

Academic Listening Skills of the International University Students in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The number of international university students in Turkey is growing, thus more research is needed on teaching Turkish as an academic language and on academic literacy. This study aims to investigate (i) the international students' views of the difficulties of the academic language skills, (ii) the efficacy level of the skills for their academic success, (iii) the academic listening and academic literacy status of the students, and (iv) the relationship between academic listening levels with some variables. In order to analyse the self-efficacy perceptions of the students, the data were collected by using the Turkish adaptation (Cronbach's alpha value =0.943) of the Academic Listening Self-rating Questionnaire (ALSAQ), developed by Aryadoust and Goh (2017) and adopted by Ellialtı and Batur (2021). The questionnaire consists of 39 items that embody six factors. These factors are lecture structure, cognitive processing skills, linguistic components and prosody, relating input to other materials, memory and concentration, and note-taking. In the study, the participants were 221 international students studying at various academic programs in 33 state universities in Turkey. The data were analysed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The results of the study showed that (i) listening is an easy skill for students to develop, (ii) listening is important for the students' academic success, (iii) out of 39 items, 13 aspects were not at a good level in academic listening, and (iv) academic listening levels of the international students were not significantly different in terms of their gender, study area, and the number of the known languages.

Key words: Academic Listening, Self-Rating, Academic Turkish

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the two ways of formal language perceptions, and it is a professional and target-driven way of performing hearing (Çıfci, 2001, p. 68). Listening has been a neglected area in language research and over the years listening skill has been underexplored pedagogically (Flowerdew, 1994). According to Brown (1994), it is nearly impossible to overestimate the importance of listening in language learning. Rost (2000, p. 7) also asserts the same idea and views listening as "the most widely used language skill". However, listening is considered in the literature as the most difficult language skill, most obscure, and hence least investigated (Vandergrift, 2007, p. 291). This can be accounted for by the transient nature of the aural texts. It is the fact that a listener cannot 'slow the speech down or break it down into manageable chunks' (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Wolfgramm et al. (2016) add that unlike reading, listening needs both hearing and processing information simultaneously.

On the contrary to the other skills, listening is an interior process, and it cannot be observed directly (Barın, 2002, p. 19). As it is not observed directly, it is hard to follow the

process and evaluate the listening comprehension easily. Alonso (2012) claims that in real life there are many types of listening such a face-to-face conversation, watching TV or listening to the radio, listening to announcements, attending a meeting or a lecture. Conversational listening is an interactional and transactional exchange of speaking among people (Babae, 2017). This kind of listening does not require a restricted corpus and a focus context. However, in academic listening, learners are in need of focusing on and comprehending the input information in academic contexts (Jeon, 2007). Academic listening is defined as processing spoken language in academic contexts (Flowerdew & Miller, 2014, p. 90). Processing spoken language in academic contexts can be thought as not just understanding the spoken language but triggering the metacognitive language skills. When listening takes place in an academic context, the listener needs to be able to overcome some cognitive processes. These processes include being able to activate the previous knowledge about the content, know or infer the meaning and usage of the special terms and use accurately and properly, synthesise the previous and new input or analyse the new input, and analyse the mind organisation of the speaker. In this way, the

listener processes the language. This comes with the proper knowledge transfer and proper knowledge acquisition.

Academic listening is the main part of academic literacy which involves “encoding, storing, decoding, changing, and manipulating information that is acquired by means of the senses” (Mitchell 2000 as cited in Papashane & Hlalele, 2014, p. 669). Richards (1983) developed academic listening micro-skills taxonomy in the frame of this structure. These micro-skills include the abilities like identifying purpose and the topic of the lecture, following lectures in different modes, recognising key words about the lecture or topic, and recognising instructional tasks. Jordan (1997, p. 180) described academic listening micro-skills as being able to determine the aim and scope of lecture, to describe the topic of lecture and follow topic improvement and to establish relationships among units within discourse. According to these micro-skills, it can be said that academic listening is about lecture styles, lecture structure, some oral signalling devices of the lecture. Apart from listing the sub-skills of academic listening, several studies have been done to find out the problems and find solutions to make listening easier for the learners in the lectures or seminars (Buck, 2001; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Flowerdew & Miller, 1997; Smidt & Hegelheimer, 2004; Tauroza & Allison, 1994). Some other studies have been done to draw an outline of the academic listening. Aryadoust et al. (2012) studied to show the relationship between academic listening skills and external factors contributing to success in academic listening. In their study, it is stated that in L2, in addition to structure, style and content, diversified extents of student language competence determine academic listening (Figure 1).

Learners themselves should exercise their own responsibility in the choice of learning objectives, content and methods as well as in determining the means used to assess their performance (Brindley, 1984, cited in Nunan, 2012, p.57). Self-rating assessment is a systematic way of assessing the learning process and is mostly used as an effective means of training and assessment in education (Nunan, 2012; Little, 2005). Shephard (2000) states that self-rate assessment

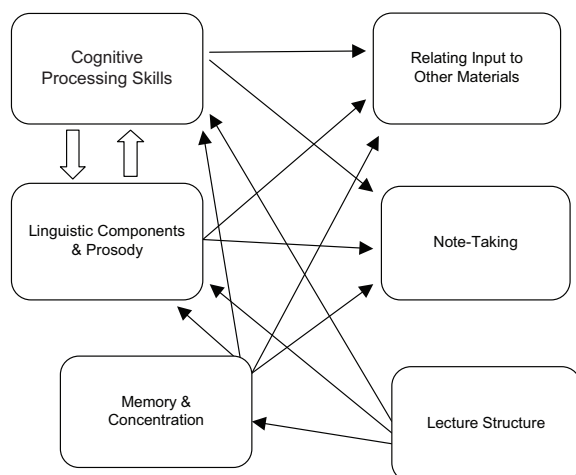


Figure 1. Academic listening model (Aryadoust et al., 2012) Relationship between academic listening skills and external factors contributing to success in academic listening.

reflects the constructivist theory of learning. This assessment accepts learners as active participants in the process of construction and evaluation of their learning process. Learners can evaluate themselves and see their weaknesses and strengths. With this method, learners can develop self-assessment skill which is important in learner-centred learning.

Purpose of the Study

Turkey is one of the countries which keeps international students most in the world. In 2020, the number of the international university students is 185047 (<https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr>). This number was 5378 in 1983 (Çetinsaya, 2014) and according to Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), it is aimed to welcome 200000 students in 2023. The main aim of the international students is to get the degree and be successful in their academic studies. Students need to have academic language skills at a good command. Within this context, the main aim of the study is to find out the the academic listening and academic literacy status and views of the students. The first objective is to reveal the international students’ view of the difficulties of the academic skills and the efficacy of the skills for their academic success. Secondly, it is aimed to identify the academic listening level of the international students in cognitive processing skills, linguistic components and prosody, note-taking, lecture structure, relating input to other materials, and memory and concentration. Last, it is aimed to see the relationship between academic listening levels with gender, study area, and number of the known languages. Limitations of this study were using a self-rating questionnaire instrument only to investigate academic listening and the sample size.

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, the academic listening rating of students identified by allowing them to assess their own academic listening performance. This assessment is expected to help us to put forward the learning outcomes that international students need to have before starting their education at their departments. The study employs a quantitative research design. By using a survey method, which aims to show the situation as it exists (Karasar, 2012, p.77), self assessment and evaluation of the international students toward academic listening were determined.

Participants

The participants were 221 international students from 31 different universities in Turkey. They were aged between 18 and 35 ($M=22.87$, $SD=1.13$). Below is the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1 shows that 69.7% of the participants are males and 30.3% of the participants are females.

In Table 2, considering the study area information of the study group in the study, it is seen that 52% of the participants

study social sciences, 34,4% of them study natural and applied sciences and 13,6% of them study health sciences.

Table 3 shows number of languages spoken by the participants, as average, 2.22 of participants know foreign languages.

Data Collection Instruments

This study employed a quantitative research design using a questionnaire survey. Two data collection tools were used to identify students' self-ratings and present level of academic listening. The first part of the survey is prepared by the researcher to derive personal information about the study group. In this part, students were asked about their genders, ages, departments, number of the languages that they know. To find out the status of the listening and the other language skills of the participants, they were asked to rank the four language skills from the most beneficial to the least one for their school success; from the most difficult to the easiest one. Secondly, data were collected by the Turkish adaptation of "The Academic Listening Self-rating Questionnaire (ALSAQ)" which was developed by Aryadoust et al. (2012) as a model for academic listening. ALSAQ consists of six dimensions of academic listening: linguistic components and prosody, lecture structure, relating input to other materials, cognitive processing skills, memory and concentration, and note-taking. The adaptation of the scale has been made by Ellialtı and Batur (2021). The adapted scale has 39 items under 6 components. The components of the scale are linguistic components and prosody (LCP) (9 items), cognitive processing skills (CPSs) (8 items), memory and concentration (MC) (3 items), note taking (NT) (4 items), relating input to other materials (RIOM) (3 items) and lecture structure (LS) (12 items). To identify the students' academic listening status clearly, the researcher used 7-point likert scale. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the components of the scale were calculated as 0.886 for LCP, 0.886 for CPSs,

0.755 for MC, 0.875 for NT, 0.728 for RIOM and 0.868 for LS. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the whole scale was found to be 0.943. The language validity of the scale was tested ($r=.897$; $p<.001$). As the result of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the correlation of the items was found over 0.30, and 55.7 % of the total variance was explained. According to the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results, χ^2/sd (1.45), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (0.042), comparative fit index (CFI) (0.98) values were found to be valid (Ellialtı & Batur, 2021).

Data Analysis

SPSS version 17 was used to analyse the data. In order to check out the normality, skewness and kurtosis values were examined. The distribution is perfectly normal if the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are zero (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). According to Pallant (2001), if the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are in the range of ± 2 , the data shows a normal distribution. According to this, distributions related to scale scores can be said to have a normal distribution.

For the first question of the study, descriptive statistics were calculated to find out the international students' views of the difficulties of the academic language skills. It is accepted 1-1.75 as 'not difficult'; 1.75-2.5 as 'partly difficult'; 2.5-3.25 points as 'difficult', and 3.25 - 4 points as 'very difficult'. For the second question of the study similar process was followed and descriptive statistics were calculated to identify the efficacy level of the skills for their academic success. It is accepted 1-1.75 as 'not important'; 1.75-2.5 as 'partly important'; 2.5-3.25 points as 'important', and 3.25 - 4 points as 'very important'. In order to find out the academic listening and academic literacy status of the students, mean scores of the each of the items were calculated. It is accepted 1-3 points as 'poor level'; 3-5 points as 'mid level'; 5-7 points as 'good level' to classify the level of the students for each of the statements. For the last question, the independent-samples *t* test was used to evaluate whether the means of the sub-dimensions of the academic listening levels of the students differ significantly according to genders and study areas. Because of the number of the variables more than two, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to evaluate whether the means of the sub-dimensions of the academic listening levels of the students differ significantly according to the known foreign languages.

RESULTS

Below are the results of data analysis obtained from the respondents.

Student's View of the Academic Language Skills

Student views of the difficulties of the skills

The participants think that productive skills, writing and speaking, are difficult to obtain and the receptive skills, listening and reading, are partly difficult to acquire. According

Table 1. Gender of participants

Gender	<i>f</i>	%
Male	154	69.7
Female	67	30.3
Total	221	100.0

Table 2. Information on study fields of participants

Study Field	<i>f</i>	%
Social Sciences	115	52
Natural and Applied Sciences	76	34.4
Health Sciences	30	13.6
Total	221	100

Table 3. Numbers of the languages that is known by participants

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Languages	221	1	5	2.22	1.13

to their evaluation writing is the most difficult skill to acquire. The participants do not evaluate any skills as 'very difficult' or 'not difficult'. The information on the skills that participants think difficult to acquire can be seen in Table 4.

Student views efficacy of the skills for academic success

According to the results, listening is accepted as the most important skill, and another receptive skill, reading is thought as the second important skill to be successful in academic life. Speaking and writing are thought to be partly important for academic success. The participants do not evaluate any skills as 'very important' or 'not important' Table 5 shows international students' views on the efficacy of the language skills for their academic success.

Academic Listening Level of the International Student

Academic listening level of the international students in linguistic components and prosody (LCP) skills

International students evaluated their linguistic components and prosody (LCP) skills as 'good' level. The scores change between 5.32 and 5.81 out of 7. The average score for this dimension is 5.56. According to these results, we may claim that international students do not have much problem in linguistic components of Turkish language in academic listening. They can understand numbers, commonplace names, short phrases and simple descriptions, biographical information, and simple technical descriptions. In the lectures or seminars, students can understand the main ideas and facts, important names, dates and numbers, short descriptions of places, people, and events. The information on the level of linguistic components and prosody (LCP) skills can be seen in Table 6.

Academic listening level of the international students in cognitive processing (CPS) skills

According to the results, CPS3 (understanding the language relevant to professional needs without reference to a dictionary.) and CPS4 (i.e., understanding the meaning and the purpose of most idioms, cultural references, word play, and irony.) are evaluated as medium level. Students have some difficulties in professional (academic) vocabularies, and they need to use a dictionary to get the meaning of some words or phrases (CPS3). Some idioms, cultural references and irony in spoken language (CPS4) also make students not to understand lecturers. Participants do not have difficulties in understanding radio and TV programs (CPS1) and the language expressing spatial relationships and directions (CPS7). The meta-cognitive skills such as meanings that are not directly stated and the language of humorous anecdotes and jokes (CPS5) can be understood by the participants. Table 7 shows the results on level of cognitive processing skills (CPS).

Academic listening level of the international students in memory and concentration (MC) skills

The results indicate that MC2 (concentrating on the lecture without being distracted by own thoughts) and MC3

Table 4. Information on the skills that participants think difficult to acquire.

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Importance</i>
Writing	221	3.05	1.14	Difficult
Speaking	221	2.57	1.04	Difficult
Listening	221	2.43	.97	Partly difficult
Reading	221	1.95	1.05	Partly difficult

(Accepted as 1-1.75 'not difficult'; 1.75-2.5 'partly difficult'; 2.5-3.25 points 'difficult'; 3.25 -4 points 'very difficult')

Table 5. Information on the skills that participants think beneficial for their academic success.

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Importance</i>
Listening	221	2.92	.92	.84	Important
Reading	221	2.82	1.11	1.24	Important
Speaking	221	2.43	1.05	1.11	Partly Important
Writing	221	1.83	1.05	1.11	Partly Important

(Accepted as 1-1.75 'not important'; 1.75-2.5 'partly important'; 2.5-3.25 points 'important'; 3.25 4 points 'very important')

Table 6. Level of Linguistic Components and Prosody (LCP) Skills

	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Level</i>
LCP1	221	1.19	5.82	Good
LCP2	221	1.10	5.73	Good
LCP5	221	1.18	5.67	Good
LCP7	221	1.18	5.59	Good
LCP6	221	1.22	5.51	Good
LCP4	221	1.17	5.49	Good
LCP9	221	1.24	5.42	Good
LCP3	221	1.22	5.41	Good
LCP8	221	1.38	5.32	Good

(Accepted as 1-3 points 'poor level'; 3-5 points 'mid level'; 5-7 points 'good level')

Table 7. Level of Cognitive Processing Skills (CPS) Skills

	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Level</i>
CPS1	221	1.24	5.60	Good
CPS8	221	1.41	5.49	Good
CPS6	221	1.25	5.33	Good
CPS5	221	1.24	5.29	Good
CPS2	221	1.28	5.06	Good
CPS7	221	1.28	5.02	Good
CPS3	221	1.28	4.85	Medium
CPS4	221	1.29	4.71	Medium

(Accepted as 1-3 points 'poor level'; 3-5 points 'mid level'; 5-7 points 'good level')

(concentrating on lectures without being distracted by people, things, and sounds around) items are at a medium level. Distracted by own thoughts or by other stimulus affects

students' academic listening comprehension skills. Hamouda (2012) also states that one of the students' major listening comprehension problems is lack of concentration. As listening is an active mental process (Vandergrift, 2011), any distractions may affect students' listening comprehension, especially for the lectures which are relatively long to focus. Table 8 shows the results on level of memory and concentration (MC) skills.

Academic listening level of the international students in note-taking (NT) skills

According to the results of the level of note taking skills in Table 9, students evaluated themselves as 'at the medium level'. These results point out that international students have some difficulties in taking notes of the important details (NT1), paraphrasing the content to take note (NT4), rephrasing the content to take note (NT2) and summarising (NT3). This result shows that the level of participants' meta-cognitive skills (paraphrasing, rephrasing and summarising), which need to analyse, critique, and evaluate (Goh, 2018) are not sufficient.

Academic listening level in relation input to other materials

According to the results in Table 10, one item, interrelating verbal descriptions to a visual one, is at medium level in relation input to other materials. It can be said that students have some difficulty in visual literacy. Visual literacy is connection between the eye and the mind, and it suggests that visual literacy requires the right and left hemisphere of the brain to be used simultaneously (holistic thinking) (Feinstein, 1993; Yilmaz, 2013).

Academic listening level of the international students in lecture structure (LS)

Items LS4 (following the hypothesis, persuasion, or argument in lectures), LS3 (understanding facts without being concerned about distinguishing main points from details in a lectures), LS8 (correcting the understanding of lectures immediately if it is incorrect.) and LS2 (distinguishing main points of lectures from details) are found at 'the medium level'. Following theories and thesis of the lecture is at an unsatisfying level for the participants. This may also affect distinguishing the details and main points of the lesson. Recognising the important parts of a lecture may also affect the other skills like summarising and note taking. Table 11 shows the results on academic listening level in lecture structure.

13 out of 39 items listed in the scale, participants assessed themselves as 'medium' level. Participants evaluated themselves as competent in linguistic components and prosody skills. In note taking skills, they do not feel themselves at a 'good level'. In Table 12, the items that students do not evaluate them as at good level can be seen.³

Table 8. Level of Memory and Concentration (MC) Skills

	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Level</i>
MC1	221	1.32	5.00	Good
MC2	221	1.39	4.91	Medium
MC3	221	1.54	4.85	Medium

(Accepted as 1-3 points 'poor level'; 3-5 points 'mid level'; 5-7 points 'good level')

Table 9. Level of Note Taking (NT) Skills

	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Level</i>
NT3	221	1.35	4.98	Medium
NT2	221	1.33	4.88	Medium
NT4	221	1.38	4.83	Medium
NT1	221	1.43	4.80	Medium

(Accepted as 1-3 points 'poor level'; 3-5 points 'mid level'; 5-7 points 'good level')

Table 10. Academic Listening Level in Relation Input to Other Materials

	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Level</i>
RIOM1	221	1.20	5.29	Good
RIOM3	221	1.20	5.29	Good
RIOM2	221	1.26	4.89	Medium

(Accepted as 1-3 points 'poor level'; 3-5 points 'mid level'; 5-7 points 'good level')

Table 11. Academic Listening Level in Lecture Structure

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Level</i>
LS11	221	5.63	1.22	Good
LS7	221	5.51	1.19	Good
LS12	221	5.36	1.13	Good
LS1	221	5.34	1.20	Good
LS9	221	5.32	1.15	Good
LS6	221	5.32	1.15	Good
LS5	221	5.28	1.20	Good
LS10	221	5.24	1.24	Good
LS4	221	4.97	1.27	Medium
LS3	221	4.87	1.22	Medium
LS8	221	4.85	1.21	Medium
LS2	221	4.84	1.05	Medium

(Accepted as 1-3 points 'poor level'; 3-5 points 'mid level'; 5-7 points 'good level')

The relationships of Academic Listening with Some Variables

Relationship between genders and the academic listening dimensions

The test results for the relationship between genders and the academic listening dimensions are shown in Table 13.

According to the results of the test, no significant difference was found in all sub-dimensions of academic listening and genders ($p > 0.05$).

Table 12. Items that students do not evaluate them as at good level

Items		M	SD
CPS4	Can understand the meaning and the purpose of most idioms, cultural references, word play, and irony.	1.29	4.71
NT1	Can easily take notes of important details of lectures/seminars/tutorials.	1.43	4.80
NT4	Can paraphrase the lecture/tutorial/ seminar content to take notes of it.	1.33	4.83
LS2	Can distinguish main points of lectures/ tutorials/seminars from details.	1.05	4.84
LS8	Can correct my understanding of lectures/tutorials/seminars immediately if my understanding is incorrect.	1.21	4.85
CPS3	Can understand the language relevant to professional needs without reference to a dictionary.	1.28	4.85
MC3	Can concentrate on lectures/tutorials/ seminars without being distracted by people, things, and sounds around me in the room.	1.54	4.85
LS3	Can understand facts without being concerned about distinguishing main points from details in a lecture/tutorial/seminar.	1.22	4.86
NT2	Can rephrase the content of the lecture and then take notes on it.	1.33	4.88
RIOM2	Can relate the description of an object to a map.	1.26	4.89
MC2	Can concentrate on the lecture without being distracted by my own thoughts.	1.39	4.91
LS4	Can follow the hypothesis, persuasion, or argument in lectures/tutorials/ seminars.	1.27	4.97
NT3	Can summarize the information from lectures/tutorials/seminars.	1.35	4.98

Note 1. (Less than 5 points)

Note 2. CPS: Cognitive processing skills, MC: Memory and concentration, NT: Note-taking, RIOM: Relating input to other materials, LS: Lecture structure.

Table 13. Relationship between genders and the academic listening dimensions

Gender	N	M	SD	F	t	df	p
Male	154	5.16	.71	.43	-.392	219	.696
Female	67	5.20	.74				

p<0.05

Table 14. Relationship between study areas and the academic listening dimensions

Study Area	N	M	SD	F	T	df	p
Social Sci.	115	5.19	.75	1.09	.408	219	.684
N/A S. & H.S.	106	5.15	.69				

p>0.05

Table 15. One-way ANOVA results of the variance between the number of the known languages and the academic listening dimensions

	Languages	N	M	SD	Mean Square	df	F	p
Academic listening competency	1	71	5.08	.749			.967	.382
	2	71	5.22	.645	.501	2		
	3<	79	5.21	.757	.519	218		

Relationship between study areas and the academic listening dimensions

The test results for the relationship between study areas and the academic listening dimensions are shown in Table 14.

The study areas of the participants are social sciences, natural and applied sciences and health sciences. In order to find a reliable result, the researcher combined the natural and applied sciences students and health sciences students into the same group because of the few numbers of the participants in the health services (n=30).

According to the results of the test in Table 14, no significant difference was found in all sub-dimensions of academic listening and study areas (p>0.05).

Relationship between the number of the known languages and the academic listening dimensions

In order to test the statistical relationship between the number of the known languages and the academic listening dimensions, Levene’s test was applied to check variance homogeneity. The p value (.369) was found higher than 0.05. Table 15 shows the results of the one-way ANOVA test.

As seen in Table 15, there were no significant differences between academic listening and the number of the known languages (p>0.05).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed at exploring international students’ views on the difficulties of the language skills. The findings of the study show that the participants thought productive skills, writing and speaking, are difficult to acquire than the receptive skills, listening and reading. This was reinforced by research conducted by Açık (2008). It was found that the international students in Turkey mostly have difficulties in writing (40%) and speaking (33%). Similar results were obtained in the study of Aksoy (2021) which aimed to find out the views of international students studying at the postgraduate level on academic self-efficacy. In the study it was reported that the students have difficulties to write articles and to synthesise paragraphs in Turkish language. Özdemir and Aslan (2018) and Genç (2017) claimed that students make more mistakes in writing than the other skills. Productive skills are based on producing accurate language and make students express themselves, especially in academic environment. Writing is related to other skills like reading, thinking and organising.

Kroll (1990) points out that for language students, writing is particularly difficult. Batur and Ellialtı (2018, p. 420) state that “writing skill, which needs knowledge and time, is difficult to obtain and use.” Speaking is the process of building language with verbal and non-verbal symbols. Nunan (2003, p.48) claims that “speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning.” To produce a systematic verbal utterance, language learner needs to practice more and learn how to contact to others. Speaking is very difficult and proficiency on speaking takes time. Saf and Ouahhoud (2015) list these difficulties as pronunciation level of students, lack of vocabulary, grammar, and the usage of the native language.

The results revealed that the participants expressed listening as the most important skill, and another receptive skill, reading, is the second important skill to be successful in academic life. Productive skills, speaking and writing, were thought as partly important for academic success. It may be seen as a controversial issue when we compare with the findings of the first question of the study, as the productive skills are more difficult but less effective in academic success and they mostly use receptive skills in-class environment. This is in line with the opinion of Nunan (1998) stating that as over 50% of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language are devoted to listening. Robertson (2008) supports that the relationship between academic success and listening is more than the relationship between academic success and IQ level. Tyagi (2013) lists the process of listening as hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. This is nearly the same for reading. Emirođlu and Pınar (2013) supports that teaching listening will affect the success of the learners and at the same time it will help develop the other skills. At the same time reading will also help learners to develop their productive skills. In the study of Şahin and Temizyürek (2019), similar results were reported to the findings of the present study. However, this result is contrary to the results of the study conducted by Berman and Cheng (2001) in which students related the productive skills (speaking and writing) directly to their academic performance.

Participants evaluated themselves as competent only in linguistic components and prosody skills. They can understand the main ideas and facts, important names, dates, and numbers, short descriptions of places, people, and event. Most of these skills can be also counted in general listening skills. In note taking skills, they do not rate themselves at a good level. This result supports the findings of İřcan (2015). In the study it was found that international students have lack of self confidence in note-taking. Toole (2000) states that students have difficulty in taking notes because of not knowing how to concentrate on the lecture. Note taking is a complex process consists of cognitive procedures and one of the most prominent listening competencies (Barbier et al., 2006; Dooley, 2006; Friedman, 2014; Koren, 1997). Many mental processes occur during note-taking. In the lecture, the learner pay attention to the teacher, understand the material, and identify the important parts to take notes under time pressure (Friedman, 2014, p. 6). Taking notes of important details, paraphrasing, rephrasing the content and summarising the

information are some of these procedures that participants have difficulty.

Participants do not evaluate themselves at a good level in knowing the meaning and the purpose of most idioms, cultural references, word play and irony; and in understanding the language relevant to professional needs without reference to a dictionary. Lack of adequate cultural knowledge causes difficulty in comprehending and directly obstruct students’ learning competence (Al Kayed et al., 2015; Wang, 2018; Çakır, 2006). Lack of professional or academic vocabulary knowledge is another point that affects students’ academic listening success. Ulutaş (2016) stated in his study that students have difficulties in understanding words and terms while they are listening to the lectures. Similar results have been found by Demir and Genç (2019) and they revealed that insufficient vocabulary is the primary source of difficulties that international students confront during the lectures.

In memory and concentration sub-skill, students have some problems in distracted by people, things, and sounds around and by own thoughts. This causes some concentration problems; it means that students have difficulties in listening due to distractions inside and outside the classroom (Lee, 1986, as cited in Mee, 1999). Sandal (2019) stated that focusing on the language is frequently reduced once the subject content is integrated. Not recognizing words, neglecting what follows, missing the beginning of the text (lecture) can be evaluated as the reasons for lack of concentration (Goh, 2000).

In the dimension of relating input to other materials, relating the description of an object to a map is the point that the participants do not evaluate themselves at a good level. Skill of combining audio input with visual material may be one of the most functional way of effective learning in lectures requiring the involvement of several sensory skills makes learning easier and more permanent.

The points that students have some trouble in the lecture structure dimension are distinguishing the main points from details, correcting misunderstanding, and following the hypothesis, persuasion or argument. Listener requires to distinguish relevant information and benefit from background knowledge about the topic in academic lectures (Flowerdew, 1994). Distinguishing major points from supporting ideas and following the hypothesis, persuasion or argument will actually also help students to take note easily as it is ‘point-driven.’ Identifying purpose and scope and identifying the topic of lecture and following topic development are also listed by Jordan (1997, p. 180) in the academic listening micro-skills.

The results of the study reveal that there is no significant difference in all factors of academic listening and genders, study areas of the participants, and the number of the known languages. These results are similar to the previous studies (Boylu & Çangal, 2015; Halat, 2015; Melanlıođlu and Demir, 2013).

This study shows that listening is not a difficult skill for the international students, but it is the most important one for their academic success. Academic literacy involves “making

inferences, learning new words from context, linking ideas, identifying and summarising important parts of the text, in short, learning from the text.” (Torgesen et al., 2017, p. 3). The ‘text’ mentioned here should not be only considered as a written text, it can be regarded as a spoken / oral text as well. Therefore, for academic literacy, academic listening lesson programs should be developed carefully and professionally in the scope of the students’ expectations, deficiencies and necessities.

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