



Effective variables that predict 5th grade Turkish students' success in listening comprehension of Turkish language

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Abstract

The aim of this quantitative study was to scrutinize the significance levels in logistic regression model used for classifying Turkish listening comprehension success (successful/unsuccessful) of the 5th grade Turkish students taking compulsory Turkish language course. The study was conducted with 286 students at 5th grade in six different private schools in Ankara, Turkey in 2017-2018 school year. In the study, Reading and Listening Comprehension Test and Student Information Questionnaire were utilized as the data collection tools. The study was based on the relational screening model. For the data analysis the Logistic Regression analysis was used. As a result of the analysis, in terms of the probability of predicting whether Turkish students were successful in Turkish listening comprehension or not; it was observed that the variables such as gender, success in reading, time-frequency allocated to in-class and out-of-class activities, note-taking while listening, listening homework, and how many books each student has were significantly effective.

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Keywords: Listening comprehension; 5th grade students; rubric; logistic regression analysis

1. Introduction

Today which is labeled as the information age and in which personal abilities shine out, individuals need to communicate with others in the society in order to share their feelings and thoughts, to obtain new information and to live in a balanced way. Effective use of language, which is the essential element of interpersonal communication, enables individuals to establish good communication with others in society and more effective learning environment in the field of education based on the developments at listening, speaking, reading and writing which are considered as necessary language skills.

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Listening which is the first and only skill for understanding throughout pre-literacy, forms the basis of all language skills (Özbay, 2005).

Researchers define listening skill as a process of interpretation and comprehension of the sounds in the mind which is heard (Ergin & Birol, 2000; Kurt, 2008). According to this; it can be said that listening starts with hearing but unlike hearing, there is a state of understanding and interpreting a verbal input in the listening process (Kurt, 2008). In other words, the meaning is not readily available in the text; to understand the text, by taking an active role, the listener chooses the appropriate information in his mind, then organizes, interprets and associates it with the new information. At the end of this process, it produces meaning (Reutzel & Cooter, 1996). Therefore, comprehension is considered as an interaction between word recognition, knowledge and comprehension skills (Bodie, Worthington, Imhof & Cooper, 2008) In the process of understanding, the listener is not interested in getting all the information contained in the oral text. Listening is made for a specific purpose; therefore, the selection of specific information from the text is carried out (Rost, 2002).

The aim of Turkish course is to develop four basic language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Listening and reading are comprehension; speaking and writing are narrative skills. These skills are closely linked to each other. The development of one skill contributes to the development of other skills (Diakidoy, Stylianos, Karefillidou & Papageorgiou, 2005). While an individual acts as the "receiver" of the incoming messages in the understanding process, the individual plays the role of "transmitter" in the narration process by transferring the feelings and thoughts as a whole. Considering that, communication is an exchange of emotions and thoughts, the importance of comprehension and narrative skills are better understood. Along with this, in order to start the communication, the message must be understood by the receiver. In this respect, comprehension skills come to the forefront as the primary step in the communication process. As mentioned earlier, listening is the most commonly used one of these skills in daily life, and listening skill forms the basis of other language skills (Özbay, 2005).

Researchers state that most of the information we learn is gained through listening. Accordingly, it is expressed that a primary school student devotes 42% of his time in school to listening, 32% to talking, 15% to reading, and 11% to writing (Robertson, 2008).

Although listening skill is seen as a skill which is related to Turkish course, considering that one of the most basic ways of comprehension is listening, the failure to develop this skill properly affects the academic success of individuals in other courses in a negative way. The individual with advanced listening skill understands and learns the information s/he encounters during her education life much better than the individual with no listening skill (Özbay & Çetin, 2011). Taşer (2006) states that failures in examinations are the result of a lack of reading and listening skills. Mackay (1997)

emphasizes that listening is the key to success and learning, and opens up new horizons for students. Studies also show that one cannot be successful without being a good listener (Bulut, 2013; Fidan, 2012; Mackay, 1997; Özbay & Çetin, 2011; Robertson, 2008; Taşer, 2006).

This situation reveals that studies which will improve listening skill should be given importance. However, it is a known fact that the most neglected language skill in Turkish lessons is listening (Doğan & Özçakmak, 2014). Osada (2004) reviewed the studies on listening comprehension skills in the last thirty years and observed that listening comprehension skills were neglected and that listening comprehension skills were less studied when compared to other language skills in literature. The researchers explained the reasons for this situation as many teachers believe that listening skill is innately acquired and naturally developed and as a result there is no need to teach listening; some teachers are in the opinion that listening cannot be taught, even if it can be, it cannot be evaluated; and some teachers think there is no time to devote to listening because of the intensive curriculum (Doğan, 2014; Göçer, 2007). This situation makes itself apparent not only in investigating listening skill but also in listening education (Doğan & Özçakmak, 2014; Kardaş, Çetinkaya & Kaya, 2018).

Listening skill's place in both communication process and importance in education life show that developing this skill within a specific program is a must. "Listening to comprehend" which is necessary for a successful communication should not be allowed for an individual to develop it by herself/himself based on coincidences. The studies (Doğan, 2007; Kaplan, 2004; Kardaş, Çetinkaya & Kaya, 2018; Katrancı, 2012; Temur, 2010) show that listening skill can be improved when appropriate learning environments are prepared by using various methods, techniques and strategies.

Considering the importance of listening skill, along with the development of this skill in a certain program, the research that determines what kind of measures will be taken or what activities will be carried out in order to develop this skill become important for students.

Within the framework of available resources, it is seen that studies aiming to determine the factors related to listening comprehension skill are mostly carried out in order to improve listening skill in foreign language courses. It was observed that some of the studies of listening comprehension in mother tongue determined the relationship between listening and other language skills (Aarnoutse, Van Den Bos & Brand-Gruwel, 1998; Hagtvet, 2003; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance, 2004; Kendeou, Lynch, Van Den Broek, Espin, White & Kremer, 2005; Lonigan, Schatschneider & Westberg, 2008; Mann, Shankweiler & Smith, 1984; Ouellette, 2006; Sinatra, 1990; Snow, Tabors, Nicholson & Kurland, 1995; Trinkle, 2008; Tuman, 1980; Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett & Wolf, 2007); some of them identified strategies to improve listening skill (Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2008; Marley, Szabo, 2010) and some of them aimed to determine the

success of listening comprehension in parallel with the cognitive development of the students (Bozorgian, 2012; Call, 1985; Kim, 2016). When the literature in Turkey was examined, limited research on the subject was encountered (Kutlu & Aslanoğlu, 2009) and it was seen that the studies were mostly related with determining the success of listening comprehension in parallel with the cognitive development of the students (Coşkun, 2010; Katrancı, 2012; Melanlıoğlu, 2011; Özbay & Çetin, 2011; Yangın & Katrancı, 2013). Some of the factors that affect students' listening comprehension skill are given as; gender, metacognitive skills, home environment, reading achievement, type of text, note-taking while listening, vocabulary knowledge and attitude (Bozorgian, 2012; Daşöz, 2013; Goh & Taib 2006; Hartley, 1983; Kiewra, 1987; Kutlu & Aslanoğlu, 2009; Lin, 2006; Yılmaz, 2007; Yıldırım, Yıldız, Ateş & Rasinski, 2010).

Students are facing difficulties regarding effective listening because of the lack of full improvement in reading comprehension skill. In this case, it may be possible to direct the education programs or the activities of listening in-school and out-of-school in order to improve the students' listening comprehension skill only by identifying the factors affecting them but also conducting detailed research to understand these factors. This situation necessitates further research to determine the factors related to listening comprehension skill.

The aim of this study is to present the significance levels in the model which is effective in classifying listening comprehension success (successful/unsuccessful) of the 5th grade primary level students. In order to achieve this aim, the present study focuses on the following research question:

What is effect of gender, reading comprehension score, time for in-class listening, time for out-of-class listening for educational purposes, whether the students take notes or not during listening activity, frequency of doing listening homework, and the number of books of their own the comprehension success of 5th grade students?

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This quantitative study was based on the Relational Screening Model. In relational screening model studies, it is tried to determine the unknown value of a variable from a known value of one variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

2.2. Participants

The study was carried out with 286 5th grade Turkish students in 6 different private schools located in Ankara in 2017-2018 school year. Out of 286 students, 170 were

females and 116 were males. The data were collected within the context of compulsory Turkish lesson.

2.3. Data collection tools

In the study, as data collection tools, Reading Comprehension Test, and Listening Comprehension Test and Student Information Questionnaire were used.

1. **Listening Comprehension Test:** The achievement test evaluating 5th grade students' listening comprehension skill was developed by Kutlu & Aslanoğlu (2009). Listening comprehension test was revised according to two assessment and evaluation experts and three Turkish teachers' opinions. Accordingly, experts were consulted about the appropriateness of the text and questions to the relevant age and grade level and then necessary arrangements were made. The test consists of six open-ended items based on this text. The questions are designed to measure students' different mental levels, from simple to complex. In the preparation of the questions related to the "comprehension" aspect, the four-level taxonomy which was developed by International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement(IEA) and used by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study(PIRLS) was taken into consideration (PIRLS, 2016). These are focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information, make straightforward inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information, evaluate and critique content and textual elements.

2. **Reading Comprehension Test:** Initially, the text was chosen in order to prepare the achievement test that evaluating 5th grade students' reading comprehension skills. In the selection of reading comprehension text, a narrative text was employed by considering the students' characteristics regarding their development, age and grade. Reading comprehension test was revised according to two assessment and evaluation teachers and three Turkish teachers' opinions. Accordingly, experts were consulted about the appropriateness of the text and questions to the relevant age and grade level and then necessary arrangements were made. The test consists of six open-ended items based on this text. The questions are designed to measure students' different mental levels, from simple to complex just like the listening comprehension test. In the preparation of the questions related to the "comprehension" aspect, the four-level taxonomy which was developed by International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and used by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study(PIRLS) was taken into consideration (PIRLS, 2016). These are focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information, make straightforward inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information, evaluate and critique content and textual elements.

It was confirmed by the Turkish language and assessment and evaluation teachers that both texts and questions have an equal difficulty level.

3. Student Information Survey: In the survey, students were asked 6 questions regarding; gender, how much time they spend on listening in in-class activities, how much time they spend on instructive listening in out-of-class activities, whether students take notes while listening or not, how frequently they do homework on listening and how much books they have.

For the scoring of listening and reading comprehension tests, a rubric was used.

2.4. Data collection and analyses

For students' scores "Listening Comprehension Test" and "Reading Comprehension Test" were used. In the first session, the listening comprehension test was applied first. Accordingly, in a classroom environment where the students' attention would not be affected by any other sounds, the text was played twice and then students were given 25 minutes to answer the questions. In the second session, reading comprehension test was applied and 25 minutes were given just like the first session and then "Student Information Questionnaire" was applied.

Binary logistic regression analysis was used to test the differences between the listening comprehension scores of the students according to the variables determined within the scope of the research. This analysis is used to determine the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable when the dependent variable consists of categorical data. Although there are two categories of the dependent variable in this analysis, independent variables can be continuous or categorical (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Logistic regression analysis does not require assumptions such as the normal distribution of independent variables, linearity, and equal variance-covariance matrices (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

In the logistic regression analysis used in this study, students' listening comprehension success (successful/ unsuccessful) was determined as a dependent variable and seven variables that were thought to be related to listening comprehension success were determined as independent variables. Among the independent variables, reading success was a continuous variable, while the other variables were discontinuous. The students were classified as successful (1) and unsuccessful (0) using the arithmetic mean of the scores obtained from the listening comprehension test (48 points).

Before the logistic regression analysis, the assumptions of this analysis were tested as a final step. Multicollinearity, model data fit and outlier values, which are the assumptions of this analysis, were examined. It was determined whether there were multiple connections among the independent variables and it was observed that the tolerance value between the variables was between 0.603 and 0.948 the highest state index (CI) value was 13.945 and the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) values were between 1.176-1.402. These results show that there is not a high level of multi-linkage

between independent variables. Standardized residuals were examined in order to determine the extreme values of the dependent variables and it was observed that these values were within the accepted ± 3 limits. Finally, the Hosmer Lemeshow Test was used to test the model data fit. In addition, the Nagelkerke R^2 coefficient of the model and the extent to which the independent variables explain the change in success in listening comprehension skills were determined.

3. Findings

In this part of the study, findings obtained as a result of logistic regression analysis are presented in stages. Firstly, findings of the first classification prediction are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Initial classification estimate obtained as a result of logistic regression analysis

Observed Value		Predicted Value		Percentage Correct
		Unsuccessful	Successful	
Listening	Unsuccessful	0	143	0.000
Comprehension	Successful	0	143	100.0
			Overall Percentage	50.0

The results on Table 1 show that the accurate classification percentage is 50.0% according to the initial classification status obtained as a result of logistic regression. Table 2 shows the variables that are not included in the equation.

Table 2. Variables not in the equation

	Variables	Score	Sig.
Step 0	Gender	.504	.008
	Reading Comprehension Score	.897	.000
	Time for In-Class Listening	.947	.000
	Time for Out-Of- Class Listening	.602	.000
	Note Taking	.302	.000
	Listening Homework	.602	.000
	Number of Books	7.391	.001
	Error Chi-Square	13.571	.000

When Table 2 is examined, score statistics, degrees of freedom, significance level, and error chi-square statistics of the predictor variables that are not included in the initial

model/equation. Firstly, when the error chi-square statistics are examined, it is seen that this value is significant ($X^2_{\beta 0} = 13.571$ $p < .05$). According to the results, it is predicted that all independent variables will contribute to the model together. When the score statistics, which indicate whether each of the variables contribute significantly to the model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), each of the variables is considered to be significant at the level of ($p < .05$), hence it is expected to contribute to the model. As a result, it was determined that the variables would contribute to the model both together and separately.

Table 3. shows the Omnibus test results for model coefficients.

Table 3. Omnibus tests of model coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	72,497	1	.000
	Block	72,497	1	.000
	Model	72,497	1	.000

When Table 3 is examined, it can be stated that the p values of the model chi-square value are significant ($p < .05$), so this is an indicator of the existence of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable combination (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 4. summarizes the intended model (outcome model).

Table 4. Model summary

-2 Loglikelihood	Cox&Snell R ²	Nagelkerke R ²
71.768	.673	.834

Table 4 shows the values of Cox & Snell R² and Nagelkerke R², which show how much the independent variables can explain the change in the dependent variable. When they are examined, Cox & Snell R² value variables all together explains the 67 % of the variance of listening comprehension skill variables while Nagelkerke R² value explains 83% of the variance. Since the Cox & Snell R² value never reaches 1, Nagelkerke R² values are taken into account in determining the variance described.

Table 5. shows the Hosmer and Lemeshov Test results to determine the model fit.

Table 5. Hosmer and Lemeshow chi-squared goodness of fit test

Chi-square	Df	Sig.
5.678	8	0.948

When the predictive variables were analyzed, it was seen that p value was not significant ($p > .05$), so the model showed a good fit, in other words, model data fit was achieved.

The β parameters obtained as a result of the logistic regression analysis performed in order to determine the variables used to estimate the probability of success in listening comprehension, and Wald statistics, degrees of freedom, significance levels and Exp (β) (odds / likelihood) values related to these parameters are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Coefficient Estimates of Intended Model Variables

Variables	β	S.E.	Wald	df	P	Exp(β)
Constant	-2.975	0.85	12.256	1	.000	0.051
Gender(Girl)	0.553	0.322	2.949	1	.033	1.738
Reading Comprehension Score	0.947	0.341	7.712	1	.027	2.289
Time for In-Class Listening/ Per Month						
Rarely	0.302	0.398	0.575	1	.018	1.352
Sometimes	0.232	0.476	0.237	1	.132	1.261
Mostly	0.033	0.541	0.055	1	.024	1.030
Always	1.030	0.498	4.277	1	.044	2.801
Time for Out-of-Class Listening/ Per Month						
Rarely	0.403	0.493	0.668	1	.027	1.496
Sometimes	0.627	0.507	1.529	1	.124	1.871
Mostly	0.768	0.541	4.135	1	.046	2.155
Always	0.702	0.570	1.519	1	.039	2.017
Note Taking	1.348	0.587	5.273	1	.010	3.849
Listening Homework						
Rarely	-0,358	0.397	2.463	1	.047	1.430
Sometimes	0.565	0.402	1.405	1	.022	1.759
Mostly	0.769	0.568	1.833	1	.037	2.157
Always	0,943	0.602	2.453	1	.047	2.258

Number of Books

10-30	1.403	0.582	5.812	1	.023	4.067
31-50	1.809	0.745	5.896	1	.845	6.104
51-70	2.017	0.742	7.389	1	.048	7.515

When Table 6 was examined, it was observed that the probability of the students' being successful or not at listening comprehension significantly differs depending on the variables gender, reading score, time allocated to in-class listening, time allocated to out of class listening, listening assignment and number of books belonging to the student. In the light of the obtained results, it can be said that these seven variables have a significant effect on the probability of success in listening comprehension skill.

When Exp (β) values (odds) were examined to determine the contribution of each variable in the research to listening comprehension success in order of importance; it was observed that female students were 1.74 times more successful than male students ($p < .05$) in listening comprehension. When the probable ratio of the reading comprehension variable was examined, it was found that when the students' reading score went up, 2.59 times higher they are more likely to be in the successful category ($p < .05$). In other words, as the students' reading scores increased, they were found to be 2.59 times more successful in listening comprehension. When the time allocated to in-class listening variable is examined, listening comprehension skill of the students who say that they have in-class listening activities always are 2.80 times more successful in listening comprehension than the ones who say they have very few listening activities ($p < .05$). When the time allocated to out-of-class listening activity variable is examined, listening comprehension skill of the students who say that they have out-of-class listening activities mostly are 2.15 times more successful in listening comprehension than the ones who say they have very few listening activities out of class.

In addition, when the note-taking variable is examined during listening, the probability of students to be successful is 3.84 times more likely than those who do not take notes in listening comprehension ($P < .05$). The fact that teachers always give students homework about listening increases 2.25 times the probability of being successful in listening comprehension ($p < .05$). Finally, the students who have more than 70 books are 7.84 times more likely to be successful in listening comprehension than the ones who own 20-30 books ($p < .05$).

The classification success of the logistic model which is formed to measure the listening comprehension achievement levels of the students is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Estimation of Correct Classification Obtained as a Result of Analysis

Observed Value		Predicted Value		Percentage Correct
		Unsuccessful	Successful	
Listening Comprehension	Unsuccessful	109	29	80.0
	Successful	34	113	77.7
			Overall Percentage	79.4

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the correct classification rate of observations in the logistic regression model is 79.4%. Accordingly, 34 students who were successful in listening comprehension were assigned to the failed group by misclassification, and 29 students who were unsuccessful were assigned to the successful group by misclassification. As a result, 77.7% of the students who succeeded in listening comprehension and 80% of the students who were not successful were estimated correctly.

4. Discussion

In the study, the importance levels of the variables that are effective in classifying the achievement of listening comprehension of primary school 5th grade students (successful/unsuccessful) were determined. In the light of the research findings, it was observed that being a female increases the probability of being successful in reading comprehension. Research shows that the success of comprehension skills of female students is higher than that of male students (Dykstra, 2006; Letho & Anttilla 2003; Rothman & McMillan, 2003).

It has been observed that students are more likely to be successful in listening as a result of increased reading comprehension success. The studies (Hagtvet, 2003; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance, 2004; Kendeou, Lynch, Van Den Broek, Espin, White & Kremer, 2005; Mann, Shankweiler & Smith, 1984; Ouellette, 2006; Snow, Tabors, Nicholson & Kurland, 1995; Sinatra, 1990; Trinkle, 2008; Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett & Wolf, 2007) support this finding.

Besides, the increase in the frequency of listening comprehension activities in the classroom and out of the class increases the likelihood of students being successful in listening comprehension.

It has been observed that students' taking notes in class listening comprehension activities and taking homework about listening comprehension increases the likelihood of being successful in listening comprehension. Researchers state that note-taking behavior increases listening comprehension success, especially when students have a chance to listen to the text once (Hartley, 1983; Kiewra, 1987; Lin, 2006). In this respect, the

results of the research are consistent with these studies. Depending on the increase in the number of students' owned books, it is possible to say that students are more likely to succeed in listening comprehension. Researchers state that one of the most important reasons for failure at listening comprehension is having a limited number of vocabulary (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Hartley, 1983; Rupley & Nichols, 2005; Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett & Wolf, 2007), which could be increased through extensive reading. Again and Boote (2006) state that there is research that predicts students' understanding levels in the following years by looking at the children's vocabulary knowledge in the early years of school. Considering that one of the most important ways for students to learn new words is to read books, it can be said that as the number of books increases, their success in listening comprehension increases.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

In the light of the findings of the research, it was observed that gender, reading success, frequency of time allocated to in-class and out-of-class activities, note-taking while listening, listening assignment and number of books students own had an essential effect on the listening comprehension. According to this, it can be said that female students are more successful in listening comprehension than male students, and the success of listening comprehension increases as the reading comprehension increases. Also, as the frequency of in-class and out-of-class activities aimed at listening comprehension increases, the likelihood that students will succeed in listening comprehension increases. The fact that students show note-taking behavior in listening comprehension activities increases their chances of being successful in listening comprehension. Finally, it can be said that as students' frequency of listening comprehension assignments and the number of their books increase, their probability of being successful in listening comprehension increases.

In the light of the research findings, it was found that the variables determined on listening comprehension success were effective and important in determining success and distinguishing students in terms of success. When the literature in Turkey is examined, which is mostly parallel to the students' cognitive development, it appears to be related to determining the success of listening comprehension (Coşkun, 2010; Katrancı, 2012; Melanlıoğlu, 2011; Özbay & Çetin, 2011; Yangın & Katrancı, 2013). It is thought that further research on the factors related to listening comprehension for the stated reasons will contribute to the theoretical accumulation of knowledge. Since it is observed that female students are more successful than male students in listening comprehension, comprehensive research can be done on why female students are more successful. Teachers and families must encourage students to read book, since students with high reading comprehension scores and a high number of books at home are likely to be successful in listening comprehension. In addition, research has shown that the reading

of audiobooks by the teacher contributes to the development of comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge of the students (Bulut, 2013). Teachers can increase students' pre-knowledge, improve their comprehension skills and enrich their vocabulary in line with the different types of books they choose with children from children's literature. In addition to this, families need to have enough time to read at home, buy books, newspapers and magazines, keep books suitable for their children's age levels and support their children to create their own library. Families should be informed and encouraged about that.

Since the time devoted to in-class listening activities has a significant effect on students' listening skill, it is important that teachers attach importance to listening activities in the classroom and share the practices that will improve students' note-taking skills with students. Besides, it is thought that giving homework about listening and giving effective feedback about these assignments will make important contributions to listening skill.

Finally, considering that the time devoted to students' out-of-school listening activities has a positive effect on their listening skill; it is important for families to take their children to social activities such as theater and cinema and to encourage their children to use their technological tools to listen/watch educational programs appropriate to their level of development.

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