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The Effect of Goal Setting on Listening Comprehension *

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the effect of setting a purpose for listening as an advance organizer on listening comprehension. The participants of the research, which was conducted by quasi-experimental design including a control group, consisted of 66 students at the age of 5, all of whom attending pre-school institutions. The data pertaining to the research was collected by the use of informational and narrative texts which were developed in line with the expert opinions as well as openended questions prepared in relation to these texts. The activities developed in line with the texts were carried out with different groups. On one hand, first experimental and control groups were given informational texts, while, on the other, second experimental and control groups were given narrative texts. Since the participants were comprised of children aged 5, the pretest and posttest measurements were performed twice by means of different texts and questions with a view to providing evidence. After reading the texts used for the pretest phase, face-to-face interviews were carried out with the participants and the prepared questions were asked. As a result of the pretest measurement, it was determined that the groups showed same level of listening comprehension. Subsequently, the experimental procedures were carried out. The listening comprehension tests, which were conducted twice a week throughout ten class hours for five weeks, were administered to the experimental group who was given a specific purpose at the beginning of the introduction as well as body of the text. The same experiment, however, was performed without the element of purpose-setting for the control group. Following the experiments, posttests were carried out with similar texts and equivalent questions designed in line with these texts used during the pretest phase. The equivalency of the texts and questions were identified with the assistance of expert opinions. The answers of the participants were examined by two analyzers. Conformity coefficient between the analyzers was obtained as 1,0. The answers obtained as a result of the analysis were transferred to statistical software. In the analysis carried out via the statistical software, Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test were utilized as non-parametric techniques. The findings obtained revealed that the existence of a purpose for listening has a positive effect on comprehending informational and narrative texts through listening. This effect showed a level of significance in terms of statistics.

Keywords

Goal setting Listening exercise Informational text Narrative text Pre-school education

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Introduction

Listening process includes physiological, psychological and linguistic dimensions. *Sound processing in the brain* is distinguished as the common characteristics of the listening process in the definitions related to listening skills (Demirel, 1996; Ergin & Birol, 2000; Gürgen, 2008; Kurt, 2008; Yangın, 1999). Listening is comprehending and interpreting an oral input (Keçik & Uzun, 2004) and is a different skill than hearing (Akyol, 2006); the components of which are receiving, attending and assigning meaning (Wolvin & Coakley, 1985). Listening requires a full comprehension of the message of the speaker and responding to it (Demirel, 1999). In listening, after distinguishing the sounds, the processes of interpreting, comprehending, remembering and responding follow. Considering these stages, it can be asserted that listening is not static but an active process.

The first dimension that underlies the listening experience consists of physical and cognitive processes. These processes are initiated by hearing. During the comprehension stage of listening process, a selection is made in relation to the oral text. The listener concentrates on what is heard by focusing on the purpose of listening. And following the cognitive processing stage come sorting, classifying, correlating, organizing, questioning and evaluating. The information obtained through hearing and focusing are integrated with the previous information by means of cognitive processes and thus comprehension takes place. According to Güneş (2013), these three stages are performed through interwoven loops rather than a straight line. The second dimension of listening process is interaction. The listener is in a state of dynamic interaction with the speaker and his/her environment. The interaction of the listener with these elements develops physically and cognitively. Physical interaction involves controllable elements within the listening environment, whereas cognitive interaction makes reference to the correlation to be made between the knowledge and ideas of the listener and the ideas in the content of the oral text. Comprehension takes places if a correlation can be established. The last dimension of listening process is comprehension. When comprehension takes place, interactional and processual dimensions are taken into account. While interactional dimension is related to the characteristics of the listener, the content conveyed and the environment; processual dimension comprises receiving, processing and attending to the information. These two processes play a key role on defining the nature and depth of the comprehension.

Listening takes place to understand an oral text. Comprehension is an act of constructing the meaning with text (Doll, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Glover, Ronning, & Bruning, 1990). The meaning does not present itself to the listener right away. Instead, the reader plays an active role, using information in the head to filter, organize, interpret, and generate relationships with incoming information and to ultimately construct meaning (Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Fitzpatrick, 1994; Gunning, 1996; Reutzel & Cooter, 1996). Comprehension then, is an interaction between word identification, knowledge, and comprehension skills (Cunningham, Moore, & Cunningham, 1995). During the comprehension stage, listeners do not aim to absorb every piece of information in the text; and since they have a purpose for listening, they make selections out of the information presented in the text (Rost, 2002). The direction of the selection depends on the purpose defined.

Opposing arguments are present in the teaching of listening. Although researches asserting that listening is a natural process that cannot be taught and even if so, it cannot be evaluated are in rife, there are also research that claim the opposite (Funk & Funk, 1989; Tompkins, 1998). Doğan (2007) argues that listening is a teachable and improvable skill and that it must be included in the curriculum as a key element of language education. In light of the relevant literature, related research show that listening skills can in fact be improved through various training methods and techniques (Cihangir, 2004; Doğan, 2007; Epçaçan, 2013; Maden & Durukan, 2013). In the teaching of listening, strategies that facilitate the comprehension stage are taught in general.

Listening strategies are generally comprised of pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening phases. During pre-listening phase, planning techniques for listening (stimulating background knowledge, observing the listening environment, etc.); during while-listening phase, comprehension techniques (identifying the questions, taking explicative notes, etc.), techniques of information constructing (identifying the primary and secondary theme) and techniques of information organizing (summarizing, etc.); and during post-listening phase, techniques of text evaluation (evaluating the presentation, identifying whether the purpose set previously has been attained etc.) can be utilized (Güneş, 2007; Kuşçu, 2010).

In the pre-listening stage -being one of the strategies used for upgrading the listening skills-preparation for listening, setting a purpose for listening, selecting a strategy in line with the purpose of listening and making the students focus on listening are the primary activities. According to Berne (2004), the activities planned for the pre-listening stage should facilitate the stimulation of students' motivation for listening and activation of their prior knowledge. Presence and activation of prior knowledge in relation to the oral text would expedite comprehension (Jones & Plass, 2002).

Strategies related to listening skills come in three types: bottom-up, top-down and metacognitive strategies (Temur, 2010). In *bottom-up strategies*, the text is placed in the center. The listener would try to arrive at the meaning by means of emphasis, intonation, words, and grammar in the text. This is a strategy used by those who would like to grasp specific information from the text. The person would listen selectively; thereby, not the whole text, but the necessary parts. However, the *top-down strategies* are listener-based. The prior knowledge of the listener, text type, content and language used in the text are the key elements. Finding the main theme, making predictions, interpreting and summarizing are among the components of the top-down strategy. The third strategy is *metacognitive strategies*. Strategic listeners could easily use metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring and evaluating). This type of listeners can plan as to which listening strategy should be used and when and can also monitor the efficiency of the selected strategy during listening and whether the listening served its purpose and whether the oral text has been comprehended.

Another classification with regards to listening strategies is active listening, comprehensive listening and critical listening (Aktaş & Gündüz, 2004). Although different names are attributed to various strategies for improving listening skills, ultimately, they all have common characteristics. What strikes as common among these strategies is that they are aimed at preparing the students and enabling them to focus on the oral text with a purpose for listening. It is necessary to prepare the student through the pre-listening activities beforehand, making the student concentrate on the topic and setting the purpose for listening (Aras, 2004). The strategy in which a purpose is defined in respect of the oral text is one of the pre-listening strategies. The questions regarding the purpose for listening developed in relation to the text are considered to be contributive to the preparation for listening, concentration on the oral text and thus to the enhancement of comprehension level.

Setting a purpose for listening - one of the pre-listening strategies- is addressed as an advance organizer in the research. According to Ausubel (2000), advance organizers prepare the student and create conceptual framework for the coming information. It is of necessity that advance organizers be used in order for meaningful learning to occur. Meaningful learning is defined as the integration of prior knowledge with the new information (Stone, 1983). Barnes and Clawson (1975) pointed out that students should relate to their background knowledge so that they can retain new information. Advance organizers pave the way to meaningful learning by connecting the new content to the relevant prior knowledge (Senemoğlu, 2003; Story, 1998). If the concepts are better anchored to the relevant subconcepts, then learning and remembering would be easier. In this sense, advance organizers are auxiliary tools (Willerman & Mac Harg, 1991).

Advance organizers consist of either visual or verbal information (Mayer, 1979). Advance organizers introduced to students prior to a lesson facilitate establishing a logical relationship within the material; thus, have a positive effect on coding of the information. Therefore, advance organizers act as statements of introduction for summing up or introducing the material which the student has to understand (Woolfolk, 2001). Advance organizers draw the attention of the student to the important points in the new information, emphasize the relationship between concepts and evoke the background knowledge in relation to the new information (Çakıcı & Altunay, 2006). However, the effectiveness of advance organizers is related to the student's skill of establishing connection (Kloster & Winne, 1989). When developing an advance organizer, the content of the selected text should be reviewed and main ideas and key concepts should be identified. These main ideas should be connected to experiences and

schema of students. Questions should be posed in order to arouse the student's curiosity and interest in the text (Çakıcı & Altunay, 2006). Questions would serve as an organizer.

Being the object of the listening skills, oral input is essentially a text. A text is a unity comprised of "a group of entities, used as signs, which are selected, arranged, and intended by an author in a certain context to convey some specific meaning to an audience" (Gracia, 1995: 4). Within this unity lie various repetitions (Onursal, 2003). The repetitions are processed by the receiver of the message. The receiver bears a significant role on understanding the text for it is the receiver who will construct the meaning. In identifying the communicative meaning of the text, the listener should concretize the type of the text and be able to acknowledge the linguistic, grammatical and textual elements in accordance with the text type (Dilidüzgün, 2008). These elements in the text can clearly be monitored, especially in informational and narrative texts.

Informational text is a text produced with a view to conveying specific information. This type of texts carries certain information within itself and aims to inform the reader (Akyol, 2006; Aktaş & Gündüz, 2004; Gordon, 1990). In the informational texts, the plan is developed with such correlations as purposive sorting, cause-and-effect relation, problem-solution relation, and comparisons among fundamental structures. Consisting of unfamiliar words and concepts, personal experiences are hardly placed in these texts (Hall, Sabey, & McClellan, 2005); rather, objective information is presented. In this type of texts, concretizations, explanations, illustrations are used so that the reader can clearly receive the information. The information obtained from the text can be evaluated or controlled within the structure of the external world (Adalı, 2003). The words in the informational texts are usually used in their first meanings (Ülper, 2010). This is due to preferring a direct and objective discourse (Kuzu, 2004). Among the characteristics of this type of text is the non-linear discourse (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). In other words, certain units in these texts repeat themselves in variety of ways.

Narrative text, on the other hand, is a text which is developed by the author based on fictionalized life and language (Adalı, 2003). Short stories, novels, poems are also in the scope of narrative texts. The content of this text type is evaluated according to the literary characteristics of the text -rather than its relation to the objective reality of life itself- in which the author organizes the linguistic elements and facts in a certain way and then integrates them. The meaning in the narrative texts is not present as clearly as it is in the objective circumstances of life. True events and facts are embodied in the text in line with the purpose of the author. The element of fiction in the events can also be observed in the language. The use of language is different from the language used for communication in daily life. In this type of texts, the words are used outside or beyond their known meanings (Zimmermann, 2001). Narrative texts are defined as stories in which various characters go through a fictionalized event which occurs in a certain time and setting (Çetişli, 2004; Hatipoğlu, 2003). The characters that are in certain circumstances at the beginning of the story would undergo changes as a result of different events taking place. In this sense, the event is one of the principal units of narrative texts (Başaran & Akyol, 2009). Other units constituting the narrative structure such as setting and time are reflected in the text to a certain degree and in a particular way based on the flow of events.

During pre-school period, developmental characteristics of children play an essential role on comprehension of oral input that is of informational and narrative nature. The attention span for listening during this age period is quite short, making the act of listening open to external stimulus. However, children can be rendered attentive through questions and comments provided during the listening process and their attention span thus can be increased. The strategies to use can give successful results should they be associated with the characteristics of children at pre-school age and the structure of the texts to be used. Therefore, the texts including concepts and content suitable for the cognitive level of children at pre-school age should be presented in a way to enable them to concentrate. Some of the questions relating to the content of the texts may help students develop a purpose and thus decide clearly what needs to be done during listening. This approach can deepen comprehension of the oral text.

Although studies on the listening skills of pre-school students have been conducted in other languages (Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, Souriyavongsa, Tiang, & Kim, 2011; Florit, Roch, Altoé, & Levorato, 2009), no studies that directly point out to this issue were found to be carried out in Turkey. Hence, determining the effect of setting a purpose on improving the listening skills of children might bridge a significant gap in this regard. To arrive at a conclusion, the answers to the following questions have been sought:

- 1. Is there a significant difference between the posttest average scores of the experimental and control groups in the informational text comprehension?
- 2. Is there a significant difference between the posttest average scores of the experimental and control groups in the narrative text comprehension?
- 3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest average scores of the experimental group in the informational text comprehension?
- 4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest average scores of the control group in the informational text comprehension?
- 5. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest average scores of the experimental group in the narrative text comprehension?
- 6. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest average scores of the control group in the narrative text comprehension?

Method

In this study, quasi-experimental research design was used. The experiments in which participants are assigned randomly to a group are described as quasi-experimental (Erkuş, 2009). In this research, the participants were not assigned to the group according to a certain criterion; instead, all the students in the class where the study was conducted were determined as a group.

Participants

The participants consisted of 66 students studying at two independent kindergartens in Antalya. All of the participants were five years old and in the last year of their pre-school education. Two separate groups were selected for the informational and narrative texts in order to find out the effect of setting a purpose on the listening comprehension. First experimental and control groups were assigned for informational texts, while for narrative texts, second experimental and control groups were assigned. Thus, four different groups were placed in the research. The groups which the classes of the participants were to assign to were determined through casting lost. Subsequent to this selection, the pretests were conducted and it was found out that both experimental and control groups had similar level of listening comprehension. The distribution of the participants by the groups is given in the table below:

Table 1. Distribution of the Participants in the Groups

		Female	Male
Informational Texts	Experimental 1	9	8
informational Texts	Control 1	10	7
Name time to the	Experimental 2	6	10
Narrative texts	Control 2	12	4

The rationale for doing the research on kindergarteners at five is due to the important role of listening skills on this age group. The kindergarteners carry out activities aimed at developing their speaking and listening skills throughout their education life. During this period where no activities are carried out for reading and writing skills development, much of the information and skills are conveyed

to students by means of listening. In addition to this, the kindergarten education serves as a preparatory class for primary school (Aslanargun & Tapan, 2011). The skills development activities carried out during pre-school education give place to an intense knowledge acquisition in primary school period. The students whose listening skills have been developed can be more successful in primary education (Doğan, 2008). Therefore, listening and listening comprehension constitute the building block of other language skills for students in primary education.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the research were collected in line with the criteria developed by the researchers. The criteria were designed by means of texts with similar characteristics. To this end, 20 texts were determined for informational and narrative texts each. In assigning the informational texts, text length, information conveyed and literal level of the texts were primarily taken into consideration in terms of similar features. In the same vein; text length, plot, number of characters and phraseology were attached priority in the narrative texts in respect of similarities between the texts. All of these texts were excerpted from the books intended for pre-school students. It should be noted that the texts were chosen in a way to ensure similarity with regards to intelligibility and were suitable for the age group (5) of the children.

Informational texts encompass information that can be used in real life and intend to convey these to the reader (Adalı, 2003; Özdemir, 1991). In the research, the texts, which held specific content and did not have the elements of figurative language for the conveyance of the message, were used. Following the assignment of the texts, opinions of two different experts' in the field of Turkish language were consulted on in terms of informative criteria placed in the text and suitability of the texts for the level of pre-school students. Same process was repeated for narrative texts as well. Narrative texts are described as a text in which reality is conveyed after being organized in a new form and is fictionalized for a certain purpose (Yılmaz, 2010; Akbayır, 2007; Adalı, 2003). Thus, based on this approach, narrative texts used in the research were comprised of stories and tales prepared for children. Similarly, the two experts in the field of Turkish language were consulted once more whether the texts chosen had the features of narrative texts.

6 informational and 6 narrative texts were eliminated upon opinions of the experts mentioned above. Of 14 informational texts, 4 texts were used for pretests and posttests, while 10 texts were utilized during in-class activities. The same process was repeated for narrative texts. The reason for determining 4 texts for pretests and posttests each is that the tests were to be conducted with two different texts for both experimental and control groups since the participants consisted of children. It was considered that as children have shorter attention span, use of a single text for the activities would not yield accurate results. To verify the result to be obtained, the pretests and posttests were redelivered with different texts.

In the next phase, questions for listening comprehension were produced in respect of the texts to be used in pretests and posttests. The scope of the questions corresponds to the first three domains (levels) in the cognitive phase in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Knowledge and cognitive process levels are addressed separately in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Amer, 2006). In the knowledge domain (level), types of knowledge are referred to, while in the cognitive domain, six phases of cognitive process level are mentioned. Knowledge is classified into four types consisting of factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge and metacognitive knowledge. The phases of cognitive process comprise remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating (Arı, 2011). Every phase in taxonomy serves as a prerequisite to the next phase and learning or comprehension occurs through these phases. In terms of types of knowledge, the comprehension questions related to the identified texts in this research were selected among factual knowledge and conceptual knowledge. The basis for having chosen these knowledge types and the first three phases are: participants attending the experiment were children; making instant evaluations due to the nature of listening skill and thereby not allowing making evaluations for the next phases in advance and producing questions out of the texts related to the first phases more easily. From this approach, for each text, 6 questions were prepared for remembering and understanding levels each and 3 questions for applying level, amounting to 15

questions in total. Then, purpose statements to be used at the beginning and middle of the listening process were determined for the experimental groups. The purpose statements were made up of questions to show what kind of information was to be given in the informational texts, whereas for narrative texts, the questions as to how the event would unfold or which phases a character would go through were asked. The two experts in the field of Turkish language were again consulted on the verification of the suitability of 15 questions and purpose statements prepared for 10 informational and 10 narrative texts. In addition, opinions of an expert from the field of Education Programs and Teaching were taken with respect to the suitability of the questions to Bloom's Taxonomy. Finally, two experts from pre-school education were conferred with on the relevance of the texts and questions in terms of level of children. Changes were made to the texts and questions in parallel with the recommendations received from the experts. As a result of the changes, listening comprehension criteria were developed comprising of 4 informational and 4 narrative text types involving 15 questions each.

Empirical Procedures

Before initiating the application phase, pretests were conducted so as to determine the level of listening comprehension of the groups. The pretests started by reading of the selected texts to the participants by the researcher. During reading, silent environment was ensured and necessary measures were taken against situations that may cut into listening session. The participants were explained that they were about to hear a text which they should listen to carefully and that they were going to be asked some questions regarding the text. Following the reading session, each participant was interviewed individually in a different class and asked comprehension questions. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder in a class where only the researcher and the participant were present. This was conducted both for experimental and control groups.

Subsequent to pretests, the sound recordings of the participants were listened to and evaluated by two experts. In the analysis of the data reached through this method, Mann-Whitney U test was used. To show that the experimental and control groups listening to informational texts were identical, the results of Mann Whitney U test applied to the pretests are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Mann Whitney U Test Applied to the Average Scores of Experimental and Control Groups in the Pretests Conducted Regarding Informational Texts

	Groups	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	U	P
Pretest 1	Experimental	17	17,79	302,50	139,500	,861
	Control	17	17,21	292,50		
Pretest 2	Experimental	17	19,00	323,00	119,000	,375
	Control	17	16,00	272,00		

Table 2 shows the results of Mann Whitney U test applied to average scores of the experimental and control groups in the pretests. In light of the results, no difference was found between the groups in the first pretest as well as between the groups in the second pretest carried out for the purpose of evidence. The analysis shows that experimental and control groups yielded similar results in relation to informational texts. The same process took place for the groups applied pretests for the narrative texts.

Table 3. Results of Mann Whitney U Test Applied to the Average Score of Experimental and Control Groups in the Pretests Conducted Regarding Narrative Texts

	Groups	N	Rank Average	Total Set of R	anks U	P
Pretest 1	Experimental2	16	15,72	251,50	115,500	,611
	Control2	16	17,28	276,50		
Pretest 2	Experimental2	16	18,00	288,00	104,000	,349
	Control2	16	15,00	240,00		

In light of the results illustrated in Table 3, no difference was detected between the groups in the first pretest as well as between the groups in the second pretest carried out for the purpose of evidence. The analysis shows that experimental and control groups yielded similar results in relation to narrative texts.

After proving that identical results were obtained from the groups, the applications were started. 30-minute class sessions were planned. Class hour began by reading the selected texts to the participants. While a purpose statement was given to the experimental groups prior to reading the text, control groups were given no such statement. After reading the text, the questions aimed at determining the level of comprehension were asked to the participants. This application was carried out with the participation of all the students during the class hour, as opposite to the individual interviews conducted during the pretest stage. The application process carried on by performing two activities in a week. Throughout the process, it was aimed to carry out the applications on experimental and control groups within the same day. The works consisting of a total of 10 activities were completed in 5 weeks. After the finalization of the activities, posttests started to be carried out. In this phase, first, the texts were read to the participants, at the end of which each participant was interviewed individually in a different class and asked comprehension questions in order to determine their level of text comprehension. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder. Subsequent to interviews, the sound recordings of the participants were listened to and evaluated by two experts. Correct answers were coded as "1" and wrong answers as "0", all of which were then transferred to the statistical software.

Data Analysis

In this study, which aims to identify the effect of purposive listening on skills of listening comprehension for children at the age of 5, Mann Whitney U test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test were used in the analysis of the data obtained. The test analyses were done through the statistical program (SPSS 13.0). Mann Whitney U test was applied for independent samples in the questions targeting the determination of the level of effect of purposive listening on listening comprehension regarding the texts prepared in accordance with the problem statements to which the answers are sought. Mann-Whitney U test is for testing whether the scores obtained as a result of two independent samples differ significantly. This test is frequently used in empirical studies with small number of participants for unrelated measurements in which distribution of scores does not correspond to the assumption of normality. U test is also known as an alternative to independent t-test in cases where scores do not meet the assumption of normality (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2011). As for determining the level of change in the average scores of the same group after the application, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was used.

Results

The first sub-problem of the research was an attempt to determine whether a significant difference existed between the average scores of the groups in the posttests regarding the informational texts. The results of Mann Whitney U test applied to find the answer to this are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Mann Whitney U Test Applied to the Average Scores of Experimental and Control Groups in the Posttest Conducted Regarding Informational Texts

	Group	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	U	P
Daattaat 1	Experimental	17	24,56	417,50	24,500	0,000*
Posttest 1	Control	17	10,44	177,50		
Doottoot 2	Experimental	17	22,53	383,00	59,000	0,003*
Posttest 2	Control	17	12,47	212,00		

^{*}p<0,05

As can be seen in Table 4., there is a significant difference in favor of the experimental group in the first measurement between the posttest scores of the participants who did the listening exercise with a purpose and the participants who did the exercise without a purpose, U=24.5, p<.05. Significant difference can also be observed in the second measurement carried out for evidence between the posttest scores of the groups, again in favor of the experimental group, U=59, p<.05.

In the second sub-problem of the research, the results of Mann Whitney U test applied to determine whether a significant difference existed between the average scores of the groups in the posttests regarding the narrative texts are provided in Table 5:

Table 5. Results of Mann Whitney U Test Applied to the Average Scores of Experimental and Control Groups in the Posttest Conducted Regarding Narrative Texts

	Group	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	U	P
Doottoot 1	Experimental	16	24,16	386,50	5,500	0,000*
Posttest 1	Control	16	8,84	141,50		
Doottoot 2	Experimental	16	22,53	360,50	31,500	0,000*
Posttest 2	Control	16	10,47	167,50		

^{*}p<0,05

As is revealed in Table 5., considering the Rank Averages, there is a significant difference in favor of the experimental group in the first measurement regarding the narrative texts between the posttest scores of the participants who did the listening exercise with a purpose and the participants who did the exercise without a purpose, U=5,500; p<0,05. Significant difference can also be observed in the second measurement carried out for evidence between the posttest scores of the groups, again in favor of the experimental group, U=31,500; p<0,05.

In the third sub-problem of the research, the results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test applied to determine whether a significant difference existed between the average scores of the experimental group in the pretests and posttests regarding the informational texts are given in Table 6:

Table 6. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Applied to the Average Scores of Experimental Group in the Pretests and Posttests Conducted Regarding Informational Texts

Posttest 1-Pretest 1	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	Z	P
Negative Rank	0	,00	,00	-3,629*	,000**
Positive Rank	17	9,00	153,00		
Equal	0				
Posttest 2-Pretest 2	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	z	P
	1	1.50	1.50	-3.325*	,001**
Negative Rank	1	1,50	1,50	-3,323	,001
Negative Rank Positive Rank	14	1,50 8,46	1,50	-3,323	,001

^{*}Based on negative ranks

As is given in Table 6., there is a significant difference in favor of the posttest scores in the first measurement between the pretests scores and posttest scores of the participants in the experimental group who did the listening exercise with a purpose, (z=-3,325; p<0,05). Significant difference can also be observed in the second measurement carried out for evidence between the pretest and posttest scores of the group, again in favor of the posttest scores, (z=-3,629; p<0,05).

In the fourth sub-problem of the research, it was aimed to determine whether a significant difference existed between the average scores of the control group in the pretests and posttests regarding the informational texts. The results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test applied to find answer to this are demonstrated in Table 7:

^{**}p<.05

Table 7. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Applied to the Average Scores of Control Group in the Pretests and Posttests Conducted Regarding Informational Texts

Posttest 1-Pretest 1	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	Z	P
Negative Rank	2	8,00	16,00	2,306a*	,021**
Positive Rank	12	7,42	89,00		
Equal	3				
Posttest 2-Pretest 2	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	Z	P
1 Osticst 2 1 Tetest 2	1 4	114111111111011100			
Negative Rank	8	6,69	53,50	-,063*	,949
		9	53,50 51,50	-,063*	,949

^{*}Based on negative ranks

As is clear from Table 7., there is a significant difference in favor of the posttest scores in the first measurement between the pretests scores and posttest scores of the participants in the control group who did the listening exercise without a purpose, (z=-2,306; p<,05). However, there seems to be no significant difference in the second measurement carried out for evidence between the pretest and posttest scores of the participants in the control group, (z=-,063; p>,05).

In the fifth sub-problem of the research, it was aimed to determine whether a significant difference existed between the average scores of the experimental group in the pretests and posttests regarding the narrative texts. The results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test applied to find answer to this are displayed in Table 8.:

Table 8. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Applied to the Average Scores of Experimental Group in the Pretests and Posttests Conducted Regarding Narrative Texts

Posttest 1-Pretest 1	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	Z	P
Negative Rank	0	,00	,00	-3,520*	,000**
Positive Rank	16	8,50	136,00		
Equal	0				
Posttest 2-Pretest 2	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	z	P
Negative Rank	0	,00	,00	-3,520*	,000**
Positive Rank	16	8,50	136,00		
Equal	0				

^{*}Based on negative ranks

As displayed in Table 8., there is a significant difference in favor of the posttest scores in the first measurement regarding the narrative texts between the pretests scores and posttest scores of the participants in the experimental group who did the listening exercise with a purpose, (z=-3,520; p<,05). Significant difference can also be observed in the second measurement carried out for evidence between the pretest and posttest scores of the group, again in favor of the posttest scores, (z=-3,520; p<0,05).

In the sixth sub-problem of the research, the results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test applied to determine whether a significant difference existed between the average scores of the control group in the pretests and posttests regarding the narrative texts are illustrated in Table 9.:

^{**}p<.05

^{**}p<.05

Table 9. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Applied to the Average Scores of Control Group in	1
the Pretests and Posttests Conducted Regarding Narrative Texts	

Posttest 1-Pretest 1	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	Z	P
Negative Rank	3	3,00	9,00	-2,571*	,010**
Positive Rank	10	8,20	82,00		
Equal	3				
Posttest 2-Pretest 2	N	Rank Average	Total Set of Ranks	Z	P
Posttest 2-Pretest 2 Negative Rank	N 2	Rank Average 4,00	Total Set of Ranks 8,00	z -2,810*	P ,005**
		9		_	1

^{*}Based on negative ranks

As is exhibited from Table 9., there is a significant difference in favor of the posttest scores in the first measurement between the pretests scores and posttest scores of the participants in the control group regarding the narrative texts, who did the listening exercise without a purpose, (z=-2,571; p<,05). Significant difference can also be observed in the second measurement carried out for evidence between the pretest and posttest scores of the group, again in favor of the posttest scores, (z=-2,810; p<,05).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The main conclusion reached through this study is that listening with a purpose has a positive impact on listening comprehension. The analyses carried out on the average scores of pretests and posttests of the control group who were given informational texts, one of the text types used in the research, showed a difference within the group itself as well. In the first measurement, the difference is at a significant level in terms of statistics. The control group listened to the oral texts of informational nature without any purpose whatsoever. However, the studies during the application process also proved that the listening skills of the listeners in this group improved to some extent. A great deal of sources (Liubiniene, 2009; Melanlıoğlu & Karakuş Tayşi, 2013; Yıldız, Okur, Arı, & Yılmaz, 2008) explicitly points out that listening is an improvable skill and therefore should not be overlooked. The result obtained in this research from the difference manifested between the average scores of the control group in the pretests and posttests in fact confirms the abovementioned opinion.

While the difference between the average scores of the control group in the pretest and posttest during the first measurement is at a significant level, the difference in the second measurement conducted for evidence is not. It is believed that this difference between the two measurements is due to groups' characteristics and the originality of the activity for the groups. The participants of the research were composed of people at the age of 5. The attention span of this age group is known to be short (Artut, 2004; Tuncer, 2000). The reason, thus, that the participants could not focus sufficiently enough during the second measurement is believed to root in this said feature. In addition, having no purpose statement with the function of an advance organizer set prior to the reading session, as opposite to the case for the experimental group, may also have incapacitated them to pay attention to the text. None the less, obtaining a success yielding result in the first measurement of the control group may be related to the first-time application of the activity. It was deduced that the reason for the obtainment of such positive result in some of the research was not the method or the technique but the originality of the application (Cook, 1967; Kocakaya, 2011).

The point where the level of effect of setting a purpose on listening comprehension is clearly understood is the process in which the difference between the average scores of the experimental and control groups in the posttests is determined. The statistical analysis applied to reveal the answer set forth a significant difference between the first and second measurement in favor of the experimental group. It can be asserted that the difference arose from purpose setting. In other words, the results of

^{**}p<.05

the exercises carried out suggest that both experimental group and control group showed a certain level of improvement to some level in terms of listening comprehension, albeit more improvement within the experimental group than the control group. This difference is statistically significant.

Among the reasons why the experimental group did better at listening comprehension than the control group is the purposes given to the experimental group prior to the listening session. The purposes provided to the participants in the experimental group were given at the beginning, i.e. introduction of the text, and in the middle of the listening exercise, i.e. body of the text. The purposes in question form served as advance organizers. According to Senemoğlu (2003), advance organizers establish the basic framework that enables us to evaluate the coming information from a broader perspective, serve as a tool to formulate logical correlations and facilitate coding. In this research, too, the participants in the experimental group had a purpose throughout the listening process. The participants listened to the oral text to attain the purpose of listening. That is, the participants felt obliged to evaluate the information they received through oral text in terms of the determined purpose in order to find the answer to the purpose question. During this process, every piece of information in the content of the text was assessed and examined in respect of its relevancy to the purpose given. This process rendered the retaining of the text content permanent in the participants' memory.

The second purpose given in the middle of the text was for recapturing the attention of those who had lost their interest in the text or could not continue focusing on listening as they did at the beginning. From the view of Capelli (1995), children are capable of learning many things that are of interest to them if the conditions fit for learning. The purpose delivered in the middle of the reading process was designed to achieve this aim. This way, the participants had to establish a cognitive relationship with the text throughout the whole listening process, right from the beginning until the end of the text. This facilitated the comprehension of the oral texts for the experimental group.

As advance organizers set the framework and cornerstone for the acquisition of new information, they have a positive impact on learning. What the advance organizers do is that they explain the coming information and integrate it with the prior knowledge in the brain (Açıkgöz, 2003; Bayat, 2006). This function creates a correlation between the new content and background knowledge. The purposes given in scope of this research had such effect. While being motivated for listening with the purposes given, the students activated their own cognitive schemas for the possible coming information.

Another reason regarding the positive effect of setting a purpose for listening could be the text type. The informational text provides accurate and new information on a subject which the reader did know or did not know at all (Günay, 2007). To live by acquiring information on the life itself is among the basic needs and behaviors of human being. The informational texts used in the research could have met the need for learning of the participants to some extent. Therefore, it could be that the participants did listen to the texts more attentively since they were receiving new information with each text read to them. Additionally, children are known for their great sense of curiosity and accordingly, an eagerness to learn (Çilingir, 2003; Rathunde, 2001; Yazıcı, 2007). The informational texts used in the research could have been understood better since they addressed to this trait of the participants. This is mostly because the interest and needs of individuals are determinant in the comprehension of the text they read or listen to (Köktürk & Çoban, 2011; Özdemir, 1991).

A structure is embedded in informational texts to help the reader understand the content fast and easy. Uzdu Yıldız (2010) states that this type of texts is created through organizing correlations that ensure the cohesion of the information which is conveyed via consistency and co-dependency. The cohesion makes the comprehension process easier. The structures that bring the cohesion element into the scene are classified as comparison, description, chronology and cause-and-effect relation (Weaver & Kintsch, 1991). All these structures smooth the comprehension of the text for the reader and this is also supported by the results obtained in the research.

The effect of setting a purpose on comprehension is also, in general, related to the developmental levels of individuals. The suitability of the education given to pre-school children to their developmental level is frequently underlined (Kandır, 1991; Oğuzkan & Oral, 1993; Senemoğlu, 1994). It is thought that the purpose setting technique, which the effect of is the research subject of this study, is closely associated with the developmental capabilities of the participants.

Other text type used in the study to determine the level of comprehension skill is narrative text. The experimental and control groups to whom the narrative texts were read were different than the groups for whom informational texts were used for the exercises. Therefore, the results of the listening exercises conducted based on the narrative texts were not affected by the exercises carried out with informational texts in scope of the research. And yet, similar results were obtained in the measurements performed for the narrative text exercises. In other words, setting a purpose has a positive effect regarding the narrative texts as well. This result was received both through first measurement and second measurement which was carried out to provide evidence.

The participants in the control group listened to the narrative texts without a purpose statement. However, it was observed during the application process that the control group also improved their listening comprehension skills. This improvement is thought to be the result of listening-oriented exercises carried out during the application process. As it was mentioned previously, listening skills fall within the scope of language skill that is developed through practices (Doğan, 2007). Thus, it can be asserted that the exercises performed with the control group also improved the learning skills of the participants to some extent.

Göktürk (1980) describes narrative texts as "conveyance of a narrative reality founded based on the reality itself". In another saying, the reality is told through fiction in this type of text. The meaning in narrative texts is produced based on the narrative structure. Zimmermann (2001) argues that the level of knowledge of the listener plays an important role on the realization of comprehension in the narrative texts and that the listeners equipped with the necessary knowledge can find the symbolic code hidden in the text and thus make sense and an accurate interpretation of the text. The most common text type which pre-school children encounter in listening exercises is of narrative type. Consequently, their first schemas as to what a text is are shaped over narrative texts. The text structure shows how the ideas in a text are organized when conveying a message (Weaver & Kintsch, 1991). The narrative text structure, which students are familiar with from the pre-school period continues to be included in the formal education almost in an unchanged form. The main elements constituting the structure of narratives are such units as protagonists and supporting characters, setting, time, plot (problem) and conclusion (Garner & Bochna, 2004; Graesser, Golding, & Long, 1991). The background knowledge of the participants in relation to the characteristics of a narrative text is thought to have a role in the successful results. In fact, some research showed -to be consistent with the results in this study- that the successful performance displayed in listening comprehension is affected by the text type and length (Çelebi, 2008; Kintsch & Kozminsky, 1977; Sinatra, 1990).

Narrative texts such as stories, poems, and tales are the text types which pre-school students encounter frequently through listening activities. Therefore, these children are considerably familiar with narrative texts. Akyol (2006) states that children have certain knowledge on the concept of story at a basic level while attending pre-school education. Besides, it is indicated that children's text schemas show similarities with narrative texts and that the comprehension for them develops over a course of listening process (Yıldırım, Yıldız, Ateş, & Rasinski, 2010). So, the improvement observed in the control group can be partially related to the prior knowledge of the participants. In addition to this, *the originality of the exercise* mentioned hereinabove can be suggested as another reason as this factor grabs the attention of the participants.

Defining a purpose for the oral text is one of the pre-listening strategies used in improving the listening skills. The activities carried out during the pre-listening stage should prepare the student for listening, catch the attention of the student and determine the purpose for listening (Aras, 2004). Introducing the purpose questions on the oral text to the students makes the student prepare for listening, focus on the text and concentrate on the subject to be read out and thereby facilitates comprehension process. The results of this research are in consistency with the finding of Aras (2004).

The factors that have effects on the skills in listening comprehension are addressed as internal and external factors. While internal factors are rather associated with the reader, external factors are related to the channels used for conveying the message. According to this, elements such as intelligence, language skill, prior knowledge and schemas of the individual, motivation and metacognition are described as internal factors, whereas the effectiveness of the speaker, the awareness of the speaker on the needs of the listener and the variables such as context, topic and the structural elements are external factors in terms of comprehension (Samuels, 1987). In this research, the correlation between the improvement observed in the level of listening comprehension of the participants and the text type is among the external factors.

Jones and Plass (2002) placed emphasis on the role of the prior knowledge pertaining to the text content as an enabling tool for comprehension. The findings of this research support the postulation of Jones and Plass. Questions asked prior to the listening session can be considered an attempt to create background information about the content of the text. Thus, it can be claimed that the result revealed in this research developed out of the activation of the prior knowledge in line with the purposes given. Berman (2003), putting forward a postulation on the subject, states that the individual's posing questions prior to listening and predicting upon the content can be regarded as an indicator of which subjects should be focused on. The questions in relation to purpose before the listening process takes place distinguish the relevant and irrelevant information in the text, as a result of which the listener is given a hint on what she/he should focus in the content of the text. The concern of the children that every piece of information in the text can be an answer to the questions and that therefore they should concentrate on the text as a whole maintain the continuity of their attention. Correspondingly, the findings in the study of Temur (2010) revealed that the influence of the questions asked in the post-listening stage on the level of listening comprehension is greater than that of the questions asked in the post-listening stage.

Another point to be underlined in the research is that the questions on the oral texts were prepared in line with the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. When the cognitive development levels of the participants consisting of pre-school children are taken account of, the questions prepared based on the first domains (levels) in the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy were meaningful and acceptable. The questions that are beyond the cognitive development levels of the participants might have rendered it hard to measure the level of their comprehension of the text. It was aimed to eliminate this risk when preparing the questions for the research. Although the first levels are not sufficient for primary and secondary school students, in the studies conducted according to the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, it was observed that the questions asked to primary and secondary school students usually remained at the first levels. For instance, Çintaş Yıldız (2015) and Eyüp (2012) found out that the questions prepared by the teachers and candidate teachers for the Turkish Language course mainly focused on the remembering and understanding levels while the knowledge types were factual and conceptual. The same findings were obtained in another study conducted (by Ayvacı & Türkdoğan, 2010) for the Science course. In a research carried out in relation to a social studies course program, the learning outcomes also centered on factual knowledge and understanding level (Özdemir, Altıok, & Baki, 2015). Although piling up of the questions at the first levels is negative for primary and secondary school students, it is normal for pre-school students due to their development levels. To this respect, it is suggested that the quality of the questions played an effective role in the success of the participants.

To conclude, this study carried out within different experimental and control groups proved that the strategy of setting a purpose for listening to informational and narrative texts had a positive and significant effect on the level of listening comprehension of the children at the age of pre-school education. The exercises showed that defining a purpose improved the listening skills for the children in oral presentation of the informational and narrative texts. This finding indicates that if the listening exercises are provided in accordance with the traits of students at the early childhood period, successful results would be acquired. In addition, this finding also supports the opinion that listening is an improvable skill (Cihangir, 2004; Doğan, 2007; Epçaçan, 2013; Maden & Durukan, 2013).

Based on the results obtained from the research, it is recommended that the effect of purpose-setting on listening be elaborated for different age groups. It could be of benefit to investigate the effects of the same strategy on the expressive language as well as on listening which is the receptive language. Finally, it is also argued that it would be beneficial to determine the effect of other strategies that could facilitate listening in all age groups and also to determine through comparisons which strategy would be more functional in which age group.

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