

## **Effect of Audiobook Applications on Listening Skills and Attitudes of 6th Grade Students: A Mixed-Method Study**

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### **Abstract**

The present research aims to determine the effect of audiobook applications on the listening skills and attitudes of 6th-grade native Turkish language speaker students. In this study, the exploratory sequential design, a mixed research method, was employed. Thus, the quantitative dimension of the study was conducted with the semi-experimental pre-test and post-test design with the control group, while the phenomenological design was employed in the qualitative dimension. The study group included 60 6th grade students, 30 of which were assigned to the control group and 30 were assigned to the experimental group. The quantitative study data were collected with "Listening Achievement Test" developed by Yaşlık (2019) and the "Listening Attitudes Scale" developed by Karakuş, Tayşi, and Özbay (2016), while the qualitative data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the authors. Independent groups t-test was employed in quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis was conducted with content analysis. The study findings demonstrated audiobook application improved the listening skills of experimental group students and positively affected their attitudes towards listening. Furthermore, the interviews conducted with the students revealed that they liked the audiobook, listening to the application, the application led to a desire to listen more among students, they comprehended better after listening, and it was an enjoyable activity.

**Keywords:** Listening, Success, Attitude, Audiobook

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## Introduction

The listening skills of an individual start to develop before birth, while speech is a postnatal skill. Effective listening skills and education, the most significant factors in the professional and social lives of an individual should be prioritized. The development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills that are the foundations of native language education has recently been conducted with new methods and techniques (participatory listening, non-participatory listening, note-taking while listening, emphatic listening, creative listening, selective listening, and critical listening). Based on novel technological advances, listening skills education has employed these methods and techniques as well.

Listening skill starts to develop during the fetal stage, continues throughout life and constitutes a basis for other skills (Kardaş & Harre, 2015). Özbay (2005) described listening as the comprehension of auditory inputs and an instantaneous attitude to perceive the things an individual hears, while Gürgen (2008) described it as an activity that entails the comprehension of spoken or read content and an ability to respond to these stimuli. Thus, it could be suggested that listening is a skill that occurs when the listener pays attention to a heard word and associates this word with a meaning.

Listening skill is among the skills that constitute the basis of information exchange in daily life (Tyagi, 2013). Listening skill is not only employed at school but in all areas of life. Thus, students are expected to develop listening skills, and various entertaining listening activities, methods, and tools should be developed to facilitate the acquisition of listening skills through extracurricular activities. The most important indicator of adequate listening skills is accurate comprehension (Melanlanoğlu, 2013). Thus, popular tools such as smartphones, tablets, and computers should be employed to improve the diversity and quality of education and instruction (Ergüney, 2017)

One of the techniques that aim to develop the comprehension, listening, and reading skills of the students is use of audiobooks. Audiobooks could be described as audio recordings where a book is read by a professional narrator or the author (Have & Pedersen 2016). Audiobooks are a concept where a text is narrated with methods such as narration, music, and various sound effects (Öztürk, 2014). Audiobooks were first developed in 1931 in a project that aimed to allow visually impaired individuals to read books. In the following years, they were started to be used for various purposes (Koskinen, et al., 2000; O'Day, 2002). Audiobooks entail reading the printed books and distribute them on audio cassette, CD, and DVD media for learning a language and providing reading facilities for the visually impaired (Kahill & Mvoore, 2017; Moyer, 2012). Audiobooks were previously played on cassette tape, CD, and DVD players, are now played on applications developed for smartphones. This allowed the users to listen to the books independent of place and time. Individuals could listen to the preferred audiobook on various audiobook applications that could be installed on smartphones.

With the increase in the employment of technological tools in educational environments, use of audiobook rapidly increased. The lack of temporal and spatial limitations, accessibility by all everywhere, low cost are among the advantages of audiobooks (Moyer, 2012). Wolfson (2008) reported that audiobooks became increasingly popular; thus, active use and integration of audiobooks in educational and instructional processes are important. Audiobooks are employed as instructional material in the development of reading and listening skills (Cardillo et al., 2007). The portability, usability, and accessibility of audiobooks facilitate the development of both reading habits and listening skills (Grover & Hannegan, 2012). Audiobooks provide semantic and content information that is not possible in other forms (Burkey, 2013). The audiobooks improve the comprehension, listening, vocabulary, critical thinking, and analysis skills of the students (Pelt, 2009; Tüklik, 2010). They improve the skills to analyze the textual elements, the theme, protagonists, and the plot and extrapolate predictions about the text. Thus, audiobooks allow the student to listen actively.

Audiobooks should have certain qualifications. Good listening material should be interesting for the students. Audio quality, cultural and social messages, adequate language level, and speech speed are among the factors that affect the impact of audiobooks (Wilson, 2008). Furthermore, the increasing audio quality of audiobooks due to technological advances and narration by professional artists, including the authors themselves, improved the interest of the students and the impact of books on them. Professionals narrate the books with proper articulation and emphasis based on the textual content, improving the interest in audiobooks (Fajry et al. 2016).

In education, the development of listening skills and listening comprehension leads to a positive listening attitude, while problems in listening and listening incomprehension could lead to a negative listening attitude (Melanlınoğlu, 2013). In the listening process, it could be observed that students are sometimes passive. This passive attitude could lead to involuntary listening and affect student attitudes towards listening (Goh & Taib, 2006). Furthermore, the inclusion of texts that are inadequate for the level of students or texts negatively affects the listening attitudes, while entertaining texts that allow the students to listen actively would lead to positive listening attitudes in particular when teachers neglect listening skills in classroom activities and focus on other language skills, this could lead to negative attitudes towards listening skills (Katrancı & Yangın, 2013). It was suggested that audiobooks are important in the development of a positive attitude towards listening skills instruction among teachers. Teachers are required to conduct various listening activities for the students to acquire listening skills (Kardaş & Harre, 2015).

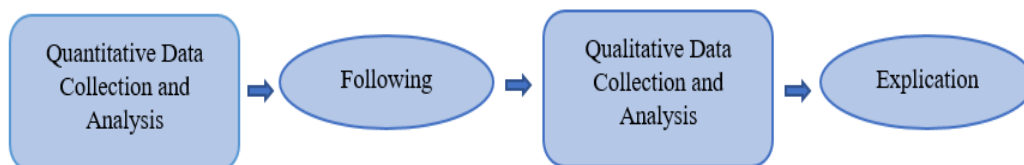
The listening skills of students who use audiobooks are improving (Simskin, 2004). In the literature, it was determined in studies that tested the effectiveness of the audiobooks that audiobooks had positive effects on reading and listening skills (Blum et al., 1995; Cardillo et al., 2007; Christensen and McAllister, 2013; Jakobs, 2006; Huffman, Türker, 2010; Mohamedi 2018; O'Day, 2002; Talalakina, 2010; Türker, 2010; Whittingham). Studies concluded that listening to audiobooks developed reading and comprehension, and improved vocabulary (Hinterleitner et al., 2013; Grover & Hannegan, 2005; O 'Day, 2002; Rahman & Hajar 2020; Türker, 2010). The fact that the present study attempted to improve the listening comprehension skills of the students and their attitudes towards listening differentiates the present study. Students need to develop positive attitudes towards the acquisition of listening skills. The study aimed to determine whether the audiobooks had an impact on the listening comprehension skills of the students and their listening attitudes. Thus, the following research problems were determined:

1. Are there significant differences between the pre-test and post-test listening comprehension test scores of the experimental and control group students?
2. Are there significant differences between the pre-test and post-test listening attitude scores of the experimental and control group students?
3. What are the views of the experimental group students on audiobook applications?

## Method

### Research Model

In the study, the explanatory sequential design (descriptive design), a mixed research method, was employed. In the explanatory sequential design, initially, quantitative data are collected and analyzed (Creswell, 2014). Then, the qualitative data are collected to discuss the quantitative data in depth. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection processes are associated. The qualitative data provide evidence for the discussion of quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015, p.90-91). After the experimental process, quantitative data were collected and analyzed in the present study, followed by the collection of qualitative data via student opinions.



The quantitative dimension of the study was conducted with the semi-experimental design with pre-test, post-test, and control group. The qualitative section of the study was conducted with the phenomenology approach. Phenomenology studies entail interviews conducted to superficially investigate and analyze experienced phenomena. Phenomenological research tackles the lives of individuals based on personal experiences and investigates their perceptions based on their perspectives on facts, events, and situations. In other words, it is an expression of experiences. Thus, the phenomenological design was employed in the qualitative dimension of the research (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016).

### **The Study Group**

The study group included 60 6th grade students attending a middle school in Turkey, 30 of which were assigned to the experimental, and 30 of which were assigned to the control group. In the experimental group, 17 girls and 13 boys; There are 16 girls and 14 boys in the control group. Two randomly selected classes were assigned as experimental and control groups. The study was conducted in Zoom meetings with the 6th-grade students who were instructed with distance education.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The quantitative study data were collected with the "Listening Achievement Test" and "Listening Attitudes Scale." The qualitative study data were collected with the "semi-structured interview form" developed by the authors.

#### *Listening Achievement Test*

The listening achievement test developed by Yaşlık (2019) to measure the listening skills of middle school students, was based on the text titled "Waste Collector" in the curriculum. The development of the achievement test that included 25 multiple-choice questions was primarily supported by five language experts. Then, the item analysis of the achievement test that was applied to 100 middle school students was conducted to determine item discrimination. After the item analysis, 2 items were removed from the test by Yaşlık, and the 23-item achievement test was finalized. The K20 reliability coefficient of the test was calculated as 0.79. In the study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the test was determined as 0.77. These findings demonstrated that the test was reliable.

### *Listening Attitudes Scale*

The 5-point Likert-type listening attitudes scale developed by Karakuş, Tayşi, and Özbay (2016) to determine the listening attitudes of middle school students includes 30 items and 4 factors. The scale factors include “considering listening as necessary,” “individual differences in listening,” “listening problems,” and “effective listening habits.” The KMO value was .77 in the exploratory factor analysis, and the Bartlett test score was significant ( $p = 0.00$ ). The analyses revealed that the scale factor loads were between .451 and .837. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.82. In the present study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.87. When the reliability coefficient is 0.70 or above, it could be concluded that the test is reliable. The coefficient was calculated as 0.87 in the study, demonstrating that the test was quite reliable.

Certain scale items were as follows:

1. I like to conduct listening activities.
2. I believe that listening to text improves my mind.
3. I prefer reading the text myself.

### *Semi-Structured Interview Form*

A semi-structured interview form developed by the authors was employed to obtain the student views on the application. The form questions were developed based on the views of two field experts that included two Turkish language academicians. The form included 4 open-ended questions. The interview questions are listed below:

1. What were the interesting features of the audiobook application?
2. What do you think about listening to audiobooks?
3. Do you think the audiobook application was beneficial?
4. What do you think about the differences between reading or listening to books after using the apps?

### **Application**

In the present study, conducted to improve the listening skills of the students and their listening attitudes, initially, the teacher provided information about the process. Then, the teacher read the textbook text titled "Waste Collector" in both the experimental and control groups. At the end of the reading, the "Listening Achievement Test" developed to measure the listening skills of the students was applied to both experimental and control group students. Then, the "Listening Attitudes Scale" transferred to Google Forms was applied to both groups to determine the listening attitudes of the students. Following the pre-tests, the application was conducted with the experimental group.

In the study, mobile Storytel, Kütüphanem Cepte (Seslikitap) (My Library in the Pocket), Dinlebi, and Boodio applications were introduced, and the scope of the application was explained to the students on Zoom meetings. It was stated that the audiobooks available in these applications will be used in the listening activities and the process was detailed. Various books were employed in the applications since the libraries of these audiobook applications were quite comprehensive. Furthermore, the audiobooks were selected based on the student level and the students were not limited to a single application. However, since some applications were subscription-based, the researcher subscribed to these applications, and a part of the application was conducted on the researcher's account. Also, students' parents were contacted to ensure the viability of the application, they were informed about the study and their informed consent was obtained.

The audiobooks were first reviewed by the author. Audiobook applications that included the books that children could read were identified. The views of related field experts who included three academics and two teachers were obtained to determine the selection of the books available in audiobook applications. The experts reviewed the Storytel, Kütüphanem Cepte (Seslikitap) (My Library in the Pocket), Dinlebi, and Boodio applications for the availability of children's books, and provided their views based on class hours, student attention levels, and book content and adequacy. Later, the most preferred eight audiobooks by the experts were determined and included in the process. The listening activities were planned to include the shortest book first, and then move to longer books in the order of length to ensure efficiency. The details of the audiobooks were presented in the weekly course syllabus and the implementation was initiated.

Table 1

*List of audiobooks played to experimental group students*

Book	Author	Audiobook Length	Process
1. The Happy Prince	Oscar Wilde	22 min 05 sec	1st week
2. The Little Black Fish	Samed Behrengi	37 min 43 sec	2nd week
3. The Three Musketeers	Alexandre Dumas père	50 min 12 sec	3rd week
4. Robin Hood	Howard Pyle	56 min 14 sec	4th week
5. Gulliver's Travels	Jonathan Swift	56 min 10 sec	5th week
6. The Secret Garden	Frances H. Burnett	57 min 21 sec	6th week
7. White Fang	Jack London	57 min 27 sec	7th week
8. The Railway Children	Edith Nesbit	58 min 15 sec	8th week

The details of the application were provided to both parents and students. The authors also collaborated with the parents in the implementation of the application and for better supervision of the students in distance education. In this context, the application directions and audiobook listening calendar were shared. The directions are presented below:

*Directions*

Dear students,

The information about audiobook activity is listed below:

1. First, the audiobook applications mentioned in the instructions should be installed on your smartphones. The links are provided below:



2. After installing the application, please click on “Enter” and enter your email address and password.
3. All students should listen to the scheduled audiobooks every week.
4. In the application, you can find the audiobooks by entering the name of the book in the search tool.

The students listened to eight audiobooks that were selected based on student level and interests in the application. The books were selected from those employed in secondary education curricula. After listening to each book, students responded to the questions on the book content and meaning using the worksheets developed by the author. Thus, the application aimed to determine the level of listening comprehension and to ensure the active participation of students in the Turkish (native) listening process. After the listening activities, the students listened to the “Waste Collector” text again and the “Listening Achievement Test” was applied as the post-test. The application process lasted for 8 weeks. Then the "Listening Attitudes Scale" was applied using Google Forms. Furthermore, 20 students completed the semi-structured interview form on Google Forms to obtain student views on the application.

**Data Analysis**

Before the analysis of the student pretest and posttest scores in the data collection instruments, the normal distribution of the data was analyzed to determine the tests that would be employed in the analysis. The test types that would be employed in the analyses were determined based on the normal distribution of the data.

Skewness and kurtosis values employed to determine the normal distribution of the pre-test and post-test listening achievement scores of the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 2.



Table 2

*Normality test findings for pre-test and post-test listening achievement scores of the experimental and control groups*

Group	Test	Skewness	Kurtosis
Experimental	Pretest	-.439	.050
	Posttest	.033	-.365
Control	Pretest	-.564	.429
	Posttest	-.509	-.637

Skewness and kurtosis values employed to determine the normal distribution of the pre-test and post-test listening attitude scores of the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Normality test findings for pre-test and post-test listening attitude scores of the experimental and control groups*

Group	Test	Skewness	Kurtosis
Experimental	Pretest	-.110	.295
	Posttest	.434	-.335
Control	Pretest	-.001	-.967
	Posttest	-.487	-.644

According to George and Mallery (2013), skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and +2 indicate normal distribution. In the present study, skewness and kurtosis values for both experimental and control groups indicated normal distribution.

In the present study that investigated the impact of audiobooks on listening comprehension skills and listening attitude, statistical software was employed to determine whether there was a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group students, who were instructed using audiobooks and the control group, where conventional instruction detailed in the curriculum was implemented. Independent groups t-test was employed to determine the difference between the experimental and control groups. The level of significance was accepted as 0.05.

In the research, content analysis, a qualitative analysis method, was employed to analyze the data collected with the semi-structured interview form. Content analysis is described as a systematic and repeatable technique where certain words in a text are summarized with a lower number of content categories based on coding conducted with certain rules (Büyükoztürk, et al. 2016: 240). The responses were coded by two individuals to determine the reliability of the content analysis. The inter coder reliability coefficient was calculated with the Miles and Huberman (1994) formula and was 0.90. (Agreement / Agreement + Disagreement = Reliability)  $(27/27 + 3 = 0.90)$ .

## Findings

The study findings determined to resolve research problems and obtained with the statistical analysis are presented below.

### Findings on the First Research Problem

The results of the independent groups t-test conducted to determine the difference between the mean listening achievement pretest scores of experimental and control group students are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*The mean listening achievement pretest scores of experimental and control group students*

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	30	72.53	7.104	58	.769	.445
Control	30	70.80	10.101			

As seen in Table 4, there was no significant difference between the mean listening achievement pretest scores of the experimental group students (M= 72.53) and control group students (M= 70.80) [ $t(58) = .769$  ( $p > .05$ )]. Based on the pre-test results, it could be suggested that the experiment and control groups exhibited similar listening comprehension levels.

The results of the independent groups t-test conducted to determine the difference between the mean listening achievement posttest scores of experimental and control group students are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*The mean listening achievement posttest scores of experimental and control group students*

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	30	83.73	6.908	58	4.119	.000
Control	30	75.27	8.890			

As seen Table 5, there was a significant difference between the listening achievement posttest scores of the experimental group students (M= 83.73) and control group students (M= 75.27) [ $t(58) = 4.119$  ( $p < .05$ )]. This demonstrated that audiobooks affected the listening comprehension skills of the students. The effect size of the difference between the experimental and control group post-test scores and listening achievement test scores was calculated as Cohen  $d = 1.063$ . Cohen recommended that the effect size should be taken as weak when  $d$  is less than 0.2, as moderate when it is 0.5, and as strong when it is greater than 0.8. (Kılıç, 2014). Thus, it could be suggested that the effect size was quite strong between the groups.

### Findings on the Second Research Problem

The results of the independent groups t-test conducted to determine the difference between the mean listening attitude pretest scores of experimental and control group students are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

*The mean listening attitude pretest scores of experimental and control group students*

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	30	62.83	7.15871	58	.567	.573
Control	30	61.63	9.11794			

As seen in Table 6, there was no significant difference between the mean listening attitude pretest scores of the experimental group students (M= 62.83) and control group students (M= 61.63) [ $t(58) = .567$  ( $p > .05$ )]. Based on the pre-test results, it could be suggested that the experiment and control groups exhibited similar listening attitudes.

The results of the independent groups t-test conducted to determine the difference between the mean listening attitude post-test scores of experimental and control group students are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

*The mean listening attitude posttest scores of experimental and control group students*

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	30	75.90	4.54366	58	5.146	.000
Control	30	68.70	6.17084			

As seen Table 7, there was a significant difference between the listening attitude posttest scores of the experimental group students (M= 75.90) and control group students (M= 68.70) [ $t(58) = 5.146$  ( $p < .05$ )]. This demonstrated that audiobooks affected the listening attitudes of the students. The effect size of the difference between the experimental and control group post-test scores and the listening attitude scale scores was calculated as Cohen  $d = 1.329$ . Thus, it could be suggested that the effect size was quite strong between the groups.

### Findings on the Third Research Problem

The views of the 6th-grade middle school students were obtained about the audiobook application. Four questions were asked to the students and the response data were analyzed by content analysis, and various categories were obtained and presented in tables.

The first question was “What were the interesting features of the audiobook application?” Categories were created based on the answers of the students are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

*Student views on the interesting features of the audiobook application*

Category	f	%
Pleasant and good	6	24.00
Tone	5	20.00
Good narration	5	20.00
Diverse and good books	4	16.00
Ease of use	3	12.00
Like a library	2	8.00
Mental reenactment	1	4.00
Total	25	100

The most interesting audiobook attributes according to the students are presented in Table 8 based on the categories. Thus, seven sub-categories, including “pleasant and good” (24.00%), “tone” (20.00%), “good narration” (20,00%), “diverse and good books” (16.00%), “ease of use” (12.00%), “like a library” (8.00%) and “mental reenactment” (4.00%) were obtained. Student responses demonstrated that the audiobook application was pleasant and good, the tone of the voice of the narrators and the narration attracted the attention of the students, and they stated that several books were included in the apps, they were easy to use. Accordingly, some student responses are as follows:

*I could search for all books. Listening to books is pleasant (S1).*

*A pleasant and good application. I wanted to listen to the books non-stop (S4).*

*What I loved the best was the tone of the voices (S8).*

*The voice of the narrator was good; that was the best feature (S18).*

*Articulation and the tone of the voice were interesting (S11).*

*The narrators were very good. Listening to a book was quite rapid (S20).*

*There are many books and everyone was great (S12).*

*There were great stories (S16).*

*It was easy to use, you can start from the last page you read (S2).*

*All books were narrated in detail and it was easy to use (S5).*

*It was similar to getting a story from the library (S19).*

*All novels and world classics were available, like a library (S17).*

*The most interesting feature was the narration of the books and their reenactment in our minds (S6).*

The second interview question was "What do you think about listening to audiobooks?" The categories generated based on student responses are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

*Student views on the listening to audiobooks*

Categories	f	%
Appreciation	7	23.33
Loved to listen	7	23.33
Joy of listening	6	20.00
Will to listen	4	13.33
Focus	2	6.67
Dislike	2	6.67
Reinforcement	2	6.67
Total	30	100

The categories, frequencies, and percentages of the views of the students on listening to audiobooks are presented in Table 9. Seven sub-categories such as "appreciation" (23.33%), "loved to listen" (23.33%), "joy of listening" (20.00%), "will to listen" (13.33%), "focus" (6.67%), "dislike" (6.67%), and "reinforcement" (6.67%) were obtained. Thus, it was observed that students liked audiobooks, liked and enjoyed listening to the books, and the application created a desire to listen among the students. Furthermore, it was determined that students were focused on the audiobooks and reinforced their knowledge. However, the views of a limited number of students were bored and disliked listening to the audiobooks and stated that the books were long. Some student opinions about the categories are as follows:

*I loved the audiobook. The narration speed could be adjusted in this application. But not only the speed but many other features, for example, you can find the summary of a book. The ability to adjust the cover and the sound, all allow us to listen to it better (S1).*

*I liked the application. We used to conduct listening activities at school but they were short, now I loved listening to longer books in this app and liked listening (S2).*

*Listening to a book is a pleasure and this application made me like listening. You almost experience the book while listening (S9).*

*Since the included books were good, I wanted to listen all the time. I finished "The Little Prince" immediately (S5).*

*The audiobook application was very productive. It facilitates the connection with the study and the focus on the story (S3).*

*I was quite bored when listening to the books on the app and I did not like it (S4). Audiobooks reinforced listening comprehension (S17).*

The third interview question was "Do you think that the audiobook application was beneficial?" The categories generated based on student responses are presented in Table 10.

Table 10  
*Student views on the benefits of listening to audiobooks*

Categories	f	%
Better comprehension	9	37.50
Skill development	8	33.33
Intelligence development	4	16.67
Fun	3	12.50
Total	24	100

Table 10 reflects the four categories about the use of audiobooks by the students. These included "better comprehension" (37.50%), "skill development" (33.33%), "intelligence development" (16.67%), and "fun" (12.50%). As seen in Table 10, the majority of the students considered audiobooks beneficial. It was observed that students comprehended better after listening to audiobooks, their listening skills and intelligence improved, and they considered it a fun activity.

*Yes, it was beneficial. Now, we can understand someone better when we listen to her/him (S1).*

*Yes, I think it was beneficial because we comprehend the books better when we listen to them (S5).*

*Yes, I think it was beneficial because our listening skills were developed (S15).*

*Yes, it develops our listening skills (S12).*

*Yes, it is beneficial, very good for intelligence (S9).*

*I think it was beneficial, my intelligence developed (S17).*

*It is beneficial, I comprehend better and have fun while listening (S10).*

The fourth interview question was "What do you think about the differences between reading or listening to books after using the apps?" The categories generated based on student responses are presented in Table 11.

Table 11  
*Student views on the differences between reading and listening to the books*

Categories	Sub-categories	f	%
Listening	Easier	7	31.82
	Better	4	18.18
	Better comprehension	2	9.09
	Reenactment	2	9.09
	Worse comprehension	1	4.55

Reading	Better comprehension	2	9.09
	Similar	2	9.09
	Boring	1	4.55
	Tiresome	1	4.55
	Total	22	100

As seen in Table 1, the questions included two categories: “listening” and “reading.” The listening category included “easier” (31.82%), “better” (18.18%), “better comprehension” (9.09%), “reenactment” (9.09%), and “worse comprehension” (4.55%) subcategories. The reading category included four sub-categories: “better comprehension” (9.09%), “similar” (9.09%), “boring” (4.55%), and “tiresome” (4.55%). As seen in Table 11, the majority of the students stated that listening to books was easier and better than reading books, they could reenact the events in the book in their minds after the audiobook application. Certain students stated that they comprehend better when listening to the books, and certain others stated that they comprehend better when reading. One student stated that it was difficult to comprehend when listening. Some students stated that reading and listening to books were similar. Others argued that reading books was more boring and tiresome. Thus, it could be suggested that the majority of the students had positive views on listening to audiobooks after the audiobook application. Some student opinions that support these statements are as follows:

*Listening is easier than reading books (S7).*

*I used to like reading books but I realized that listening to books was easier and more comfortable than reading. I think that listening to books is better (S20).*

*Listening is better, it is not tiresome, but reading is weary (S5)*

*I comprehend better when listening (S9).*

*I comprehend better when listening. I can reenact the events in my mind (S14)*

*I can reenact it in my mind when I listen to the books but cannot when I read (S15).*

*I comprehend better when I listen (S4).*

*For example, I read it myself, I would comprehend better (S3).*

*They were similar. I think both are the same (S10).*

*Reading books can sometimes be boring. But it is nice to listen to the books (S13).*

*Listening is better, it is not tiresome, but reading is tiresome (S5).*

## Discussion and Conclusion

The study findings demonstrated that the experimental group students who employed audiobooks in the Turkish language course were more successful in the listening achievement test when compared to the control group students who were instructed using curriculum-based listening activities. Based on this finding, it could be suggested that the listening skills of the experimental group students improved.

In the literature, there are only a few studies where the effect of audiobook application on students' listening skills and attitudes was tested. It was determined that audiobooks were mostly employed in foreign language learning and the development of the reading skills of the students. The present study findings were consistent with these reports the listening process. Thooft, (2011), Koskinen et al. (2000), and O'Day (2002) argued that audiobooks effectively improved the reading habits and skills of the students. Türker (2010) concluded that audiobooks improved and had positive effects on listening skills. In the research, it was determined that the audio book levels changed according to the competencies of the students; As a result of the comparison of the experimental and control groups, it was found that the experimental groups were more successful. In addition, it has been determined that audio books have a great effect on text comprehension skills. Similarly, Woodal (2010) found that audiobooks were effective in the development of comprehension skills. Banks and Collean (1987) concluded that listening to stories improved basic language skills of experimental group primary school students. The present study findings were consistent with the above-mentioned reports. In this study, it can be said that the fact that audio books appeal to students' both visual and auditory senses is effective in their listening comprehension skills and in developing positive attitudes towards listening. As a matter of fact, the more visual and auditory stimuli appealing to the senses of the students, the richer the learning process. Thus, students' listening comprehension skills develop.

Audiobooks are among the important listening materials. Audiovisual materials are significant in the acquisition and development of listening comprehension skills (Göner, 2019). Gregori (2008) stated that the facilities provided by multimedia tools encouraged the creativity of the students and could help promote and facilitate various learning and instruction methods among students. Thus, it was observed that the employment of audiovisual material develops listening skills and assists the students to concretize listening texts. The employment of materials is very important in the learning process of 11-year-old students who enter the period of abstract operations (Senemoğlu, 2005). Wagarv (2016) reported that audiobooks improved the comprehension skills of the students and eliminated the differences among the students. According to Miller (2003), the prerequisite of active listening is the active participation of the students. Audiobooks are among the material that maintains attention during the listening process. Thus, Miller suggested the employment of these materials in instruction.

In the study, it was observed that there were significant differences between the listening attitudes of the experimental group students when compared to the controls. Thus, it could be suggested that audiobooks improve the listening comprehension levels and listening attitudes of the students. Although there are studies that tested the impact of various listening types, techniques, and methods on the listening attitudes of the students in the literature, since there was no study on the impact of audiobook employment on listening attitude, related findings are not discussed. Student attitudes towards listening



are particularly important in the development of listening skills. Göçer and Çaylı (2019) indicated that student attitudes towards listening directly affected the development of listening skills. The improvement of listening attitudes, interests, and attention of the students reflects their listening achievements.

In the study, it was determined that the views of the students on audiobook applications were generally positive. Students stated that the audiobook application was pleasant and good, the tone and articulation of the narrators raised their interest, the apps included several types of books, they loved the audiobook apps, liked to listen to the audiobooks, and loved listening. Furthermore, the application increased the students' desire to listen, they comprehended better after the audiobook activity, listening to audiobooks developed their intelligence and it was fun according to the students, listening to books were easier and better than reading books, and they could reenact the content in their minds after listening. However, certain students stated that listening to audiobooks was boring, did not like listening, and the books were long. Grover and Hannegan (2005) also reported that audiobooks helped improve the reading and listening skills of the students and the views of the experimental group students were positive about the application. The students stated that they were satisfied with audiobooks in the listening comprehension process, and audiobooks motivated them to read and listen more. Certain authors argued that audiobooks could be employed as a learning tool in education and extracurricular activities in the future. It was concluded that the employment of audiobooks in the development of listening skills was supported by qualitative data collected from students (Shany & Biemiller, 1995). The student views on audiobook applications were positive and they considered it fun, supporting the employment of audiobooks (O'Day, 2002). Furthermore, students stated that the employment of audiobooks improved pronunciation, reading, and listening skills (Beers, 1998; Lo & Chan, 2008; Marchionda, 2001; Wolfson, 2008). The findings of the above-mentioned studies were consistent with the qualitative findings of the present study.

In conclusion, the employment of audiobooks in distance learning improved the listening skills and attitudes of 6th-grade students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the present study findings, the following could be recommended:

- The employment of audiobooks could be investigated based on other cognitive and affective processes such as student motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy, and self-regulation.
- The present study findings are limited to the 6th-grade level and listening skills. The employment of audiobooks could be tested on other language skills and at different class levels.
- Audiobook employment could be popularized in learning environments in the education process.

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