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LISTENING DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY A1 LEVEL LEARNERS LEARNING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE[1]

Oytun Yarar[2]

Dilek Fidan[3]

Abstract

The subject of this study, which pertains to the listening skill in foreign language education, aims to investigate the listening difficulties experienced by A1 level learners who are learning Turkish as a foreign language. To achieve this aim, the "Model of Listening Difficulties Experienced by A1 Level Learners Learning Turkish as a Foreign Language ", which was prepared by compiling similar studies in the literature and consists of perception, parsing, grammar, task and strategy use dimensions, was used. The model was applied to a total of 96 (57 male and 39 female) learners using the correlational design. While there are statistically significant differences in the perception, parsing and task dimensions of the Model, there is no significant difference in the strategy use and grammar dimensions According to the research results, gender variable has not had an impact on listening difficulties. On the other hand, age and native language variables were found to be statistically significant. In the light of these findings, it has been revealed that learners' metacognitive awareness should be increased, teachers should take a more active role in the process, and listening activities should be prepared to reinforce listening skills rather than testing knowledge.

Keywords: model of listening problems, skill of listening, teaching listening

[1] This study was produced from the unpublished master's thesis titled "Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğrenen A1 Düzeyi Öğrenicilerin Yaşadığı Dinleme Zorlukları", which was done under the supervision of Doç. Dr. Dilek Fidan.

[2] 30 Ağustos Primary School, Kocaeli, Türkiye. oytunakkoc@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-2704-4041

[3] Assoc. Prof. Dr, Kocaeli University, Faculty of Education, Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language, dilek.fidan@kocaeli.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-1349-580X

Introduction

In effective oral communication, the nearly flawless execution of the listening act is as crucial for the seamless flow of discourse as the accurate encoding of the target language by both the sender and receiver, allowing them to reciprocally fulfill speech reception and speech production actions. A fundamental element for the healthy continuation of communication is the accurate decoding of this code in addition to its proper encoding. However, it is undeniable that language learners encounter certain difficulties in the process of enhancing their listening skills in the target language. Funk and Funk (1989) emphasize that, particularly due to traditional teaching methods used in language instruction for listening activities, the development of this skill lags behind other language skills such as speaking, writing, and reading. Richards (2008) delves into the relationship between listening and language learning, highlighting how the listener's focus on the language heard during speech can facilitate the language learning process. The conscious awareness directed towards the language heard during speech plays a crucial role in how it can ease the acquisition of new words and structures.

Listening Skill, Listening in the Native Language, and Listening in a Foreign Language

Rost (2013) views listening as a quantifiable outcome depending on the language spoken and the extent to which it is understood. Güneş (2013) defines listening as the accurate perception of auditory stimuli from the environment, emphasizing not only hearing but also the proper processing of the information in the individual's mind based on perception and interest. Purdy (1997) defines listening as a skill without which understanding anything is impossible, considering it indispensable for success in both personal and professional life, as well as a crucial condition for maintaining health. Brown (1987) argues that listening is the fundamental source of communication throughout an individual's life. Oxford (1993) defines the listening skill through the concepts of input and perceptual input, stating that attention and the importance of the input for the individual are necessary for any input reaching the human mind to transform into a listening act. According to her, the primary condition for understanding what is heard in language teaching is exposure to meaningful input. Krashen (2017) defines input as the environmental

components needed in the language acquisition process; this input can include materials, sources, and tools that can capture learners' attention, as well as the prior knowledge that learners bring. Therefore, he emphasizes that the input learners are exposed to during the learning process is necessary for language learning because exposure to the correct type and amount of input affects and even accelerates language learning. The listening skill exhibits differences in native and second language acquisition. Rost (2013) states that individuals with a healthy nervous system under normal circumstances can successfully acquire their native languages. In native language acquisition, children learn their languages by listening from the moment they are born, and this process occurs naturally. Second language listeners, often having a more limited vocabulary compared to native language listeners, may struggle to recognize words and expressions in the text they listen to; they may need guidance in effective listening strategies such as word prediction, deriving meaning from context, and using visual cues. Learners who fail to master these strategies may find it challenging to fully comprehend the texts they listen to.

Listening Approaches and Types

In the field of language teaching, there have been two predominant views on listening categorized as bottom-up and top-down approaches, based on the direction of cognitive processes (Nunan, 1998. These are the bottom-up processing approach and the top-down interpretation approach. The bottom-up processing approach considers the listening process as an analytical process. According to this view, the listening process is a linear analysis process starting from the smallest meaningful units of the heard sounds and progressing toward complete texts. The heard sounds are dissected into phonemes, and words, expressions, and utterances are assembled. These units are then brought together to create meaningful texts. Meaning is derived in the final step of this process. The listener's vocabulary and grammatical competence in a language provide the basic input for bottom-up processing. The input is scanned from familiar words, and grammatical knowledge is used to decipher the relationship between sentence elements. Clark and Clark (1977) summarize this type of listening as follows:

1. Listeners receive raw speech and hold a phonemic representation of it in their memories.
2. They attempt to break down the phonemic representation into components, determining their contents and functions.
3. They internalize each component and then construct the underlying meaning, continuously adding to the components they understand.
4. Once a component is grasped, they store them in working memory, facilitating the removal of the phonemic representation from memory at certain points. In doing so, they forget word clusters but retain the meaning.

The other approach, known as top-down interpretation, requires listeners or readers to use their existing knowledge to interpret the text and create reasonable expectations about what they will hear or read (Goodman, 2014; Smith, 2012). The top-down listening approach suggests that pre-existing knowledge and expectations influence the understanding of the heard language material during the listening process. According to this approach, listeners attempt to understand the listening material by using their pre-existing grammar and comprehension skills. Therefore, the listener tries to understand the heard language as a whole, combining its subcomponents to create meaning. Manihuruk and Sidabutar (2022) investigated the impact of bottom-up and top-down strategies on listening skills. Participants were divided into experimental and control groups, with the experimental group being taught both bottom-up and top-down strategies. The research found that using both bottom-up and top-down strategies had a statistically significant effect on listening skills.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study on listening skills is to identify the difficulties faced by A1 level learners learning Turkish as a foreign language. In line with this aim, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Do the listening difficulties experienced by A1 learners of Turkish as a foreign language differ by gender?
2. Do the listening difficulties experienced by A1 learners of Turkish as a foreign language differ by age?

3. Do the listening difficulties experienced by A1 learners of Turkish as a foreign language differ by native language?
4. What is the relationship between the sub-dimensions (perception, parsing, grammar, task, and strategy use) in the "Listening Difficulties Model of A1 Level Individuals Learning Turkish as a Foreign Language"?

Method

The aim of this study is to identify the listening difficulties experienced by A1 level learners learning Turkish as a foreign language. In line with this objective, the study utilized the correlational design, which is one of the non-experimental designs of quantitative research. According to Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel (2008), the correlational design is a type of correlation study conducted to determine relationships between two or more variables and provide information about cause-and-effect relationships.

Universe and Sample

The universe of this research includes all A1 level learners learning Turkish as a foreign language during the 2021-2022 academic year. The sample consists of a total of 96 A1 level learners (57 males, 39 females) who voluntarily participated in the study and were learning Turkish as a foreign language at the Kocaeli University Language Teaching Application and Research Center during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Limitations

The data for this study are limited to A1 level learners, and other proficiency levels are excluded. The reason for choosing the A1 level is that it represents the initial stage of exposure to Turkish input for learners, and success or failure in understanding at this stage may influence language motivation at later levels.

Data Collection Tools and Implementation

To collect the data for this study, ethical approval was obtained from the Kocaeli University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Board on May 6, 2021, with approval number 51025. Subsequently, a model titled "Listening Difficulties Model of A1 Level Individuals Learning Turkish as a Foreign

Language" was developed based on the works of Goh (2000), Hasan (2000), Graham (2006), Nowrouzi, Tam, Zareian and Nimehchisalem (2015), and Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016). The model consists of five (5) sub-dimensions: perception, parsing, grammar, task, and strategy use. The model was translated into four languages (Turkish, English, French, and Arabic) and learners answered the questions in their proficient language. After scoring the obtained data, the responses were categorized based on the research questions, and analyses were conducted using SPSS 26.0.

Validity and Reliability

To construct the Model used for collecting quantitative data in the study, a literature review was conducted, and a form consisting of 41 items under three subheadings was prepared, based on the findings of studies related to listening difficulties in teaching other languages. To ensure the content validity of this form, the Model was examined by an instructional technology specialist and three Turkish language teaching experts. After obtaining expert opinions, the number of items in the form was reduced to 35. After calculating the averages for each sub-dimension of the study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the Model. The reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of the Model and all Model items are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Participants	Cronbach's Alpha
Perception	3.20	0.66	96	0.681
Parsing	2.96	0.51	96	0.601
Grammar	2.69	0.71	96	0.640
Task	2.71	0.54	96	0.741
Strategy Use	3.29	0.95	96	0.459
All answers	**2.97**	**0.67**	**96**	**0.876**

Table 1's subcategories and coefficients indicate that the obtained values are considered sufficient for the reliability of the model according to the literature. However, the reliability coefficient for the sub-dimension of "Strategy Usage" was found to be 0.459 (unacceptable). It is believed that this low value may be associated with the quantitatively limited number of items designated for strategy usage. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for

all model items was found to be 0.876 (good). Consequently, the obtained values suggest that the model is reliable and suitable for use in the study.

Findings

In the subsequent section of this study, which aims to identify the difficulties experienced by A1 level learners learning Turkish as a foreign language in listening, the findings of the data obtained through the applied Model will be presented. In this context, the first research question of the study is, "Do the listening difficulties experienced by A1 learners of Turkish as a foreign language differ by gender?"

The Impact of Gender on Listening Difficulties in Turkish Learning

To investigate whether the listening difficulties experienced by learners are statistically significant based on the gender variable and to understand the effect of this variable on the five sub-dimensions of the study, a descriptive statistics table was created, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Gender Averages in Terms of Listening Difficulties in Turkish Learning

Dimension	Gender	Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation
Perception	Male	57	3.26	,65685
	Female	39	3.10	,66778
Parsing	Male	57	3.02	,47482
	Female	39	2.87	,54518
Grammar	Male	57	2.78	,69386
	Female	39	2.56	,73328
Task	Male	57	2.77	,50434
	Female	39	2.62	,57143
Strategy Use	Male	57	3.40	,93751
	Female	39	3.13	,95778

When examining the gender averages in Table 2 in terms of listening difficulties, it is observed that in all sub-dimensions of the study, the averages for males are higher than those for females. To determine whether this finding is statistically significant, a t-test was conducted. Table 3 presents the findings related to the average values of men and women in all sub-dimensions of the study in terms of listening difficulties.

Table 3. Findings Regarding Gender in Terms of Listening Difficulties in Turkish Learning

		Levene Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means				
Dimension		**F**	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error of the Difference**
Perception	Equal variances not assumed.	0.286	0.594	1.178	94	0.242	0.162	0.137
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.174	80.9	0.244	0.162	0.138
Parsing	Equal variances not assumed.	0.557	0.458	1.433	94	0.155	0.150	0.105
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.396	74.1	0.167	0.150	0.108
Grammar	Equal variances not assumed.	0.095	0.759	1.482	94	0.142	0.219	0.148
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.466	78.8	0.147	0.219	0.149
Task	Equal variances not assumed.	0.631	0.429	1.387	94	0.169	0.153	0.111
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.355	74.9	0.180	0.153	0.113
Strategy Use	Equal variances not assumed.	0.003	0.960	1.401	94	0.165	0.275	0.197
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.395	80.6	0.167	0.275	0.197

When examining Table 3, the results of the Levene test for the equality of variances were evaluated based on the sigma value. When the sigma value was assessed within the 95% confidence interval for all sub-dimensions of the Model, it was observed that these results did not create a significant difference. In other words, there is no statistically significant difference in

the performance of understanding spoken language between women and men in terms of gender.

The second question of the research is whether the listening difficulties experienced by A1 level learners of Turkish as a foreign language vary according to age. The findings related to this question are provided below.

The Impact of the Age Factor on Listening Difficulties in Turkish Language Learning

To address this question, the sample, ranging from 15 to 51 years old, was divided into three age groups: under 20, 20-25, and over 26. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the extent to which the age factor influences the listening difficulties experienced by A1 level individuals learning Turkish as a foreign language in the five sub-dimensions of the research.

In the created table, it was observed that the age group of 26 and above faced the most difficulties in the dimensions of perception, parsing, task, and strategy use; whereas, in the grammar dimension, the age group facing the most difficulties was the 20-25 age group. To determine whether this finding was statistically significant, an ANOVA analysis was conducted. According to the results of this analysis, a significant difference between groups was found only in the perception dimension ($p < 0.05$), while no significant difference was observed between groups in the other dimensions.

Subsequently, a homogeneity test and post-hoc analysis were conducted to identify which groups had a significant difference in the perception dimension. The results of the homogeneity test indicated that it was appropriate to conduct a post-hoc analysis for the perception dimension. The findings of the post-hoc analysis for the perception dimension are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings Regarding Age in Terms of Listening Difficulties in Turkish Language Learning

Dimension	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Perception	Under 20 years old	20-25 years old	-,32464	,15611	,120
		26 years and older	-,64625*	,14842	,000
	20-25 years old	Under 20 years old	,32464	,15611	,120
		26 years and older	-,32161	,15250	,114
	26 years and older	Under 20 years old	,64625*	,14842	,000
		20-25 years old	,32161	,15250	,114

When examining Table 4, a significant difference is observed in the perception dimension between those under 20 years old and those in the 26-51 age range ($p<.05$). This indicates that the group under 20 years old experiences less difficulty in terms of listening difficulties in the perception dimension compared to the group aged 26 and older. In other words, the group aged 26 and older experiences more difficulty in the perception dimension compared to the group under 20 years old.

The third research question of the study investigates whether there is a difference in the listening difficulties of A1 level learners of Turkish as a foreign language based on their native language. The findings related to this question are presented below.

The Impact of Native Language Differences on Listening Difficulties in Turkish Language Learning

The 26 different native languages of the 96 participants in the study were categorized into four main groups: Afro-Asiatic languages, Indo-European languages, Altaic languages, and Austronesian languages. Subsequently, to answer the research question, a descriptive statistics table was created to understand the impact of native language differences on the five sub-dimensions of the study. Upon examining the mean values in the table, individuals with native languages belonging to the Austronesian language family were observed to experience the most difficulty.

Later, to determine whether this finding was statistically significant, an ANOVA analysis was conducted. It was found that there was a significant difference between groups in the perception, parsing, and task dimensions ($p<.05$). Before the post-hoc analysis to identify which language groups had significant differences in these dimensions, a homogeneity test was conducted. According to the results of this test, it was concluded that the variances of the groups were homogeneous ($p>.05$). Subsequently, post-hoc analyses were conducted for the perception, parsing, and task dimensions. The findings of these analyses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Findings Regarding Native Language Differences in Listening Difficulties in Turkish Language Learning

Dimension	(I) Language Group	(J) Language Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Perception	Afro-Asiatic	Indo-European	0.20	0.14	0.65
		Altaic	0.61	0.27	0.28
		Austronesian	-0.35	0.23	0.65
	Indo-European	Afro-Asiatic	-0.20	0.14	0.65
		Altaic	0.41	0.27	0.67
		Austronesian	-0.55	0.23	0.22
	Altaic	Afro-Asiatic	-0.61	0.27	0.28
		Indo-European	-0.41	0.27	0.67
		Austronesian	-0.96*	0.32	**0.05**
	Austronesian	Afro-Asiatic	0.35	0.23	0.65
		Indo-European	0.55	0.23	0.22
		Altaic	0.96*	0.32	**0.05**
Parsing	Afro-Asiatic	Indo-European	0.17	0.11	0.50
		Altaic	.60408*	0.17	**0.03**
		Austronesian	-0.08	0.16	1.00
	Indo-European	Afro-Asiatic	-0.17	0.11	0.50
		Altaic	0.43	0.16	0.15
		Austronesian	-0.25	0.16	0.59
	Altaic	Afro-Asiatic	-,60408*	0.17	**0.03**
		Indo-European	-0.43	0.16	0.15
		Austronesian	-,68571*	0.20	**0.03**
	Austronesian	Afro-Asiatic	0.08	0.16	1.00
		Indo-European	0.25	0.16	0.59

		Altaic	,68571*	0.20	**0.03**
Task	Afro-Asiatic	Indo-Eurpoean	0.24	0.11	0.17
		Altaic	,74653*	0.17	**0.01**
		Austronesian	-0.01	0.18	1.00
	Indo-European	Afro-Asiatic	-0.24	0.11	0.17
		Altaic	0.51	0.16	**0.05**
		Austronesian	-0.25	0.17	0.70
	Altaic	Afro-Asiatic	-,74653*	0.17	**0.01**
		Indo-European	-0.51	0.16	**0.05**
		Austronesian	-,76000*	0.22	**0.03**
	Austronesian	Afro-Asiatic	0.01	0.18	1.00
		Indo-European	0.25	0.17	0.70
		Altaic	,76000*	0.22	**0.03**

Table 5 reveals significant differences in the perception dimension between Altaic languages and Austronesian languages, in the parsing dimension between Altaic languages and Austronesian languages as well as between Afro-Asiatic languages, and in the task dimension between Altaic languages and all other language families ($p < .05$). This implies that participants speaking Altaic languages experience fewer difficulties in the perception dimension compared to those speaking Austronesian languages, in the parsing dimension compared to those speaking Austronesian and Afro-Asiatic languages, and in the task dimension compared to those speaking all other languages. In other words, participants speaking Austronesian languages experience more difficulties in the perception dimension, Austronesian and Afro-Asiatic languages in the parsing dimension, and Austronesian, Afro-Asiatic, and Indo-European languages in the task dimension compared to those speaking Altaic languages.

The fourth and final research question of the study investigates the relationship between the sub-dimensions (perception, parsing, grammar, task, and strategy use) in the Listening Difficulties Model for Individuals at A1 Level Learning Turkish as a Foreign Language. The findings related to this question are presented below.

Correlation Regarding the Sub-dimensions of the Study

This research conducted a correlation analysis for all sub-dimensions of the "Model of Listening Difficulties Experienced by A1 Level Individuals Learning Turkish as a Foreign Language," which was developed based on the literature. The findings of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Findings of Correlation Analysis for the Sub-Dimensions of the Research

Dimension	Coefficent	Perception	Parsing	Grammar	Task	Strategy Use
Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	,611*	,222*	,522*	,463*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,030	,000	,000
Parsing	Pearson Correlation	,611*	1	,496*	,676*	,551*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000
Grammar	Pearson Correlation	,222*	,496*	1	,478*	,242*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,030	,000		,000	,017
Task	Pearson Correlation	,522*	,676*	,478*	1	,496*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000
Strategy Use	Pearson Correlation	,463*	,551*	,242*	,496*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,017	,000	

When examining Table 6, it is observed that all correlations are statistically significant, and there is a positive correlation between all dimensions ($p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$). In other words, these results indicate a relationship between dimensions; a learner experiencing difficulty in one dimension may also experience difficulty in others. When examining the correlations between dimensions, it is seen that there is a moderate positive relationship between perception and parsing (0.61), perception and task (0.52), parsing and task (0.67), and parsing and strategy use (0.55). There are low-level positive relationships between perception and grammar (0.22), perception and strategy use (0.46), parsing and grammar (0.49), grammar and task (0.47), grammar and strategy use (0.24), and task and strategy use (0.49).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the listening difficulties experienced by A1 level learners of Turkish as a foreign language, and a model was developed to identify these difficulties. Based on the developed model, it was observed that listening difficulties did not have a significant effect on the gender variable. The literature reveals varied results regarding the influence of gender on language learning and language use: some studies, such as Boyle (1987) and Yılmaz and Yavuz (2015), suggest that gender has no significant impact on language learning, and the performance of women and men in language learning is similar. On the other hand, studies like Oxford R. and

Crookall D. (1989) indicate that women outperform men, while Brimer (1969) reports that men are more successful than women.

Yılmaz and Yavuz (2015) found no gender effect on the listening difficulties of 10-year-old children learning English in their study. Boyle (1987), in an experimental study with Chinese university students, showed that although girls were superior in overall language proficiency, boys had higher average scores in listening and vocabulary. Kimura (2008) stated that gender did not have a significant effect on confidence and anxiety regarding English listening.

In conclusion, the findings of this study align with some studies suggesting that gender may not be a decisive factor in language learning and specifically in overcoming listening difficulties. The complexity of language learning and the interplay of various factors make it essential to consider multiple variables when examining the impact of gender on language skills.

In the study, a significant difference was found in the perception dimension between the age group under 20 and the age range of 26-51. Learners under 20 experience less difficulty in the perception dimension compared to learners in the age range of 26-51. This finding can be explained by differences in cognitive processes depending on age: as age advances, cognitive processing may slow down, and there may also be decreases in auditory ability. Sommers et al. (2011) suggest that age-related decreases in speech perception and phonemic discrimination abilities may be a result of auditory decline.

Therefore, the higher perception rates of younger learners may imply that their cognitive skills are more dynamic than those of the other group. However, since the age range of 26-51 is actually a wide age range, further studies that divide the 26-51 age range into two or more age groups and measure participants' cognitive performance and hearing levels before the study will make the data more reliable. In addition to changes in age-related cognitive abilities, other factors such as participants' previous language learning experiences and even cultural differences can also be variables that affect the findings. For example, cultural factors or socioeconomic status can influence perception skills. Therefore, in future studies, considering these variables will be beneficial.

In the study, statistically significant differences were observed in the perception dimension based on participants' native languages: there is a

significant difference between learners whose native language is one of the Altaic languages and learners whose native language is one of the Austronesian languages. In the perception dimension, learners whose native language is one of the Altaic languages experience less difficulty than learners whose native language is one of the Austronesian languages. This can be explained by the structural similarity between the Altaic clanguages spoken by other Altaic language speakers and Turkish. In this case, learners from Altaic languages are expected to adapt more quickly to the structural features of Turkish.

For instance, in Austronesian languages, sentence structure is generally formed as subject-verb-object. For example, in Indonesian ("Indonesian Word Order," 2023), the sentence "Saya (I) makan (eat) nasi (rice)" exemplifies this structure. On the other hand, in Altaic languages, sentence structure is typically subject-object-verb. For example, in Mongolian ("Mongolian Grammar Forms," 2023), the sentence "I am going to school" is expressed as "Би ([bi]-I) сургууль д ([surguuld]-to school) очиж байна ([ochij bayna]-am going)".

In addition, another reason why learners whose native language is one of the Altaic languages perform better in the perception dimension may be their greater familiarity with the Turkish sound system. On the other hand, Austronesian languages constitute a language family that includes languages such as Indonesian, Malay, Tagalog, Farsi, and Maori. These languages have fewer similarities with Turkish in terms of phonetics and grammar. Tonal languages, where tone plays a dominant role, can change the meaning based on tonal variations. For example, in Vietnamese ("Tones and Accents," 2023), when the word "má" is pronounced with high or low tones, it takes on different meanings: when tonally pronounced as "má," it means 'mother,' whereas when pronounced as "mạ," it means 'rice bran.' Altaic languages, generally, are less complex in terms of tone usage, and the role of tone in changing meaning is not as dominant as in, for example, Chinese.

In this context, considering that individuals whose native language is, for instance, Chinese are more sensitive to tonal changes, it would be useful to investigate how the performance of speakers of tonal languages is in Turkish listening skills through further studies.

In the dimension of parsing, a significant difference was found between learners whose native language is one of the Altaic languages and learners whose native language is one of the Austronesian or Afro-Asiatic languages. In other words, learners from Altaic languages experience less difficulty in parsing compared to learners from Austronesian languages and Afro-Asiatic languages. It is known that parsing problems can occur during the process of creating understandable representations of heard words in the mind (Goh, 2000). In light of this information, it is thought that learners speaking Altaic languages may create representations of Turkish words and structures in their minds faster than those speaking other languages.

In the dimension of task, it is possible to attribute the significant difference between learners whose native language is Altaic languages and learners whose native languages belong to all other language families to the structural similarities in Altaic languages.

No significant difference was found in the dimension of strategy use. The average score for the dimension of strategy use in the Model was higher than the other dimensions. In other words, learners experience the most difficulty in the dimension of strategy use. After expert opinions, the number of items related to strategy use in the Model was reduced by half. Therefore, it is considered that the reason for the high average in the dimension of strategy use is the inadequacy of the number of items. Kök (2018) mentions a positive correlation between listening skills and listening strategies. Thus, further studies are needed to examine in more detail how well learners know the use of strategies and the relationship between their native languages.

Listening strategies are techniques that help learners improve their listening skills. In language teaching processes, strategies such as pre-listening preparation, identifying keywords in advance, making predictions, taking notes while listening, repeating, and asking about unclear parts have been used. These strategies help learners focus their attention, understand, and remember. Additionally, they contribute to learners' language learning in a more active and conscious way. When reviewing the literature, studies that show a relationship between strategy usage and listening skills (Graham, 2006; Kök, 2018; Vandergrift, 2003) are encountered. Vandergrift (2003) indicates that the use of metacognitive strategies improves listening skills; Graham (2006) states that participants do not know which strategies to use

while listening and that strategies from whole to part and from part to whole need to be taught to learners. When examining the literature, there are studies (Moore, 2012; Rahmadhani, 2017; Manihuruk and Sidabutar, 2022) that suggest that strategies related to whole-to-part and part-to-whole listening approaches improve listening skills. Moore (2012) implemented various listening activities including strategies from part to whole through Google Classroom for ten weeks and found that these strategies improved listening skills. Rahmadhani (2017) taught a synthesis of strategies from whole to part and part to whole to participants and found that 96% of participants increased their listening test scores by at least 20 points compared to before.

In summary, the lack of listening practice and proficiency leads to challenges for learners in overcoming real-world communication difficulties. In this context, insufficient use of specific strategies required for listening skills and deficiencies in teaching methods have resulted in the neglect of these skills compared to other language abilities. Effectively teaching listening skills begins with accurately identifying the challenges learners face. Recognizing listening difficulties guides teachers and material developers in better addressing the needs of learners, ultimately enhancing the overall language learning process.

In conclusion, in addition to the points mentioned above, the following recommendations can be made to address the listening challenges faced by A1 level learners of Turkish as a foreign language:

- Conducting further studies to publish works addressing listening issues identified in the literature will contribute to overcoming the listening challenges individuals face during language learning.
- Teaching learners listening strategies to increase their metacognitive awareness. Such efforts will help learners understand what and why they are struggling to learn, enabling them to effectively address challenges.
- Providing in-service training to teachers on using listening strategies, aiming to eliminate differences among educators and ensuring a certain standard in strategy implementation.
- Developing activities in prepared listening materials that prioritize whole-to-part strategies. Encouraging learners to use background information will stimulate their engagement. Consequently,

teachers, by anticipating the challenges learners may face, can encourage students to predict unknown words from context instead of trying to understand each word individually.

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