16%) students reported this reason more frequently than C level students (45.23). More than a third of students in A (37.5%), B (35%) and C (38.09%) levels indicated that they did not have a large enough listening vocabulary. More than a quarter of students in C (28.57%) and B level (26.96%) students indicated lack of background information about the listening topic as a reason for this problem while the percentage of A level students for this reason remained the lowest (20.83%) (see Table 4.37).

Table 4.37. Reasons for the Problem Statement 8

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for the difficulty in catching the following bit of speech while still concentrating on the previous utterances.	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I spend a long time trying to identify unfamiliar words or phrases.	48	50	54	60.67	21	50	123	54.18
I translate from English to Turkish when listening	52	54.16	51	57.30	19	45.23	122	53.74
I feel nervous when listening to English.	39	40.62	34	38.20	16	38.09	89	39.20
I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary.	36	37.5	35	39.32	16	38.09	87	38.32
I don't have a good short-term memory for English.	28	29.16	30	33.70	11	26.19	69	30.39
I don't have enough information about the listening topic.	20	20.83	24	26.96	12	28.57	56	24.66
I don't know.	8	8.33	10	11.23	3	7.14	21	9.25
Other	9	9.37	3	3.37	5	11.90	17	7.48

Among the reasons reported by the students for the last problem described as "When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in making sense of the grammar" were that students did

not know enough English grammar (45.37%). In other words, about half of the students in all levels indicated that they lack adequate grammar knowledge to tackle this listening comprehension problem. Other reasons lack of concentration when listening to English, (39.20%) and unfamiliarity with English phrases (32.59%). About a quarter (24.66%) of the students reported that they did not have a good short-term memory for English.

Inadequate grammar knowledge is reported most frequently by B level students (48.31%) followed by C level (45.23%) and A level (42.70%) students. Similarly, lack of concentration is reported most frequently by B level students (44.94%), followed by A level (40.62%) students while the percentage of the C level students remained much lower than B and A levels (23.80%). Unfamiliarity with English phrases were reported in similar percentages by A (30.20%), B (33.70%) and C level (35.71%) students. Additionally, B level students also reported lack of short-term memory for English more often (29.21%) than A (23.95%) and C level (16.66%) students (see Table 4.38.).

Table 4.38. Reasons for the Problem Statement 9

	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Reasons for difficulty in making sense of grammar	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I don't know enough grammar.	41	42.70	43	48.31	19	45.23	103	45.37
I can't concentrate when listening to English.	39	40.62	40	44.94	10	23.80	89	39.20
I am not familiar with English phrases.	29	30.20	30	33.70	15	35.71	74	32.59
I don't have a good short-term memory for English.	23	23.95	26	29.21	7	16.66	56	24.66
I don't know.	15	15.62	12	13.48	8	19.04	35	15.41
Other	14	14.58	4	4.49	8	19.04	26	11.45

4.6. Qualitative Results On Students' Suggestions to Listening Problems

Data regarding the participants' solutions to their listening comprehension problems came via the last question in the Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report. The responses were varied and grouped under two themes, which are: self-study-suggestions and classroom-related-suggestions. The student responses were not provided in this section as the researcher think that the suggestions in the categories are self-explanatory and the students' responses were relatively shorter than the previous sections or just consisted of one or two words. In the following pages, specific results regarding these categories will be shared with the reader.

4.6.1. Suggestions Regarding Self-Study

The first theme that emerged in students' suggestions has to do with their own study behaviors and habits. Students offered suggestions regarding developing study habits and use of multimedia, both of which will be discussed below.

4.6.1.1. Developing Self-Study Habits

Students commented on suggestions regarding their study habits to a great extent. In fact, within this theme 129 comments were made. About one third of the students indicated that they should carry out more L2 listening exercises. Students also indicated their need to increase their lexical capacity as a solution to their listening problems in English: 13% of the total number of the students suggested this solution. Yet, this need is observed more often in A level (16%) and B level (13%) students as opposed to C level students (2%). Other self-study habit related suggestions that were mentioned by the participants were: making friends with L1 English speakers (3%), seeking international exchange opportunities (3%), studying English more in general (2%), listening to English on a daily basis (1%), reading more in English (1%) and talking to themselves in English on a daily basis (0.44%) (see Table 4.39).

Table 4.39. Students' Study-Habits Related Suggestions

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
I should…	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
do more listening exercises in English	31	32	31	35	12	29	74	33
increase my vocabulary knowledge in English	15	16	12	13	2	2	29	13
befriend English speakers / seek English speaking areas outside the class	2	2	5	5	0	0	7	3
seek international exchange opportunities	6	6	1	1	0	0	7	3
study English more	3	3	2	2	0	0	5	2
listen to English on a daily basis	0	0	2	2	1	2	3	1
read more in English	2	2	1	1	0	0	3	1
self-talk in English on a daily basis	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.44
Total	59	61.45	55	61.79	15	35.71	129	56.82

4.6.1.2. Self-use of Media

In total, 42 comments were made about the use of media. 15% of the total number of students across levels suggested that they should watch movies and TV series in English. Students in all levels suggested this idea, yet there were more comments from B level students in this category. Other suggestions included listening to songs in English (3%), making vocabulary lists while or after viewing movies / TV series in English (0.88%), and listening to shows and news in English on the radio (0.44%) (see Table 4.40).

Table 4.40. Students' Suggestions for Using Media

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
I should…	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
watch movies and TV series in English	9	9	20	20	3	7	32	15
listen to music in English	3	3	4	4	0	0	7	3
make vocabulary lists while or after watching movies/series in English	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.88
listen to radio programs and news in English	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.44
Total	14	14.58	25	20.08	3	7.14	42	18.50

4.6.2. Suggestions Regarding Classroom Instruction

The second theme that emerged in students' suggestions is related with classroom instruction. These suggestions were grouped under several areas which are: material-related suggestions, suggestions for improving general listening skill, suggestions for specific listening activities, solutions for students themselves during listening sessions and solutions for environmental changes.

4.6.2.1. Suggestions for Listening Materials in Class

Students mostly provided ideas to improve their listening instruction in terms of the materials. Students in all levels (10%) suggested that acoustically more clear texts and more understable accents should be used as the listening texts. 4% of the students suggested more level-appropriate listening materials for the class. Contradictory to the first suggestion, 3% of the students suggested using different accents in the listening texts to increase familiarity of World Englishes. 2% of the students said that teachers should choose more interesting topics. Similarly, 2% of the students indicated that teachers should choose listening texts with familiar topics for them. While %0.88 of the students said that teachers should use shorter

texts, 0.44% of them said that the background noise in the listening materials should be eliminated (see Table 4.41).

Table 4.41 Students' Suggestions Regarding Listening Materials

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Teachers can …	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
choose materials with comprehensible accent	10	10	7	8	5	12	22	10
use more clear and level-appropriate materials	5	5	0	0	3	7	8	4
choose texts that embody various accents	4	4	1	1	1	2	6	3
choose interesting listening topics	1	1	3	3	1	2	5	2
choose texts with familiar topics	1	1	2	2	1	2	4	2
use shorter texts	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0.88
eliminate background noise in materials	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.44
Total	23	23.95	13	14.60	11	26.19	48	21.14

4.6.2.2. Suggestions for Improving General Listening Skill in Class

Within the general theme of classroom-related suggestions, students provided 43 comments as suggestions for the way the listening skill was to be handled in the language classroom. 10% of all the students suggest that they should do listening practice activities in various difficulty levels. 8% of the total number of students across levels indicated that they should have more listening comprehension exercises in the English language classroom. This idea was proposed by more A level students compared to B and C level students. Students also suggested various ways to expose themselves to the target language. These included engaging in related speaking activities after listening activities (0.88%) and receiving practical information about the listening skill (0.44%) (see Table 4.42).

Table 4.42 Students' Suggestions Regarding Developing General L2 Listening Skills

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
There should be…	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
listening practice in various difficulty levels	7	7	12	13	3	7	22	10
more listening exercises	13	13	3	3	2	2	18	8
more connection between speaking and listening activities	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	0.88
more practical information about the listening skill	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.44
Total	21	21.87	16	17.97	6	14.28	43	18.94

4.6.2.3. Suggestions for Specific Listening Activities in Class

Students made 22 comments and suggested a variety of ways to carry out specific L2 listening tasks in the language classroom. These included specific focus on pronunciation (3.96%), utilizing songs for micro-listening (2%), listening to text at a slow speed (1%), doing listening with transcript and without transcript (0.88%), using pre-listening vocabulary and grammar activities (0.44%), doing dictation activities (0.44%) and creating easier questions (0.44%) (see Table 4.43).

Table 4.43 Students' Suggestions Regarding Specific Listening Activities in Class

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Teachers can …	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
specifically focus on pronunciation	4	4	5	5	0	0	9	3.96
prepare 'fill-in-the-blanks' activities with lyrics of songs	1	1	4	5	0	0	5	2
play text at slow speed	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	1
provide listening with transcript and then without transcript (or vice versa)	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0.88
use pre-listening activities (vocabulary or grammar)	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0.44
do dictation activities	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0.44
create easier questions	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.44
Total	6	6.25	14	15.73	2	4.76	22	9.69

4.6.2.4. Suggestions for Students Themselves During Listening Sessions in Class

There were also suggestions for while listening parts of the lessons. Interestingly, none of the C-level students made any comments in this category of suggestions. 3% of the total number of students suggested that they should only try to focus on the listening text while carrying out the listening comprehension activity. 2% of the students indicated that they should not translate the texts into Turkish while listening. Other suggestions included reading the questions before listening (0.88%), being relaxed (0.88%) and taking notes (0.44%) (see Table 4.44).

Table 4.44. Suggestions Regarding Students Themselves during Listening Sessions in Class

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
I should…	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
try to focus	4	4	3	3	0	0	7	3
not translate texts into Turkish	3	3	2	2	0	0	5	2
read the questions prior to listening	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0.88
be relaxed	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0.88
take notes	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0.44
Total	8	8.33	9	10.11	0	0	17	7.48

4.6.2.5. Suggestions for Environmental Changes in Class

There were also a few comments by 8 students regarding the listening context. A small percentage of students suggested that the sound systems used for listening activities should be modern (3%). One student (0.44%) indicated that they should have a listening lab for developing their listening skills (see Table 4.45).

Table 4.45. Suggestions on Environmental Changes

	n=96		n=89		n=42		n=227	
	A Level		B Level		C Level		Total	
Solution	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
The sound systems should be new.	1	1	2	2	4	10	7	3
We should have a listening lab.	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.44
Total	2	2	2	2	4	10	8	3.44

Students who participated in the study provided detailed qualitative and quantitative data on the problems they experience in L2 listening comprehension, the reasons for the listening problems and their suggestions to overcome these challenges. The following chapter will discuss the data from various aspects. Educational and research implications derived from the results will also be elaborated.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The intention of this work was to explore the variety of difficulties students experience in L2 listening in academic settings based on their own accounts. The reasons for the problems stated by the students and their suggestions to minimize them were also within the scope of this study. The participant group for the research was Turkish speaking students who study English at a language preparatory school of a higher education institution as required by their bachelor degree program. The results obtained in the study and presented below are hoped to shed light on some issues that students come across in L2 listening and provide information for further studies. In this chapter, results will be summarized and discussed in the light of previous studies.

5.1. Attitudes Towards and Ideas about Listening in English

Almost all of the students (97.8%) indicated that listening to English is quite important or very important for their university study. A great majority of the students (97%) said that listening to English is quite important or very important for their future needs. 93% of the students stated that in the process of listening, pronunciation is quite important or very important for them. The vast majority of the students (93.8%) thought that listening vocabulary is quite important or very important for them in the process of listening. A big portion of the students (79%) reported that the skill of translating from English to Turkish while listening is quite important or very important to them. All of these results show that the participants of the study viewed listening in L2 and its components as highly important for their academic and future career needs. They seem to value listening in English and are aware of its importance. This might stem from their strong belief they attribute to English as a skill that can put them in an advantegous position in academic and professional environment.

About one third of students (31%) thought that listening is a difficult skill. More than half of the students (56%) thought that their teachers` spoken English is easy or very easy to understand. About two thirds of the students (68%) reported that their peers` spoken English

is easy or very easy to understand. Around one third of the students (31%) indicated that pronunciation is hard or very hard for them.

As can be seen from the results, only one-third of students of the study find listening skill and pronunciation difficult. Yet, close to half of students have difficulty in understanding their teachers' language, but they more easily understand their peers' spoken language. This finding, in part, might stem from comparably more exposure of students to their peers' speech, who are within similar English proficiency levels. Thus, they typically have lower chance of being exposed to unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures as well as the comfort of speaking or listening to a peer rather than a teacher, who is a source of authority in the classroom. Reed, McLeod and McAllister (1999) indicate that students differentiate the skills they use in communication when they talk and listen to their peers and teachers. Thus, this finding might also play a role in their perceptions towards the perceived difficulties of their peers' and teachers' speech in L2. As students' L2 listening comprehension success might be influenced by their positive or negative attitudes towards L2 listening skill (Hasan, 2000), monitoring and responding to students' attitudes towards it is of great importance.

Interestingly, students think that skills based on oral comprehension and production are more difficult than the text-based skills since in their rankings, listening is the second hardest skill after speaking among the four language skills. It might mean that students struggle recognizing input and producing utterances orally more than in the written mode while reading and writing. The temporal and instantaneous nature of speaking and listening might also present added difficulties for processing input or formulating utterances, which are unique to the oral mode of communication. This finding is partially contradictory to Berman and Cheng's (2001) study, where undergraduate students rated speaking skill as the most difficult language skill and placed listening in the third place after writing. The results from Berman and Cheng (2001) indicate that the participants in their study found production skills more difficult than the receptive skills.

Results of the study showed that vocabulary, pronunciation, memory and grammar are reported by participants of the present study to be major factors causing difficulties while listening to English. This shows that students focus on and are influenced mostly by bottom-up skills during listening.

Ishida and Arai (2016) indicate that lacking the extent of lexical knowledge L1 speakers have access to, L2 speakers need to expand their L2 vocabulary knowledge so as to better cope with the challenges brought by listening in L2. Matthews (2018) also stresses the importance of helping students master mid- and high-frequency vocabulary in order to develop L2 listening skills over time. Even though L2 pronunciation instruction challenges educators mainly because of time limitations (Derwing et al., 2012), Kissling (2018) reports that systematic L2 pronunciation instruction is helpful in identifying words, parsing the incoming speech better and increasing their overall understanding of the speech.

5.2. Academic Listening Problems

Through the increased awareness of their L2 listening process, students are likely to look for reasons and possible solutions to their L2 listening problems outside of themselves, rather than blaming themselves for all the L2 listening problems (Goh, 2000). When asked open-ended questions about the problems related to listening comprehension in L2 English in academic settings, major themes that emerged were processing problems, phonological problems, affective problems and vocabulary problems. In this part, participants were given an opportunity to express their own difficulties in L2 listening, rather than being presented pre-determined problem areas.

Around one-third of students reported often experiencing some form of processing problem while listening. Processing is the main area where students report experiencing the most difficulties. Five main problem areas surfaced in relation to processing, namely: not understanding overall meaning, missing details or the gist, being unable to do parsing, not being able to follow the text, and inability to retain overall meaning after listening.

One third of students stated that they cannot understand the overall meaning and A and B level students suffered from this problem almost twice the C level. It might be speculated that higher proficiency level students are at an advantage to activate their top-down listening skills as well as benefit from the bottom-up skills. Lower proficiency students might have difficulty breaking the aural input into smaller units due to inadequate use of bottom-up and/or top-down listening skills. It is now well-known that students need to develop their bottom-up and top-down listening skills in order to carry out listening comprehension tasks effectively (Nunnan, 1997). Vandergrift (2007) says that skilled L2 listeners use significantly more

metacognitive strategies than lower-level L2 listeners. That is a factor which may put skilled L2 listeners at an advantageous position to compensate any bottom-up processing shortcomings while listening. Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) report that text familiarity, knowledge of the key vocabulary and context are contributing factors to successful comprehension of L2 texts. In terms of deriving factual and detailed information while listening, both low-proficiency and high-proficiency students usually rely on both explicit information and less direct information such as inferences but reaching an overall meaning is not always accessible to low-proficiency students (Becker, 2016).

Lynch (1998) stresses that prosody of a target language (L2) has influence on the listener's recognition of L2 and manintaining its development over time. Also, students do not recall much information from listening as they do from reading by quality and quantity (Osada, 2004). As for retaining overall meaning after listening, the listeners who are in low proficiency levels, whose L1 rhythmic patterns show great difference to that of L2 and learners who have low exposure to the L2 are usually limited by their working memory (WM) to a great extent as they can only process certain amount of aural input at any given time (Yeldham, 2015).

The second major problem area for students was found to be phonology, as reported by one-third of students who highlighted difficulties related to unfamiliar accents of the speakers. As students indicated, familiarity with accents is an important contributing factor in L2 listening comprehension. This was more obvious for B and C level students compared to A level students. A level students might have reported less on problems regarding accent due to the fact that they have other priorities, such as being challenged linguistically in many domains of L2 listening. Accent familiarity might play a role in assisting students by allowing the students to allocate their processing capacity to the listening task at hand instead of accommodating an unfamiliar accent in the decoding process in L2 listening. Tauroza & Luk (1997) reported the positive effect of accent familiarity in L2 listening comprehension. This positive attitude towards familiar accents such as American accent (AmE) or British accent (BrE) due to extended exposure is also indicated by Zhang & Hu (2008); however, a correlation between accent familiarity and understandability is not reported. Adank, Evans, Stuart-Smith & Scott (2009) indicate that accent familiarity might affect the speed of speech comprehension and adapting to an unfamiliar accent might require long-term interaction in that accent. Although it is possible to admit the influence of familiarity with accents on L2

listening comprehension, a strong explanation of its underlying mechanisms needs to be made available (Weber, Broersma, & Aoyagi, 2011). Ockey & French (2016) also indicated that accents have influence on L2 listening comprehension.

Affective issues constituted the third largest problem category in the present study as reported by students. Concentration difficulties seemed to negatively affect about one fifth of students and B level students were more influenced by stress than A and C level students. This finding is in line with the results of the previous section in the survey where students viewed listening as one of the difficult skills, and this might increase their anxiety level when tested. Lack or insufficiency of concentration might hamper L2 listening comprehension. In other words, one of the ways to contribute to L2 listening comprehension is to employ strategies to increase concentration while listening. Heavy demands required by the L2 listening activity are likely to cause stress and high levels of stress might translate into poor performance and listening comprehension (Rost, 2014). Bang & Hiver (2016) report that in terms of affective factors influencing L2 listening proficiency, motivation, specifically intrinsic motivation, play a significant role.

Vocabulary was reported as the fourth frequently cited problem area in L2 listening by students of the study. About one sixth of all students indicated that limited vocabulary knowledge influences their L2 listening comprehension negatively. Interestingly, as the most proficient group in the study, C level students reported the highest percentage of vocabulary problems in L2 listening while A level students reported vocabulary difficulties to a lesser extent. The fact that C level students are more often exposed to authentic materials intended for native or native-like listeners, thus come across unknown vocabulary in a wide variety of topics, might have played a role in this finding. The finding that students' reports include insufficient vocabulary knowledge as a listening-related problem is consistent with previous studies. As students largely rely on their ability to decode vocabulary in L2 listening, their successful comprehension depends on their vocabulary knowledge. (Bonk, 2000; Stær, 2009; Foomani, 2015)

A small percentage of students reported problems related to study habits such as effective note taking skills. C level students reported about this fifth largest problem category more often than A and B level students. The fact that C level students, as high proficiency students, indicated study habits as a problematic area in L2 listening is striking in that these students

were able to reach high proficiency levels despite inadequate support strategies to develop their L2 listening. It might also mean that they feel challenged on multiple linguistic and cognitive levels, thus the kind of habits that helped them earlier is not effective anymore, and they feel the need to review or upgrade their habits in order to increase their proficiency level.

Graham (2006) stresses that students tend to think neither about the kind of strategies they need in order to carry out an L2 listening task successfully, nor the strategies they actually use when carrying out one. Graham (2006) also says that without the active reflection on the listening process, students might risk spending hours of study on unfocused and less effective study on L2 listening.

Grammar related concerns were reported by only a small percentage of the students. In other words, grammar knowledge appeared to be a minor concern among students in all CEFR levels. It means that they do not feel the need to focus on grammar as a way to improve their L2 listening skill, which is in line with other results in the literature. Even though further empirical studies need to be carried out to draw decisive conclusions, it is reported in the literature that strong grammar knowledge is not likely to predict successful listening comprehension (Mecartty, 2000; Field, 2008a; Oh, 2016).

Problems due to materials and environmental / technical problems were also mentioned by participants, yet mostly in the lower proficiency levels. Though they are not central to L2 listening problems reported by students, environmental factors might cause difficulties for students when carrying out their listening activities, thus they should be minimized.

As reported by Renandya (2012), students' engagement might be aided with L2 listening materials which include intelligible language and have appeal to students' interests. Hamouda (2013) also indicates that the presence of negative environmental factors such as noise, high or low temperature in the classroom, noise or distracting behaviors coming from other students might distract L2 listeners.

Data also came from closed-ended quantitative items, where students indicated the frequency with which they experienced certain given problems. Based on these items, more than one third of students reported to often experience the inability to break the stream of speech into separate chunks and words. B and C level students reported this problem more often than A level students.

This result confirms the corresponding data from the open-ended survey, and indicates that this is an important processing problem from which students suffer. It might be possible to say that B and C level students are exposed to longer narratives and more varied linguistic forms and vocabulary during L2 listening activities, which necessitates an increased level of language skills. Goh (2000) found that students with low-proficiency are challenged more in terms of low-level processing, which contradicts with our finding that higher level students suffer from breaking the stream of speech into smaller units. Parsing phase of L2 listening is an important stage towards comprehension and students are usually challenged by syntactic and semantic problems (Nowrouzi, Tam, Zareian & Nimehchisalem, 2015).

About one third of students reported to often or always have difficulty in holding speech or meaning in memory. In fact, B level students reported to have retention problems more often than A and C level students. This might stem from the progressive increase in the difficulty level and topic variety in listening texts for this level, and students' inability to keep up with this increase in the language level.

Besides factors related to the incoming speech, such as speed, accent and topic students also link retention problems with personal capacities or shortcomings (Graham, 2006). However, it might be possible that students experience memory problems while carrying out L2 listening activities because they are owerwhelmed by aural input that is at a level beyond their current capacity to process, thus their working memory (WM) suffers (Yeldham, 2015).

One third of students reported often or always having difficulty in recognizing phrases during L2 listening. When levels are analyzed separately, C level students' percentage is three times lower than A and B level students, which indicates that phrasal verbs seem to be more of a challenge in listening for A and B level students as such vocabulary might be harder for them to distinguish in the stream of speech due to their lower proficiency level.

It is reported in the literature that L2 learners might avoid phrasal verbs in their speech even when the students can recognize them in written form, a phenomena called 'phrasal verb avoidance' (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Liao & Fukuya, 2004). This might be true for L2 listening activities, where L2 learners cannot recognize phrasal verbs in stream of speech due to unfamiliarity with the aural form or unfamiliarity with both written and aural forms of the phrasal verb. This is reflected in L2 listening as inadequate vocabulary knowledge to tackle L2 listening problems necessitated by the lexical needs for comprehension. Still, rather than

recognition of words in written form, recognition at an aural level is vital for successful L2 listening comprehension (Stær, 2009).

In the study, half of the students indicated sometimes to have difficulty in identifying sounds of words while listening. This problem was reported by A level students more than B and C level students. Obviously, phonological knowledge of A level students is often challenged while listening compared to B and C level students due to their relatively lower linguistic and compensatory skills.

Wilson (2003) indicates that in order to notice sounds in speech, L2 listeners should be exposed to gradual challenges where listening texts' demands from the listeners increase progressively, thus allowing the L2 listeners to rely on their top-down and bottom-up processing skills in a balanced fashion. Wilson (2003) maintains that L2 listeners can control their comprehension when they are expected to direct their attention to a manageable portion of the text provided that the listening text is at the proficiency level of the L2 listeners. Kuziakhmetov & Porchesku (2016) say that providing practice opportunities for L2 listeners to improve their surface level skills such as speech recognition through bottom-up processing activities may be helpful to improve their comprehension.

Difficulty in catching upcoming utterances due to concentrating on the previous utterances is reported to be a frequently encountered problem by the participants. More than half of the students in all levels reported to often or always have this difficulty. A and B level students experienced this problem more often than C level students. Keeping up with the listening text was a major problem as reported by students in all CEFR levels. Processing, phonology and affective problems are reported to play a major role in limiting or compromising listening comprehension as well.

As a summary, there are various factors which limit or hinder L2 listening comprehension. Among these factors are limited vocabulary knowledge (Bonk, 2000; Stær, 2009; Foomani, 2015), pronunciation (Kissling (2018), concentration issues (Vandergrift, 2005), anxiety (Rost, 2014), and overwhelmed working memory (WM) (Yeldham, 2015).

5.3. Reasons of Academic Listening Problems

As a result of qualitative data analysis regarding the reasons for the L2 listening problems, eight themes emerged. These reasons are related to study habits, processing, phonology, vocabulary, affective, grammar, environment and text. It was seen that students mostly regarded intrinsic and personal factors, such as study habits and processing issues as leading reasons for their L2 listening problems. At the same time, it can be said that they emphasized and valued practice and exposure to improve their listening skills.

In terms of study habits, about a quarter of the total number of students reported that they have inadequate amount of individual and in-class L2 listening practice. This reason was reported by mostly C level students. It might be speculated that for a good portion of the students in the study, exposure to level-appropriate L2 listening texts with selected linguistic and thematic features is largely limited to the classroom activities. The students' feedback indicates that more exposure to L2 listening texts is demanded, a finding that is supported by Graham's (2006) findings. As suggested by Field (2008b) however, teachers should help their students develop an understanding of progressive construction of meaning through the stages of comprehension of an L2 listening text. So, instead of rote repetition of more L2 listening activities in similar fashion, students are expected to carry out listening practices that can help them become aware of the components and processes of listening comprehension.

As processing-related reasons, close to one fifth of students reported that they experienced listening problems because they were not able to keep up with the listening text. This reason was provided by mostly B level students. Moreover, more C level students than other levels indicated inability to do parsing because of speed and voice changes. In addition, students also reported the need for listening multiple times in order to understand the text. It can be said that processing reasons of listening problems are complicated and are based on various factors, so cannot be generalized to a certain group of students. Different levels seem to experience different processing difficulties.

Processing L2 input is a complex task for language learners where various knowledge areas need to be activated instantaneously and synchronously for successful comprehension. Thus, exhaustive studies were carried out in an attempt to explore the L2 listening process and the factors at play such as bottom-up processing (Nunnan, 1997; Wilson, 2003; Field, 2004; Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016), text familiarity (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011), meta-

cognitive strategies (Vandergrift, 2007), decoding aural input (Yeldham, 2015), accent familiarity (Zhang & Hu, 2008), affective factors (Rost, 2014) and vocabulary knowledge (Bonk, 2000; Stær, 2009; Foomani, 2015).

In terms of phonologically-related reasons to their L2 listening problems, students stated unfamiliarity with various accents. Students also reported inadequate vocabulary knowledge as an important reason. In addition, lack of concentration and inadequate grammar knowledge were also stated by fewer C level students than others. These results are consistent with the qualitative data obtained in this study. Environmental factors (stated by mostly C level students) and text-related issues were secondary sources of reasons for the problems students experience in listening. C level students' answers regarding the reasons for listening problems were characterized slightly different from other levels possible because grammar is a minor source of difficulty for them and environmental reasons seem to be more highlighted.

As discussed earlier, accent familiarity might play a supporting role in reducing obscurity in L2 speech (Tauroza & Luk, 1997). Even though grammar knowledge might not be a major contributing factor in L2 listening comprehension (Mecartty, 2000; Field, 2008a; Oh, 2016), a small number of low and mid-level proficiency students included inadequate grammar knowledge among the reasons for L2 listening comprehension problems.

Quantitative data on reasons yielded similar and complementary results. Half of the students in all levels combined indicated not having adequate vocabulary knowledge and knowledge of how pronunciation changes in connected speech. In other words, vocabulary and pronunciation problems are viewed as the major factors in the processing of aural input.

In other words, vocabulary and pronunciation limitations seem to effect students in many ways, i.e. their non-comprehension of overall meaning, capacity to break speech into chunks and words, identify the stressed words, hold chunk of speech in memory, catch the ends of the words, recognize words in oral form, recognize phrases, identify sounds of words directly, catch the following bit of speech while still concentrating on the previous utterances, and make sense of grammar. Knowledge of vocabulary and pronunciation in L2 are regarded as contributing factors for comprehension in other studies as well (Bonk, 2000; Stær, 2009; Foomani, 2015, Kissling, 2018).

Concentration, translation and grammar related limitations were also chosen by the participants as some other factors that influenced their L2 listening success. However, these sources were not reported to be as influential as vocabulary and pronunciation.

In terms of level differences, it can be concluded that it is most of the time the students in A and B levels who pinpoint to accent-related sources of listening problems. In other words, phonology is a big source of listening problems for A and B level students.

Overall, the participants mostly reported perception and bottom-up processing problems in the study. Students in lower proficiency level report that they are challenged by decoding of the aural input. This finding is reflected in the results of the qualitative data, too, where majority of the students reported on problems related to bottom-up processing.

5.4. Students' Suggestions

As a result of the data analysis, two themes emerged from the students' suggestions for their L2 listening problems: self-study suggestions and classroom-related suggestions. The sub-categories of self-study suggestions included developing study habits and use of media. Regarding self-study, one third of the students indicated that they should do autonomous L2 listening exercises and about one-sixth suggested personally increasing their vocabulary knowledge in English. Other self-study related suggestions were befriending English speakers, seeking international exchange opportunities, studying English more, listening to English on a daily basis and reading more in English. Students thought that they do not carry out enough listening comprehension activities on their own.

Students' suggestion on expanding vocabulary knowledge in order to overcome their L2 listening problems is supported by studies that show vocabulary knowledge as a strong predictor of L2 listening comprehension success (Bonk, 2000; Stær, 2009; Foomani, 2015). Also, Cubillos, Chieffo & Fan (2008) indicate that L2 students benefit from study abroad programs greatly even though their visits to the countries where their target language is spoken as L1 is short-term.

One-sixth of the students of the present study are of the opinion that they should watch movies and TV series in English in order to improve their L2 listening skills. Other media related self-improvement ideas were listening to music in English, making vocabulary lists

during or after watching movies or series in English and listening to radio programs and news in English. Students think that exposing themselves to non-academic media sources such as movies and TV series is likely to help them achieve greater proficiency in L2 listening in academic settings.

Watching authentic and appealing movies and TV programs in L2 which are also subtitled in L2 might contribute to the improvement of L2 skills (Wang, 2014); however, Li (2012) informs the field that relying extensively on subtitles for comprehension might put the L2 listener to a more passive position as a listener, largely obtaining input through reading rather than active listening. Hasan & Hoon (2012) report positive student attitude towards using podcasts as classroom materials for developing L2 listening comprehension.

The sub-categories of classroom-related suggestions were about the use of listening materials in class, improving general listening skill and specific listening activities in the lessons, students' responsibilities during listening sessions in class, and environmental changes regarding classrooms. With the exception of environmental suggestions, most suggestions came from A and B level students.

In terms of classroom-related solutions, students suggested using clearer texts with more comprehensive accents in order to facilitate their L2 listening comprehension. They also mentioned the use of level appropriate materials with interesting and familiar topics. Students apparently believe that accent variety is a definitive factor in their L2 listening comprehension.

About one tenth of the participants think that carrying out listening comprehension activities in various levels is likely to contribute to their L2 listening development. Students are also of the opinion that they should do more listening practice in the classroom. They even think that facing adequate amount of challenge is beneficial for the progressive improvement of the listening skill.

A small percentage of students suggest specific L2 listening tasks for the language classroom, such as focusing on pronunciation, using songs with fill-in-the-blanks exercises, listening to texts at a slower pace, and using transcripts. Students think that they should focus on specific sub-skills in relation to the development of their L2 listening abilities.

It is striking that students' main suggestions for L2 listening development mainly concentrate around activities intended for bottom-up skills. These suggestions are parallel with the other parts of the study where students largely focused on bottom-up skills.

Very few students suggested use of strategies to improve their own listening abilities in the classroom, such as trying to focus, not translating between languages or taking notes. Lack of concentration was reported to be a factor among L2 listening difficulties, and some students thus suggested improving their concentration while listening. Even though there may be other reasons, lack of concentration may be connected to L2 learners' attitudes towards listening as well as pre-conceptions about themselves. Loss of concentration may also be brought by heavy cognitive load that is beyond the L2 listeners' processing capacity (Rost, 2014). Bang & Hiver (2016) also point out the supporting influence of motivation on concentration and L2 listening comprehension.

Since environmental problems were reported to be a minor problem in listening comprehension by the students in the study and few students suggested environmental modifications in order to facilitate their L2 listening comprehension, their suggestions remained scarce.

5.5. Educational Implications

The results of the study yield important immediate and long-term implications for education.

As a receptive skill, listening ability is of vital importance in L2 academic contexts. Considering most communication is handled orally in academic settings (Janusik and Wolvin, 2009), development of L2 listening skill is essential. Thus, a wide range of opportunities where students are exposed to L2 should be provided to L2 students in order for them to improve their listening skills. Also, students suggest engaging in plenty of L2 listening activities.

Teacher talk is an important source of input in L2 in academic settings, thus its intelligibility greatly influences students' understanding of communication and instructions in the classroom. Thus, teachers should be aware of students' responsiveness to the oral input and make the necessary modifications in their speed of speech, paraphrase their utterances and actively check comprehension with follow-up questions.

It is sensible to consider that students' linguistic needs differ depending on their departments and future educational and professional plans. Thus, students need to be equipped with the proper linguistic skills in order to perform academic and professional tasks in L2 English. Besides providing students a variety of listening tasks and activities, offering students a program on English for specific purposes should be considered for more focused language instruction tailored to their needs.

Giving students the opportunity to improve a combination of skills and knowledge areas in L2 listening, such as metacognitive awareness, focused pronunciation instruction, background knowledge activating pre-listening activities and perhaps even specific activities for improving memory would be beneficial for students' overall improvement of L2 listening skill in classroom. Improving bottom-up processing skills is a contributing factor reaching a successful comprehension in L2. Thus, students should be guided to develop a balanced combination of top-down processing and bottom-up processing skills in L2.

Students in all levels, especially the ones lower in the levels, should be encouraged to actively reflect on their development in L2 listening. Students also need to participate in deliberate L2 listening activities that can offer them opportunities to raise their awareness about L2 listening, develop their vocabulary knowledge and improve their pronunciation skills. Personal reflection along with feedback from teachers can be seen as a step towards raising the students' awareness further about L2 listening and sustaining their interest. Increasing students' metacognitive awareness in L2 listening is a supporting action towards better reflection of progress, and provides the valuable information to shape and focus study habits of L2 learners.

From the classroom perspective, it might be helpful to support students in evaluating their L2 listening process and raising their awareness about lexical, metacognitive, linguistic, grammatical, knowledge areas as well as study skills. This way, students are hoped to better evaluate their progress, or lack of thereof, and make informed decisions about their learning. Thus, it might be an academically sound idea to monitor and adjust the frequency and intensity of L2 listening activities in class according to the students' needs.

As accent familiarity is directly linked with exposure to a variety of accents, students would benefit greatly from learning and communication opportunities in which they can interact with native speakers as well as non-native speakers of English. Listening texts with various

native and non-native accents of the target language should be made available to L2 students in and out of the classroom. Teachers can assign students the types of tasks that can potentially respond to their self-study needs. This may also include assisting them to find language tandem partners. The pedagogical decisions to ensure fitting accent variety into the curriculum also gains importance. In addition, there are opportunities for university students to join international learning environments where English is the lingua franca, such as Erasmus student exchange programs.

As far as L2 curriculum and classroom practices are concerned, engaging and relevant L2 listening activities might contribute to the students' motivation, thus overall proficiency in academic settings.

Improving vocabulary knowledge, both written and oral, is an important aspect of listening comprehension in L2. For this reason, progressive vocabulary development should be an integral part of English teaching curriculum and daily classroom activities as well as individual study tasks should be assigned to students. High and medium-frequency words should be given priority when classroom time is limited.

As far as the results of the present study are concerned, grammar focused activities are viewed to be of minor relevance for the development of L2 listening, thus from the pedagogical standpoint, other knowledge and skill areas should be given priority especially when time is a matter of concern in the classroom.

Establishing a distraction free listening environment in the classroom can help students maintain their focus during such activities. Considering a language classroom, it means that students sometimes need to be instructed on how to carry out an L2 listening activity, such as not worrying about questions or not interacting with classroom members.

As put forward by Wilson (2003), L2 students need gradual change in the way more linguistic forms and variety of vocabulary are presented in L2 listening texts for improvement. Lack of challenge in L2 listening might slow down L2 learners' improvement and reduce engagement whereas excessive challenge might overwhelm the L2 learners and cause stress.

In terms of study habits of the students, how the students study for listening in English and their habits relating to this specific language skill can be guided through research-driven decisions made by the educators. Considering the time constraints posed to the teachers and students in terms of class hours, assigning students extensive listening activites for individual

study on a regular basis might help intensify the exposure to L2 listening texts, thus contribute to students' progress.

Students' suggestions on how to improve their L2 listening is valuable in that they are in search of ways to actively participate in their own learning process. Also, frequently suggested solutions are likely to reflect students' common weaknesses in L2 listening, thus need to be taken into consideration by teachers, curriculum planners and educators. It appears that the students in the current study are in need of independent and personalized opportunities for improving their L2 listening in English. Ways and platforms for offering more individualized L2 listening tasks should be sought as a response to students' feedback.

Use and media tools such as radio programs, podcasts, TV series and movies are possible and should be encouraged to utilize in L2 for student engagement as well as language development purposes. In addition, teachers should be made aware of the useful audio and video content freely distributed on the internet such as podcasts and videocasts. Teachers should be also informed about the selection of level and content-appropriate L2 listening materials as well as their integration into the curriculum and classroom practices (Hasan & Hoon, 2012).

Even though environmental issues are not among the frequently reported problems in the study, student reports show that there are needs for improvement in the physical surroundings where L2 listening activities are carried out as well as the need for upgrading of technical equipment. Finally, listening text appears to be very important to the students. They think that most of their in-class listening problems may be overcome by choosing suitable and clear listening texts. For this, students may be involved in the selection of texts for classroom or individual practice.

5.6. Research Implications

The following areas of research were beyond the scope of this study; however, can be elaborated through further research.

As student reponses confirm L2 listening skill to be a significant skill in academic settings and along the course of their professional lives, it is important to meet the needs of students through a curriculum based on their academic and future needs. For that purpose, students' academic needs and specific occupational needs should be further investigated.

More extensive and longitudinal studies on developing bottom-up skills and top-down skills in L2 listening are encouraged to reach more generalizable results across language proficiency levels.

As reported to be one of the challenging factors in L2 English listening comprehension, problems related to familiarity with various English accents in L1 Turkish context is an area of study that should be further investigated.

Students' vocabulary learning efficiency and habits for better L2 listening seems to be an area that can be studied further. Contributing factors as well as factors holding students back in improving their vocabulary knowledge in both written and oral forms can be a step towards minimizing students' L2 listening problems.

Considering the results on reasons for the L2 listening problems, students' self-study habits can be explored in an effort to document and inform students and educators about how students study in general and their particular effort to improve L2 listening skill.

In relation to students' L2 listening comprehension problems and reasons for these problems, the following parameters can be explored in further studies: whether there is correlation between listening comprehension test scores and type of stated listening problems, and how students' attitude towards L2 listening skill change from beginning of the academic year until the end of it.

Studies on students' actual L2 listening problems can potentially help students and educators become aware of overlaps and discrepancies between students' perceptions of L2 listening problems and actual L2 listening problems. The relationship between problem areas and listening comprehension scores might shed light on how students' perceptions meet their actual abilities in L2 listening.

Responsiveness and strategies to ensure oral intelligibility of teachers' speech in L2 classrooms should be investigated in an effort to contribute to the quality of communication and instruction in the L2 classroom.

Additionally, further research is needed for elaborating on teachers' attitude to L2 listening and their perceptions about the comprehension problems that their students experience in L2 listening.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Listening Comprehension Problems Self-Report

The problems I experience while I am listening in English: The reasons for these listening comprehension problems: My suggestions / solutions for overcoming these problems:

Appendix B. Academic English Listening Problems Awareness Questionnaire

SECTION I: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Gender:	**Age:**
Department:	
Your CEFR Proficiency level (A, B, C) :	

Prior English Learning Experience:

1. At what age did you start learning English? _____

2. Please indicate type of schools you attended:

a. **Primary School** (Public / Private)
b. **Secondary School** (Public / Private)
c. **High School** (Public / Private)

I. Natural Sciences High School
II. Social Sciences High School
III. Anatolian High School
IV. Theological High School
V. Vocational High School
VI. Multi-Program High School
VII. Other _____

SECTION II: YOUR OPINION ABOUT L2 LISTENING

1. **Indicate the importance of listening English for you for each statement.** (*Please tick only one box for each row* ✓)	Not important at all	Of little importance	Neither important nor unimportant	Quite important	Very Important
	1	2	3	4	5
a. For my university study, listening to English is …					
b. For my future needs, listening to English is …					
c. In the process of listening, pronunciation is …					
d. In the process of listening, listening vocabulary is …					
e. In the process of listening, the skill of translating from English to Turkish is …					

2. How difficult do you find listening to English? (*Please tick only one box for each row* ✓)	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor hard	Hard	Very hard
	1	2	3	4	5
a. In my English course, I find listening to English is …					
b. In my English course, I find understanding my teacher's spoken English is …					
c. In my English course, I find understanding my peers' spoken English is …					
d. In my English course, I find pronunciation is …					

3. Please rank the following English skills, in order of difficulty from 1 to 4 according to the scale.

(easiest) **1 < ---------- > 4** (hardest) ***Make sure that each of numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) are used once only.***
a. Reading _____ b. Listening _____ c. Speaking _____ d. Writing _____

4. What causes you the greatest difficulty in listening to English?
Please rank the following causes of listening difficulty, in order of difficulty from 1 to 5 according to the scale.

(the least problematic) **1 < ---------- > 5** (the most problematic) ***Make sure that each of numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) are used once only.***
a. Konu bilgisi (genel bilgi seviyesi) _____ b. Dil bilgisi _____ c. Dinlediğini hatırlama _____ d. Telaffuz _____ e. Kelime bilgisi _____ f. Diğer _____

SECTION III. LISTENING DIFFICULTIES FACED IN L2 ACADEMIC LISTENING

How often do you experience difficulties with each of these 9 aspects of listening comprehension?

Tick each statement below as appropriate, according to the scale.

1a. **When I listen to spoken English, I have difficulty in breaking the stream of speech into separate chunks and words.** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldim	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

✓	1b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
	I don't know the rules of sentence stress in English
	'I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary
	I don't have a large enough vocabulary
	I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (e.g. linking, weak forms , assimilation)
	I don't know
	Other _____

2a. **I have difficulty in identifying which words the speaker emphasize** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldim	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	2b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
	I don't know the rules of sentence stress in English
—	I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (e.g. linking, weak forms , assimilation)
—	'I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary
—	I am not familiar with different accents of English
—	I don't know
—	Other _____

3a. **I have difficulty in holding a chunk of speech or meaning in my memory** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldım	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	3b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I don't have a good short-term memory for English
___	I can't distinguish between sounds that don't exist in Turkish and similar sounds
___	I can't concentrate when listening to English
___	I feel nervous when listening to English
___	I can't identify where the chunk starts and finishes
___	I am not familiar with English phrases
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

4a. **I have difficulty in catching the ends of words (-s, -ed etc)** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldım	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	4b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I can't identify the sounds that don't exist in Turkish
___	I don't know enough grammar
___	I can't concentrate when listening to English
___	I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (e.g. linking, weak forms , assimilation)
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

5a. **I have difficulty in recognizing words even though I know them in written form.** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldım	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	5b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I can't identify the sounds that don't exist in Turkish
___	'I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary
___	I don't know how the words should be pronounced correctly
___	I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (e.g. linking, weak forms , assimilation)
___	I am not familiar with different accents of English
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

6a. **I have difficulty in recognizing phrases** (e.g. *catch up with*) (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldım	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	6b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I don't have a large enough vocabulary
___	I don't know how the phrases should be pronounced correctly
___	I can't identify the sounds that don't exist in Turkish
___	I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (e.g. linking, weak forms , assimilation)
___	I don't have a good short-term for English
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

7a. **I have difficulty in identifying the sounds of the words correctly** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldm	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	7b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I don't know how the pronunciation of words changes in connected speech (e.g. linking, weak forms , assimilation)
___	I can't identify the sounds that don't exist in Chinese
___	I am not familiar with different accents of English
___	I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary
___	I don't know how the words should be pronounced correctly
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

8a. **I have difficulty in catching the next bit of speech because I'm still concentrating on what was just said** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldm	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	8b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I spend a long time to identify unfamiliar words or phrases
___	I don't have a large enough 'listening' vocabulary
___	I feel nervous when listening to English
___	I translate from English to Turkish when listening
___	I don't have enough background knowledge
___	I don't have a good short-term memory for English
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

9a. **I have difficulty in making sense of grammar** (*Please tick the box on the right* ✓)	Never	Seldim	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

	9b. **What is the reason for this difficulty?** *Tick as many boxes as apply for each statement.*
___	I am not familiar with English phrases
___	I don't know enough grammar
___	I can't concentrate when listening to English
___	I don't have a good short-term memory for English
___	I don't know
___	Other _____

Appendix C. A Sample of New Language Leader Elementary Coursebook

Kent, S.; Falvey, D.; Rees, G.; Lebeau, I.; Cotton, D. (2014). *New Language Leader Elementary*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

1 Cities

1.1 BIG CITIES: CITY FACTS

IN THIS UNIT

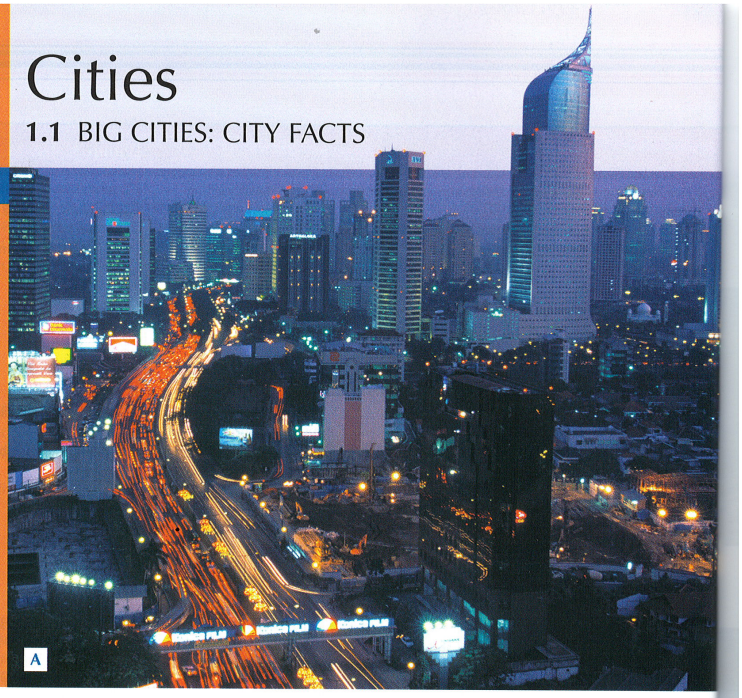
GRAMMAR
- *to be*
- *there is, there are (+ any)*

VOCABULARY
- cities
- adjectives (1)
- places in a city

SCENARIO
- saying where places are
- using a map

STUDY SKILLS
- using your dictionary (1)

WRITING SKILLS
- a city description



'I'm a city person – I go on holiday and I'm bored.' Danny Boyle, 1956–, British film director

VOCABULARY

CITIES, ADJECTIVES (1)

1 **Using existing knowledge** Match the cities in the box with the photos (A–D). (There are four extra cities.)

Istanbul Jakarta Lagos London Mexico City
New York Shanghai Tokyo

2 Match the adjectives (1–8) with their opposites (a–h), then choose two or three words for each city in the photos.

1	good	a	hot
2	old	b	dry
3	big	c	quiet
4	cold	d	new
5	wet	e	expensive
6	noisy	f	ugly
7	beautiful	g	bad
8	cheap	h	small

Istanbul – big, …

READING

3a Read the text and choose the correct answer.

Jakarta is

1 big and noisy.
2 small and quiet.
3 cold and expensive.

10 FACTS ABOUT MY CITY

Jakarta, Indonesia

1 It's in the west of Indonesia.
2 It's on the sea.
3 It's a big city.
4 It isn't a quiet city. In fact, it's very noisy.
5 It's the capital of Indonesia.
6 The weather is hot all year. It's wet from October to March.
7 It's famous for food.
8 The restaurants are good.
9 The boats in the old port are big. They're beautiful, too.
10 The buses aren't expensive.

3b Are these sentences about Jakarta true or false?

1 It's in Indonesia. *true*
2 It's in the west of the country.
3 The weather is dry in December.
4 It isn't the capital of Indonesia.
5 The restaurants are bad.
6 The boats in the old port aren't beautiful.

6

B



GRAMMAR

TO BE

4 **Read the text again. Complete the table.**

affirmative (+)	negative (–)	question (?)
I'm (I am)	I'm not (I am not)	am I?
he's (he is)	he isn't (he is not)	is he?
she's (she is)	she isn't (she is not)	is she?
[1] *it's* (it is)	it [2] _____ (it is not)	is it?
you're (you are)	you aren't (you are not)	are you?
we're (we are)	we aren't (we are not)	are we?
[3] _____ (they are)	they [4] _____ (they are not)	are they?

➥ Language reference and extra practice, pages 102–103

5a **Choose the correct word.**

1 London *is* / ~~are~~ the capital of the UK.
It's / *He's* an old city.
2 Istanbul *aren't* / *isn't* the capital of Turkey.
3 Beijing and Shanghai *am* / *are* in China.
4 New York and Tokyo *aren't* / *isn't* hot in December.

5b **Write one or two sentences about your city or town.**

My city is noisy.

GRAMMAR TIP

Notice the short answers.
'Is London cold?' 'Yes, ***it is****.'*

6 **Look at the questions and choose the best answer.**

1 Is your city beautiful?
Yes, it is. / *No, it isn't.*
2 Are you a student?
Yes, I am. / *No, I'm not.*
3 Are the restaurants in your city bad?
Yes, they are. / *No, they aren't.*
4 Is your teacher from the UK?
Yes, he/she is. / *No, he/she isn't.*

7 **Put the words in the right order to make questions. Then ask and answer the questions with a partner.**

1 good in your city / coffee / Is / ?
Is coffee good in your city?
2 expensive in your city / the buses / Are / ?
3 Is / in Europe / New York / ?
4 a big / Tokyo / city / Is / ?
5 Are / you / in your city / happy / ?
6 famous / Are / in your city / you / ?

LISTENING

8a 1.1 **Understanding context** **Listen to two conversations and choose the correct endings for these sentences.**

1 The conversations are between
a two students.
b two teachers.
c a teacher and a student.
2 The situation is
a on the phone.
b in a school/university.
c in a café.

8b **Listen again and complete these phrases.**

Mexico City	Istanbul
1 big, noisy, *old*	4 big, _____, noisy
2 the _____ of Mexico	5 _____ mosques
3 _____ buses	6 _____ in winter

SPEAKING

9a **Look at Audio script 1.1 on page 148. Practise the conversations with a partner.**

9b **Work with a partner to make similar conversations between a teacher and a student.**

C



D



VOCABULARY

PLACES IN A CITY

1a Match the words in the box with the corresponding photo(s) on pages 8 and 9. You will not need all the words.

an airport a beach a bridge a canal a church
a cinema a concert hall a fountain a harbour
a mountain a museum a park a temple

1b Make a list of more buildings and places in a city. Compare your list with a partner's.

READING

2 Understanding main points Read the article about famous cities from an in-flight magazine below. Put these words in the correct gaps.

~~music~~ beaches films water

3 Read the article again and choose the best answer (a, b or c).

1 Copacabana is a famous *beach*.
  a park b cinema c beach
2 Rio is a good place for _____.
  a films b music c museums
3 Mumbai is a _____ city.
  a small b busy c quiet
4 Bollywood films are from _____.
  a Los Angeles b Mumbai c Venice
5 Venice is a _____ city.
  a big b noisy c small
6 Venice isn't a good place for _____.
  a cars b people c boats









Famous cities

In all cities there are large buildings, parks, museums and schools, but a lot of cities are famous for other things.



Rio de Janeiro, city of [1] *music* **and city of** [2] _____

Rio is in the south-east of Brazil. The population is over six million. In Rio, there are mountains and lovely beaches. Copacabana Beach is famous for beach football. There are a lot of bars and concert halls with samba and bossa-nova music. There is a famous carnival every year. Rio is a fun city!



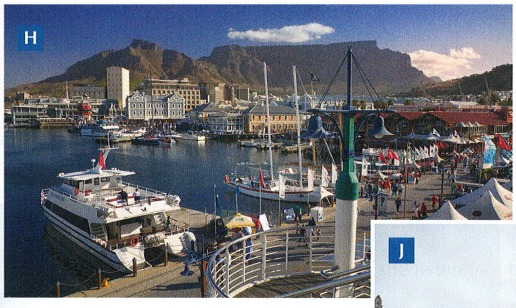
Mumbai, city of [3] _____

Mumbai is in the west of India. It's a big city with over ten million people. It's a busy city with a lot of entertainment. There isn't a carnival, but the city is famous for music and films. In Los Angeles, there's Hollywood; in Mumbai, there's Bollywood. In Mumbai, there are a lot of cinemas – over 200! It's an exciting city.



Venice, city of [4] _____

Venice is in the north-east of Italy. It isn't a big city – the population is under 500,000. In Venice, there aren't any buses or cars. There are 150 canals and a lot of boats. It's a beautiful city.







GRAMMAR

THERE IS, THERE ARE

4a **Complete the sentences from the article.**

1 In Rio, *there is* a famous carnival.
2 In Mumbai, _____ a lot of cinemas.
3 In Mumbai, _____ a carnival.
4 In Venice, _____ buses or cars.

4b ***There is (There's)/There are*** **introduces a place or thing. It tells us what is in a city, building, room or place. Look at sentences 3 and 4 in Exercise 4a. When do we use *any* in a negative sentence?**

5 **Complete the table below with the correct words in the box.**

~~is~~ is are are any not isn't

	singular	plural
+	There's a cinema. (There [1] *is* a cinema.)	There [2] _____ 200 cinemas.
–	There isn't a theatre. (There is [3] _____ a theatre.)	There aren't [4] _____ theatres. (There are not any theatres.)
?	[5] _____ there a park? Yes, there is. No, there [7] _____.	Are there any canals? Yes, there [6] _____. No, there aren't.

Language reference and extra practice, pages 102–103

6 **Choose the correct form of *to be*.**

1 In London, there *is* / ~~are~~ an opera house.
2 There *is* / *are* two international airports in New York.
3 In Brighton, there *isn't* / *aren't* any canals.
4 There *isn't a* / *isn't any* harbour in Mexico City.
5 *Is* / *Are* there any temples in Paris?
6 Are there any museums in Nairobi? – Yes, there *are* / *is*.

GRAMMAR TIP

a lot of = a large number of
In Mumbai, there are a lot of cinemas.

SPEAKING

7 **Work with a partner to find out about different cities.**

Student A: Look at the table on page 131 and ask questions.
Student B: Look at the table on page 132 and ask questions.

LISTENING

8a 1.2 ***I Love My City*** **is a TV programme. Listen to the programme and match the people with the cities.**

1	Yukako	a	Cape Town
2	Pablo	b	Lima
3	Stefan	c	Kyoto
4	Peter	d	Chicago

8b **Listen again. Tick (✓) the correct sentences.**

1 Kyoto
  a There are a lot of new buildings.
  b There are a lot of old buildings. ✓
2 Lima
  a There are a lot of cafés.
  b There are a lot of cars and buses.
3 Chicago
  a There are a lot of museums.
  b There are a lot of temples.
4 Cape Town
  a There's a beautiful fountain.
  b There's a beautiful mountain.

PRONUNCIATION

9a 1.3 **Contractions** **Listen and tick (✓) the sentence you hear.**

1 a I'm from Chicago. ✓
  b I am from Chicago.
2 a They are very quiet.
  b They're very quiet.
3 a There's a beautiful mountain.
  b There is a beautiful mountain.

9b **Listen again and repeat.**

WRITING

10 **Write about your city or town.**

My city is in the north/south-east of . . .
The population of my city is . . . My city is famous for . . . In my city, there are . . .



MEET THE EXPERT

Watch an interview with Adam Gadsby, an international publisher, about megacities.
Turn to page 126 for video activities.

Appendix D. A Sample of New Language Leader Pre- Intermediate Coursebook

Kent, S.; Falvey, D.; Rees, G.; Lebeau, I.; Cotton, D. (2014). *New Language Leader Pre-Intermediate.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

1 Human planet

1.1 ONE WORLD



IN THIS UNIT

GRAMMAR
- present simple and present continuous
- action verbs and adverbs of frequency

VOCABULARY
- countries and regions
- modifiers
- adventure holiday activities

SCENARIO
- agreeing/disagreeing: holiday destinations
- making a choice

STUDY SKILLS
- understanding meaning (using a dictionary)

WRITING SKILLS
- describing a place (an online city guide)

'I change the world; the world changes me.' Libba Bray, 1964 – , US writer

SPEAKING

1a 1.1 **Discuss these questions with your partner and choose the correct answer. Then listen and check.**

1 How many different languages are there in the world?
under 100 about 200 over 300
2 How many countries use English as a main language? Can you name any of them?
15 30 60
3 What is the total number of English speakers in the world?
1 billion 2 billion 3 billion
4 What percentage of the internet is in English?
25% 55% 80%

1b Why are you learning English? When do you use English in your life?

READING

2a Read the homepage *My world, our world*. What is the website for?

2b Answer these questions.

1 What type of things are on the website?
2 The artist says 'the people of the world make this portrait of the world'. Why does he say that?
3 What language does the artist want the voice recordings to be in? Why?
4 Which sentence tells you how to see/find the photographs on the website?
5 Do you think the project matches the artist's aims?

my world, our world

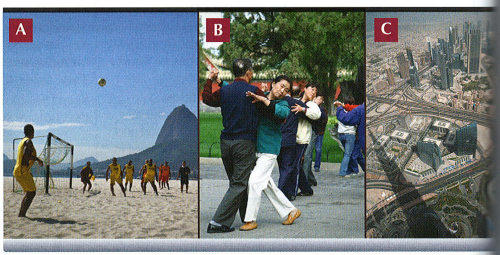
Welcome to a photography project that brings the world's favourite places together in one place – in this website.

My world, our world is a portrait of the world in sound and images, and the people of the world make this portrait of the world. People take a photograph of a favourite place and share it on this website. With each picture, the photographer adds a voice recording about their favourite place.

I want this art project to give us a unique view of the world and to bring people together. Would you like to take part? Here's what to do.

- Take a photograph of your favourite place.
- Make a voice recording to go with your photograph. Say who you are and where you are, and tell the world about your favourite place. Please use English.
- Post your photograph and MP3 recording on the website.

To submit a photograph and recording, click here.
To view the online exhibition, click here.



LISTENING

3a 1.2 **Summarise key points** Listen to three people on the website. Take notes to help you remember. After each recording, match the person with a picture on the website on page 6 and tell your partner what you can remember.

3b Listen again and answer these questions.

1 What do you think is the main reason Liu Shan goes to the park?
2 Why does Mo spend time at the top of the tower?
3 André plays beach football three times a week. True or false?
4 Transport to the beach is not a problem. True or false?
5 Which recordings and photographs do you find interesting? Why?

VOCABULARY

COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

4a Match these countries with the continents and regions.

China Canada Saudi Arabia Brazil Thailand Poland Ghana New Zealand

Europe North America South America Australasia the Arab World East Asia West Africa South-East Asia

4b What are the adjectives from the country and region nouns above?

China – Chinese

4c Do you ever visit other countries and regions? Do you know any people from other countries?

GRAMMAR

PRESENT SIMPLE AND CONTINUOUS

5a Which of these sentences are in the present simple (PS)? Which are in the present continuous (PC)?

1 Right now, people are dancing.
2 I'm studying science.
3 Currently, the beach is getting busy.
4 She comes to this park every week.
5 It is easy to get here.

5b Match these grammar notes (a–d) with the sentences above (1–5).

a This is a regular action or habit.
b This is an action happening now, or around now.
c This is a fact or general truth.
d This is a trend (i.e. a changing situation).

5c Find more examples of these grammar points in Audio script 1.2 on page 149. How do you make negative sentences with these tenses?

➥ Language reference and extra practice, pages 102–103

5d Complete these sentences. Use the present simple or present continuous of the verb in brackets.

1 I _____ at the café. Where are you? (wait)
2 She often _____ to the beach to relax. (go)
3 We _____ around Europe by train at the moment, before we go to university next year. (travel)
4 The sun _____ up in the east, and it _____ down in the west. (come, go)

GRAMMAR TIP

There are two types of verbs: state verbs and action verbs. State verbs usually describe feelings and situations, e.g. *be, have, know*. Action verbs describe activities and movements, e.g. *dance, play, hit*.

6a Underline the main verb in these sentences. Are they state or action verbs?

1 I'm a student.
2 The view is always different.
3 I'm playing football with my friends.
4 I love this part of the park.
5 She comes to this park every week.
6 People are taking photographs.

6b Which do you usually use for state verbs? Present simple or present continuous?

7 Complete this extract from *My world, our world*. Use the present simple or present continuous of the verbs.

Hi, I'm Lucy. I [1] _____(be) English and I [2] _____(live) in London. I'm here in Trafalgar Square, London – my favourite place. I [3] _____(love) coming here because it's the centre of the city but it [4] _____(have) a nice feeling. Right now, many people [5] _____(look) around and they [6] _____(take) photos. Everyone always [7] _____(feel) relaxed here. I [8] _____(study) photography at the moment, so I often [9] _____(take) a lot of photos of people in this square. Also, the National Gallery [10] _____(be) here, so I usually [11] _____(have) a coffee in the square and then [12] _____(visit) an exhibition at the gallery.

SPEAKING AND WRITING

8a **Long turn taking** Think of one of your favourite places. Draw a simple picture to represent it. Plan what to say in your short talk.

8b Work with a partner. Student A: give your talk while Student B listens, takes notes, then asks some questions. Then change roles.

8c Use your notes from your partner's talk to write a paragraph about his/her favourite place.

Ahmed's favourite place is the National Museum of Science. He goes there once a month because …

1.2

THE BIG CHILL

READING AND SPEAKING

1 **Discuss these questions with a partner.**

1 Are there seasons in your country? If so, what's your favourite season? Why?
2 Do you like winter? Why?/Why not?
3 What do you know about winter in Russia? What do you know about Siberia?

2a **Understanding genre** **Quickly read the introduction to the text below. Where is the text from? Why do you think this?**

1 a guidebook to Siberia
2 a book about climate change
3 a magazine about TV programmes

2b **Read the rest of the text. What is the topic of each paragraph (A–J)?**

paragraph A = the length of winter

2c **Read the text again. Complete the gaps (A–J) with these interview questions.**

1 Does winter last a long time?
2 And what's life like? Is it very difficult for people?
3 Really? Why do they do that?
4 How do people keep warm?
5 Is the climate changing? Are winters getting warmer?
6 Is it really cold?
7 What do Russians think about their cold winters?
8 I see. What about snow? How much snow is there in Siberia?
9 What about you? What do you think about winter in Siberia?
10 That's incredible! Why is it so cold?

Surviving Siberia

Wednesday 14 May 8 p.m. on Channel 7

Liam O'Connor is a familiar face in homes all over the country. Millions of us watch his documentaries. Now he's making a new programme about life in Russia. Here he tells Gaby Redmond about winter in Siberia.



A *Does winter last a long time?*
Yes, it does. Generally speaking, winter starts in September and lasts until May – so for about nine months. In the north, the sun never rises in December and January, and it's dark nearly all day.

B _____
Well, minus 30 or 40 degrees Celsius is normal, but in northern Siberia, the temperature sometimes drops to minus 60 or 70 degrees.

C _____
One reason is that, in the far north, the sun is always low in the sky and produces very little heat, so the ground stays cold all year. Another reason is that freezing winds come down from the Arctic because there are no mountains or trees to stop them.

D _____
It often snows, but it's rarely heavy. In the far north, snow cover lasts between 260 and 280 days.

E _____
Yes, they are. Definitely. Western Siberia is getting warmer faster than anywhere in the world. In fact, it's actually melting. And in some places in eastern Siberia, dangerous gases are rising from the ground. They're stopping the surface from freezing, even in the middle of winter. But it's still very cold!

F _____
They wear fur. In the West, we consider fur a luxury, but it's the only thing that keeps you warm when it's extremely cold.

G *And what's life like? Is it very difficult for people?*
Yes, it is. Without gloves, your fingers freeze. The little hairs in your nose freeze too. It's quite scary! The tyres of cars and lorries burst. Sometimes children can't go to school because it's so cold. They have lessons on TV!

H _____
Actually, they don't mind them. They enjoy a lot of outdoor sports. Ice-skating is the number-one sport – it's really popular. They also like cross-country skiing and ice-hockey. Reindeer racing is quite popular too. Some people swim in rivers and lakes in the sub-zero temperatures.

I _____
They say there are health benefits to swimming in icy water. It's a way to avoid colds. Also, it's a real community event. Everyone takes part – men, women and children.

J _____
Well, to tell you the truth, I love it! In my home city, Liverpool, the winters are usually cloudy and mild, and I don't like them much. You don't get many days when the weather's fine – you know, sunny and not raining. In Siberia, it's different. On bright sunny days, it's very beautiful.



3a Find words in the text (verbs, nouns and adjectives) that refer to winter weather.

cold, …

3b Complete these sentences with one or two words. Use the words you found above.

1 In my country, it _____ a lot in the mountains in winter.
2 The days are short, and it's already _____ at 4 p.m.
3 Driving on _____ roads is very dangerous.
4 When the _____ winds come from the north, it's very cold.

3c What other weather words do you know? Make a list of words to describe the weather in summer.

dry, clear, sunny …

VOCABULARY

MODIFIERS

4a Match these sentences with the pictures below.

1 It's extremely cold in Moscow in January.
2 It's very/really cold in Beijing in January.
3 In January, it's quite cold in London.



4b Talk about the cities in the chart on page 134 using *extremely*, *very/really* and *quite*, and the weather adjectives from Exercise 3.

It's extremely hot in Dubai in July.

4c Talk about places and things you know, using these adjectives and a modifier.

crowded dangerous interesting lively popular quiet scary

My city is very crowded.

GRAMMAR

PRESENT SIMPLE AND CONTINUOUS QUESTIONS

5a Look at Exercise 2c. Which questions are in the present simple? Which are in the present continuous?

5b Match 1–3 with a–c to complete these grammar notes.

1 When *be* is the main verb, you make present simple questions
2 When the main verb isn't *be*, you make present simple questions
3 You make present continuous questions

a with the auxiliary verb *do/does* + subject + infinitive of the main verb.
b with the auxiliary verb *am/is/are* + subject + *-ing* form of the main verb.
c with *am/is/are* before the subject.

➥ Language reference and extra practice, pages 102–103

6a Choose the best word to complete these questions. Then answer them.

1 When *is / do / does* winter start in Siberia?
2 Where *is / are / do* dangerous gases rising from the ground?
3 *Is / Does / Are* winter in Siberia getting warmer?
4 *Are / Am / Do* your fingers freeze in the very cold conditions?
5 *Do / Be / Are* winter sports popular in Siberia?
6 *What / Why / Where* does Liam like Siberia?

6b Underline the question words in Exercise 2c. What other question words do you know?

6c Put these words in order to make questions.

1 sad / you / days / do / on / feel / cloudy / ?
2 wearing / your / teacher / what's / today / ?
3 English / are / fun / learning / you / for / ?
4 time / your / how / spend / free / you / do / ?
5 friends / doing / what / now / are / your / ?
6 holiday / you / how much / year / have / every / do / ?

6d Take turns to ask and answer the questions in Exercise 6c with a partner.

SPEAKING

7 Discuss these questions in a group. Listen to your partners' answers and ask them questions about their views.

1 What is life like for people in very hot countries?
2 Is it better to live in a very hot country or a very cold country?
3 What is the difference between *weather* and *climate*?
4 What, in your opinion, is the perfect climate?
5 Is the climate changing in your country?
6 How does the climate affect the way people live in your country?

WRITING

8 Write five sentences about the climate in your country and the way the climate affects people. Use your ideas from Exercise 7.



MEET THE EXPERT

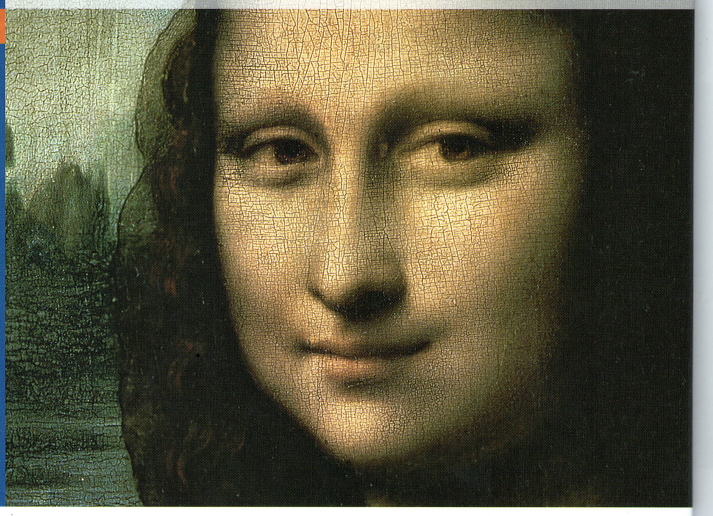
Watch an interview with James Moore, an expedition medical consultant, about living in extreme places.
Turn to page 126 for video activities.

Appendix E. A Sample of New Language Leader Intermediate Coursebook

Kent, S.; Falvey, D.; Rees, G.; Lebeau, I.; Cotton, D. (2014). *New Language Leader Intermediate.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

1 Personality

1.1 PERSONALITY TYPES



IN THIS UNIT

GRAMMAR
- question forms
- present simple and present continuous

VOCABULARY
- personality adjectives
- prefixes

SCENARIO
- giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, making suggestions
- choosing a new team member

STUDY SKILLS
- taking notes while reading

WRITING SKILLS
- a for and against essay

'My one regret in life is that I am not someone else.' Woody Allen 1935–, US film-maker, writer and actor

VOCABULARY
PERSONALITY ADJECTIVES

1a Work with a partner to think of as many personality adjectives as you can, e.g. *friendly, generous.*

1b Choose three adjectives which you think describe your own personality.

2 Look at these adjectives connected with personality. Which ones are positive, which are negative and which are neutral?

adventurous ambitious assertive
bossy cautious creative energetic
likeable moody organised quiet
reliable sensible sensitive serious
sociable talkative thoughtful

3 Match words 1–8 with words a–h to make compound adjectives connected with character.

1	easy-	a	working
2	open-	b	confident
3	even-	c	going
4	hard-	d	hearted
5	self-	e	tempered
6	strong-	f	willed
7	warm-	g	headed
8	level-	h	minded

PRONUNCIATION

4a 1.1 **Word stress** On which part of the compound adjective in Exercise 3 does the stress fall? Listen and check, then repeat the words.

4b Match the meanings below with an adjective from Exercise 3.

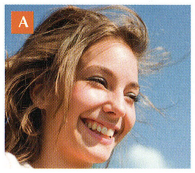
A person who …
1 does not easily become angry: *even-tempered*
2 is determined to do what they want: _____
3 is not easily upset or annoyed: _____
4 accepts other ideas and opinions: _____
5 makes a lot of effort: _____
6 believes in their own success: _____
7 behaves in a calm way even in a difficult situation: _____
8 is friendly, kind and generous: _____

4c Think of people you know and one or two adjectives to describe each person. Explain why you describe them like this. Give examples.

LISTENING

5a Look at the people in the photos and discuss. What kind of personality do you think each person has?

5b 1.2 Listen to the three people talking. Was your description of them accurate? A speaks first.







6

READING

6a Divide these adjectives into two groups according to personality types.

adventurous cautious enthusiastic
quiet reserved self-confident
talkative thoughtful

6b Now divide these jobs into two groups according to personality types. Which adjectives from Exercise 6a do you think go with which jobs? Work with a partner and explain your choices.

artist salesperson politician engineer
teacher inventor manager writer

7a Read the encyclopedia entry quickly and check your ideas in Exercise 6.

7b Read the text again. Are these statements true or false according to the text?

1 Jung thought of the terms extrovert and introvert.
2 The terms describe a person's way of looking at life.
3 Extroverts prefer to be surrounded by people rather than be on their own.
4 Introverts don't think carefully before they do things.
5 Scientists agree that extroverts are this personality type when they are born.
6 Introverts tend to be happier than extroverts.

8 Making connections Work with a partner and choose five jobs. Discuss what personality types the jobs would attract and why. Then discuss your choices with another pair.

computer programmer musician
tax inspector fashion model
librarian film director police officer
researcher songwriter journalist

SPEAKING

9 Work with a partner to discuss the following.

1 In your opinion, how useful do you think the two personality types are for describing personality?
2 What tells you more about a person's personality: their clothes, their body language, their voice, their attitude, their tastes or something else? Which is best in your opinion?

Extroverts and introverts



Everyone has a different personality. It is what makes people individuals and unique. However, there are some shared personality qualities which let us talk about personality 'types'. One of the most basic personality differences is between extroverts and introverts. These terms are used in many theories of personality types. They were made popular by the important Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875–1961), although he did not invent them. Extroversion and introversion are ways of describing a person's attitude to the world: do they move towards it or away from it?

Extroverts are people who look outwards. They are friendly, sociable, talkative, enthusiastic and self-confident. They are interested in a range of experiences and enjoy spending time with other people. They tend to act first, then think later. When extroverts feel bad, unmotivated or without energy, they look outside themselves. This means they might go shopping, call friends or have a party. Typical extrovert jobs are in politics, sales, teaching and management.

Introverts, on the other hand, look inwards. They feel more comfortable alone and enjoy ideas and thinking. They are reserved, quiet, thoughtful and may be shy. They like to think and consider before taking action, and will often analyse before speaking. In contrast to extroverts they value fewer, but deeper experiences. When feeling bad or stressed, introverts look inside themselves for energy and motivation. Introverts often work as artists, writers, engineers and inventors.

Although the types are different, most people have both extrovert and introvert characteristics in their personality, but often they are more one type than the other. There has been some interesting research into why people are basically extroverts or introverts. Some people say that extroverts and introverts are born not made. Others believe that environment is more important in shaping someone's personality.

Attitudes towards introverts and extroverts vary in different cultures. For example, Americans value extrovert qualities. However, cultures such as those in central Europe and south east Asia regard introvert characteristics more highly. Interestingly, research shows that people who live on islands tend to be more introverted. Studies have also found that extroverts have higher happiness levels than introverts.

1.2 EXPLORING PERSONALITY

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

1 **How useful do you think the following are for judging a person's character?**

personality tests handwriting analysis star signs/horoscopes interviews

2 **Have you ever done a personality test? If so, why?**

3a 1.3 **Listen to an interview with Dr Frank Partridge, an expert in psychometrics (the measurement of intelligence and personal qualities). Tick (✓) the topics covered in the interview.**

1 things that psychometric tests measure
2 the first tests
3 problems with personality tests
4 the Myers–Briggs test
5 the future of personality tests

3b **Complete the questions that the interviewer asks.**

1 What exactly _____ psychometrics _____?
2 How _____ psychometric testing _____?
3 _____ useful _____ the tests?
4 _____ they reliable?
5 What _____ personality tests _____ you about a person?
6 _____ you _____ any of these tests yourself?
7 What _____ you _____ on at the moment?

3c **Listen again and check your answers to Exercise 3b.**

GRAMMAR

QUESTION FORMS

4 **Look at the questions you completed in Exercise 3b. Which tense is used in each question?**

5 **Are these statements about question formation true or false? Correct the ones that are false.**

1 In questions with the verb *be*, we put the verb before the subject.
2 In present simple questions (except with *be*), we use the auxiliary verb *do/does*.
3 In past simple questions, we use the auxiliary verb *has/have*.
4 In present continuous questions, we put *do/does* before the subject.
5 In present perfect questions, we put *has/have* before the subject.

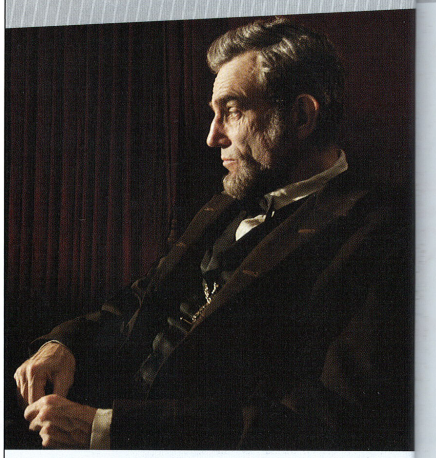
6 **Look at a and b below, then answer questions 1–3.**

a Who designed the Stanford–Binet test?
– Alfred Binet designed it.
b What did Alfred Binet design?
– Alfred Binet designed the first usable intelligence test.

1 In which question (a or b) is the *wh-* word the subject? (This is a subject question.)
2 In which question (a or b) is the *wh-* word the object? (This is an object question.)
3 In which type of question do we form the question with an auxiliary verb, e.g. *do/does, did*?

➥ Language reference and extra practice pages 126–127

METHOD



Some actors believe that they have to 'become' the people they play in order to give a convincing performance. Actors who think and behave in character to prepare for their roles are known as 'method actors'. Two classic examples today of method actors are Daniel Day-Lewis and Johnny Depp.

Daniel Day-Lewis is undoubtedly the greatest method actor of our time. He has won three Oscars for best male actor – more than any other male actor. He works only when it suits him. He does not act for the money. He chooses roles in films that are difficult to play and tries to understand totally the thoughts and emotions of the personalities he portrays.

He prepares thoroughly for roles and finds ways in which he can 'live' in a character. He becomes completely involved in the character. For the film *The Boxer*, he devised a training schedule: twice a day in the gym, seven days a week for three years. He became so fit that he could have entered the ring professionally.

His method acting also appeared when he played the role of Christy Brown, the Irish artist with cerebral palsy, in the film *My Left Foot*. Day-Lewis stayed in a wheelchair while on set, spoke like a person with cerebral palsy, and asked crew members to spoon-feed him and wheel him about. At this time, he taught himself to paint, like Brown, using his toes.

ACTING

One of his most difficult roles was when he played the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, in Steven Spielberg's film *Lincoln*. According to one critic, he 'eases into a role of epic difficulty as if it were a coat he had been wearing for years'. He stayed in character during the production, speaking at all times in Lincoln's Kentucky accent.

Another famous method actor is Johnny Depp. He often stays in character during a film. He likes to paint a portrait of a new character to help him find the person's face and personality. For example, he painted the Mad Hatter, for the film *Alice in Wonderland*, with tangerine hair. One of his best known roles is as Edward Scissorhands. *Edward Scissorhands* is a film about an artificial man named Edward who has scissors for hands. Depp was so committed to the role that he passed out from heat exhaustion in one scene.

Johnny Depp has described his feelings after finishing the film: 'I can remember when I finished *Edward Scissorhands* looking in the mirror as the girl was doing my make-up for the last time and thinking, "Wow, this is it. I'm saying goodbye to Edward Scissorhands." You know it was kind of sad. But in fact, I think they're all still somehow in there ... With any part you play, there is a certain amount of yourself in it. There has to be, otherwise, it's just not acting. It's lying.'



7a Put the words in the right order to make questions from a personality test.

1 do / ever / you / get / worried / ?
2 you / are / a / confident / person / ?
3 you / do / make / easily / friends / ?
4 makes / happy / what / you / ?
5 who / you / phone / do / when / you / worried / are / ?
6 in your life / influence / who / the / biggest / is / ?
7 test / you / a / ever / have / personality / taken / ?
8 worry / about / do / what / you / the / most / ?
9 influenced / you / at / school / most / who / the / ?
10 best / advice / gives / you / who / the / ?

7b Work with a partner to ask and answer the questions.

8 Work with a partner to complete a text about Sigmund Freud. Take turns to ask and answer questions. Prepare your questions first.

Student A: turn to page 163.
Student B: turn to page 157.

A: Who was born on 6th May 1856?
B: Sigmund Freud.

Yunus Emre
- What inspires you?
- How did you decide to write poems?
- Would you change any work of yours?

READING

9 Look at the photos of two actors. What do you know about them and their style of acting?

10a Read the first paragraph of the article. What is 'method acting'?

10b You are going to read an article about two method actors and how they prepare for a character. Scan the article and name three films that Daniel Day-Lewis appeared in and two films that Johnny Depp appeared in.

10c Read the article again. Find examples of how the two actors were committed to the roles they played in each of the films mentioned.

10d Reacting to the text Read the final paragraph again. Work with a partner and talk about the film character you have found most difficult to say goodbye to, and why.

11 Discuss these questions in groups.

1 Which actor would you most like to meet, and why?
2 Do you know any other films that these actors appeared in? What did you think of those films?
3 Do you know of any other method actors?

WRITING

12 Imagine you are going to meet a famous person, dead or alive (e.g. a famous leader in history, a film star, a pop star, a character in a book). Write down five questions you would like to ask this person. Then compare your questions with a partner.



MEET THE EXPERT

Watch an interview with Michael Gould, a professional actor, about method acting.
Turn to page 150 for video activities.

relative clause → örnekler