

DEFINING LISTENERS IN SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) LISTENING: INVESTIGATING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS AS LISTENERS

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ABSTRACT

Studies in L2 listening, unlike those in other language skills, mostly focus on the product of the skill instead of defining the process itself. Recent studies are far from going beyond basic experimental research designs most of which aim to find out the differences between the two groups in terms of the product of listening. The listening literature is full of such product-oriented experimental studies. However, it is obvious that qualitative research has a key role in understanding and uncovering listening as a cognitive process which is not susceptible to direct observation. More research is needed to find out the relationship between personality traits of effective and ineffective listeners and L2 listening success, a topic of interest for scholars since it was first asserted by the early middle of 20th century. From this point of view, this study is devoted to reach beyond stereotypical listening research. Aiming at investigating and exploring the characteristics of language learners as listeners according to the strategies they use in EFL listening, this study is expected to contribute to the field with its method, procedure, findings and concluding remarks. There are two phases in the study: a) the application of the Oral Communication Strategies Inventory (OCSI), which was developed to measure 'active listening strategies' and 'less active listening strategies' of EFL learners, to 123 freshman students of English Language Teaching (ELT) Department of a state university in Turkey; b) semi-structured interviews with 10 students selected from the participants of the first phase. After the qualitative analyses of OCSI scores, the top-ranking 10 students were included in the second phase of the study and invited as volunteer interviewees. The second phase, the main qualitative part of the study, was conducted with semi-structured interviews. The questions were designed to explore the participants' personality traits in L2 listening. Qualitative data was transcribed verbatim and analysed with a content analysis method. The analysis revealed basic characteristics such as 'being text-dependent, non-interruptive, judgmental, empathic'. In total, 30 characteristics were defined under 5 pre-determined themes and 11 categories. While most of the characteristics defined in the study are consistent with existing literature, there are also some newly explored ones such as 'being respectful, being text-independent, and willingness'. Both the findings and the research design of the study have implications and suggestions for further research as well as L2 listening practice.

Key Words: L2 listening; characteristics of listeners; listening comprehension strategies; big five factors (BFF).

INTRODUCTION

The amount of time devoted to the research and teaching of listening is far less than that devoted to other components of communication such as speaking and reading (Adler & Rodman, 2006; Barker, 1971). Along with the amount of time, research methods of L2 listening seem to be restricted to experimental research designs. However, Vandergrift (1997) points out the importance of qualitative studies as having a key role in understanding and uncovering listening as a process. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005), listening is a cognitive activity and not susceptible to direct observation. Many researchers define it as the least explicit of

the four language skills and they suggest that listening involves physiological and cognitive processes at different levels (Field, 2002; Lynch, 2002; Rost, 2002; Vandergrift, 2004).

As predominantly qualitative, this study investigates characteristics of learners as listeners in accordance with the strategies they use in EFL listening. It is necessary to define the most recurrent terms in the study which are listening, listening strategy, characteristics of listeners and English as a foreign language.

Also referred as listening comprehension strategies in the literature, listening strategies are defined as memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social ways of coping with listening difficulties (Oxford, 1990; Vandergrift, 1993).

Listener characteristics are those features unique to a language learner or listener. The 'characteristics' mentioned here is different from the concept 'personality factors'. It is more or less related to 'the big five personality dimensions' which are agreeableness, openness, extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability. However the study has a broader focus on the term in reference with studies from communicational and educational sciences.

The Importance of Listening/Listening Skill

Listening is an active process. According to Rogers and Farson (1986), 'active' means 'the listener has a very definite responsibility of trying to grasp the facts and feelings in what s/he hears.' (p. 149). From this point of view, it can be concluded that a listener should do her/his best to be a good listener. Then, what is 'being a good listener?' or 'an effective listener?'

Throughout history, effective speaking has been accepted as an important talent. However receptive behaviour, in particular listening, matters as well. Several studies give two reasons to support this. First, effective listening allows the listener to have access to other's beliefs, objectives, knowledge and attitudes as this kind of information is disclosed to an effective listener (Bavelas, Coates & Johnson, 2000; Miller, Berg & Archer, 1983). Second, effective listening provides important relational assets such as setting up trust, sincerity and credibility between the agent and the listener (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Detert & Burris, 2007; Yukl, Kim & Falbe, 1996).

Purdy (1997) lists seven features for an effective listener:

1. Willingness to listen
2. Focus the attention
3. Being aware (perceptive) during listening
4. Doing interpretation (both verbal and non-verbal cues)
5. Consciously working to remember
6. Responding with feedback
7. Caring about the relationship during listening

He makes a definition of listening in accordance with the above mentioned features. According to him, 'listening is the active and dynamic process of attending perceiving, interpreting, remembering and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings.' (p. 4).

During 70's and early 80's several researchers investigated 'the time devoted to listening during daily communication and language learning process' (Barker, Edwards, Gaines, Gladney & Holley, 1980; Gilbert, 1988; Rivers, 1981; Weaver, 1972). They all concluded that listening is by far the most important human activity and language skill which merits more extensive concentration.

L2 Listening Strategies

There is a great deal of research in the literature dealing with language learning strategies. However second language listening (L2 listening) seems to be ignored as the focus is being put on other skills (reading, writing

and speaking). This is perhaps because of its 'implicit and ephemeral nature' (Vandergrift, 2008, p. 84) which makes listening skill difficult to observe. Researchers have studied L2 listening strategies from various perspectives which caused several taxonomies to occur such as; types of cues listeners use (Conrad, 1985); the sequences listeners follow (Martin, 1982; Young, 1997); proficiency levels of listeners (Anderson, 1985; Fujita, 1985; Murphy, 1987; O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Vandergrift, 1997).

Metacognition in L2 Listening

'Meta-cognition' is a key term of research on L2 listening strategies as it has given a new impulse to the field. Metacognitive awareness in L2 listening is defined as 'learners' cognitive appraisal or the metacognitive knowledge of their perceptions about themselves, their understanding of listening demands, their cognitive goals, and their approach to the task' (Rahimi & Katal, 2012) and the strategies they adopt during learning. Metacognitive strategies include five types of strategies. These are: problem-solving, planning and evaluation, mental translation, person knowledge, and directed attention. Use and effects of metacognitive strategies in L2 listening have been studied by several scholars from various perspectives (Berne, 2004; Bozorgian, 2014; Cross, 2011; Goh, 2008; Goh & Yusnita, 2006; Rahimirad & Shams, 2014).

Characteristics of Language Learners as Listeners

Individual differences have attracted the scholars of second language acquisition (SLA) research over last two decades regardless of topics they specialize. It is obvious that many problems arising in language learning and the teaching process should be approached in a contemporary manner taking individual differences into account. The big five factors as well as attitudes, motivation, anxiety and gender are found to be 'strongly related to success in L2 learning and communication' (Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011; p. 60). Samuels (1984) divided those factors as 'inside-the-head' and 'outside-the-head' factors. Intelligence, kinesics and motivation are among inside-the-head factors. There are several others investigating the correlation between success and the personal traits of learners (Ames, Maissen & Brockner, 2012; Bommelje, Houston & Smither, 2003; Dewaele & Furnham, 1999; Liyanage, 2004; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Samimy & Tabuse, 1992).

As Fayyaz and Kamal cited 'regarding the importance of personality traits in English listening, teachers should be made aware of the importance of and sensitivity to the individual differences among their students' (Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011; p. 72). However, it seems that research on the topic is not sufficient to provide implications for teachers. Language learners have not been studied enough in terms of their characteristics as listeners.

Studies on the characteristics of listeners had started by the early middle of 20th century with Nichols (1948, cited in Purdy & Newman, 1999) who set the basics with his doctoral thesis and identified characteristics of effective and ineffective listeners.

The second half of the 20th century also witnessed several studies on the topic. Ross (1964) investigated 'the relationships between listening ability and measures in reading, arithmetic, intelligence, personal and social adjustment, socioeconomic factors and hearing' (p. 369) with good and poor listeners. Ross reached some findings that, good listener characteristics 'should be traced to something other than intelligence' (p. 371) in that, his experimental results showed that poor listeners were well below the good listeners in reading and arithmetic ability, intelligence and general school achievement.

Mostly inspired by Nichols' works, scholars in the communication field conducted some studies to determine the characteristics in a contemporary manner while SLA researchers still discussed whether personality traits had an effect on listening ability (Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011). Steil, Barker and Watson (1983) gave lists of good and poor listeners. They reviewed 14 good and 12 poor characteristics (Appx. Table 1).

Nichols' list was replicated several times for different variables such as age (Coakley, Halone & Wolvin, 1996; Halone, Wolvin & Coakley, 1997), gender (Purdy & Borisoff, 1991; Purdy & Newman, 1999) and context (Imhof, 2001). Among all, Purdy and Newman's study (1999) is the most convenient to be taken as sample as its participants had a suitable average age (M=21.5) for the university context (in which the current study is also

conducted). Also their study gives the most distilled lists of characteristics for both good and poor listeners. They distilled 12 top ranked good and 13 poor characteristics (Appx. Table 2).

All these studies reveal that there are certain personal traits affecting a listener becoming either a good or poor listener.

Big Five Factors and Listener Characteristics

Big five factors (BFF), five dimensions of personality, also known as the 'Five Factor Model (FFM)' (Costa & McCrae, 1992) have started with Cattell's works in the 1940's. Cattell (cited in John & Srivastava, 1999) created the initial taxonomy of personality traits. Later on, his taxonomy was developed by many scholars (Almagor, Tellegen & Waller, 1995; Benet-Martinez & Waller, 1997; Digman, Takemoto-Chock, 1981; John, 1990). These factors are generally listed as:

1. Extraversion
2. Agreeableness
3. Conscientiousness
4. Emotional stability ('Neuroticism' as cited in Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011)
5. Openness (Ames et al. 2012).

It was Goldberg (1981) who named these factors the 'Big Five' "not to reflect their intrinsic greatness but to emphasize that each of these factors is extremely broad" (John & Srivastava, 1999, p. 105).

Over time, these factors found their way into language studies. They were defined as the factors affecting the language learning process (Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011).

BFF take an important part of the research on characteristics of listeners in SLA. There are several studies on the relationship of success in L2 listening and BFF, attitudes and anxiety about L2 listening (Ames et al., 2012; Dewaele & Furnham, 1999; Liyanage, 2004; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). BFF are thought to have a major role in metacognition and metacognitive knowledge: Neuroticism-linked preference for self-information and on metacognitive knowledge; neuroticism-linked predominance of negative schemas such as negative self-evaluations are the topics studied by several scholars (Abe, 2005; Bidjerano & Dai, 2007; Hudlicka, 2005; Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal & Tafaghodtari, 2006; Whitmer, 1997).

This study, through a qualitative research design, seeks answers for the following research questions:

1. Which characteristics do the language learners have as listeners?
2. Are the characteristics of language learners as listeners and BFF interrelated?

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

The participants of this study were selected from the classes of the department where listening skill is taught and practiced during preparatory courses and first year studies under different courses. Students have a 'Listening' course 5 hours per week during preparatory class. In the first year there is a 'Listening and Pronunciation' course (105 AL/106 AL) which is carried out 3 hours per week. Data was collected at the end of the academic year (2011-2012 Spring) which means all the participants, as first year students, had two years of listening courses. None of the participants were reported to have any listening education prior to their university life. This study consists of two phases. In the first phase, Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) was administered to freshmen students in the English Language Teaching Department of a state university. According to the analysis of OCSI, top ranking students were determined to have been using listening strategies effectively. Six out of seven listening strategies were scored according to the items they had in OCSI. One of the strategies of OCSI was excluded from scoring as it was to measure a 'less active listener strategy pack' (See Nakatani, 2006 for a detailed evaluation of OCSI). After recruiting the participants based on the results of the OCSI, they were informed about the second phase of the study and a meeting date was set

suitable for both parties (the researcher and the participants). The aim of the study was briefly defined to the participants. Those whose consents were taken were chosen as the participants.

Measures

OCSI: OCSI, developed by Nakatani (2006), has two parts. The first part examines speaking strategies used for coping with the problems experienced during speaking and the second part examines strategies for coping with listening problems experienced during interaction. There are eight categories for the speaking part and seven categories for the listening part. In this study, only the second part was used as speaking is not among the concerns of the research. The reliability of OCSI's listening part was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha (0.85 for listening part). The total percentage of variance accounting for seven factors of listening part was 58.3 %.

In the first phase of our study, OCSI was used without any translation as the participants were all upper-intermediate learners (freshman after one year of intensive English preparatory class). A total of 120 students (72 women and 48 men) participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 18-24 years old. Gender and age were not among the concerns of the study so the demographic profile data was collected only to assure the homogeneity of the group in terms of a general profile of English language teaching departments of Turkey.

The reliability of the questionnaire indicated a highly acceptable consistency with Cronbach's alpha value measured 0.80. OCSI was used in its original form; therefore factor analysis was not conducted. The participants were ranked according to the values obtained from OCSI results. Only Factor 6 was excluded as it was designed to measure 'less active listener strategies'. Each participant's responses for the questions were calculated to obtain a total value. Values were equal to likert scale figures. For example if a participant's response for an item was 1 (Never or almost never true of me), then it was given one point. Likewise, 5 points were given for an item which was responded as 5 (Always or almost always true of me). In this way, top ranking participants (Appx. Table 3) were determined and they were included in the second phase of the study which was interviews to determine the characteristics of language learners as listeners.

Interviews

As the second phase of the study in-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher himself. Participants having the highest scores of OCSI results were included in interview section of the study. According to OCSI scores, 10 participants (7 women and 3 men) were included in this phase. They were accepted as having the awareness and ability for using active listening strategies. Content analysis was conducted to obtain grouped data from interviews.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter data analysis is given along with discussion of the results. Findings are discussed in their relation to the current literature; the findings are expected to include the answers for the research questions presented. As a limitation of the study it should be stated that there is a gap in the literature which might provide more a sufficient relationship between personality factors and listening. After preliminary investigations of transcribed data, BFF are determined as the theme of the characteristics. Each trait of the BFF has unique categories which cover the characteristics of language learners as listeners. This study is designed as a qualitative one; and questionnaires, which form the quantitative part, have been used only to determine the participants for the main part of the study as explained above. Each theme and quotes of the participants are given in an appendix in order to make the essential points of this section more clear.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness is one of BFF and it is associated with courtesy, cooperation and tolerance (Abe, 2005; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Bidjerano & Dai, 2007). Participants' responses for the related interview questions and probes revealed two main categories of agreeableness: Kindness and cooperative behaviour (Appx. Table 4).

Agreeableness and its categories compound a very popular set of characteristics among the participants. Being respectful to the speaker seems to be the most significant characteristic of listeners. Most of the participants reported to holding a respectful attitude toward the speaker in a two-way listening process. One of the participants expressed her attitude (*Quote #1*).

It is important to note that 'being respectful' is a quite dominant characteristic of the listeners whether the speaker is their teacher or their classmates or even a foreigner. They think 'respect' is a mutual and humanistic concept. These two quotations show the listeners perception of respect in their listening experiences (*Q #2, Q #3*)

Almost no data exists in the relevant literature on 'respect' as a characteristic of a listener. Considering cultural and social backgrounds of the participants, it is logical to estimate it as a characteristic arising from national stereotypes or parental manners of the context. Several studies reveal cultural stereotypes as determinants of SLA process (Grindsted, 2000; Kramsch, 1993, 1998).

Another factor attributed to 'kindness' is being 'non-interruptive'. Most of the participants who reported to be respectful while listening, also reported themselves as non-interruptive even when the topic did not suit them or they would like to raise an objection to what is being told. According to them, interrupting is an indicator of being a poor listener as one of them described (*Q #4*).

Recalling her classroom experiences, one of the participants revealed her listener characteristics as 'non-interruptive' and 'caring'. She described her attitude while listening to a lecture by her professor, a classroom performance by one of her classmates and an everyday conversation with one of her friends on Skype (*Q #5*).

Listening differs from writing and reading in that it needs at least two agents (the speaker and the listener) which allow participation of the two. During classroom listening activities and everyday listening experiences, listeners also need collaboration. The participants revealed their characteristics in terms of cooperative behaviour. Giving feedback was seen as an indicator of comprehension (*Q #6*).

Being a participatory and responsive listener was also a favourable characteristic among the participants most of whom defined themselves as 'participatory' rather being passive listeners (*Q #7, Q #8*), or responsive (*Q #9*).

Participating, responding and giving verbal or non-verbal feedback are among the common listener behaviours (Purdy, 1997; Vandergrift, 2004). Feedback and participation of the listener is among the vital components of active or effective listening (Murphy, 1989; Rogers & Farson, 1994; Rost, 2002; Wolvin & Coakley, 1993).

These characteristics – apart from 'being respectful' – have all been defined by previous studies (Purdy & Newman, 1999; Steil et al., 1983). Determined by their listening aims and the source, 'being respectful' is attributed to the context. Also, it can be concluded that moral issues such as being respectful and caring as a listener are context-bound characteristics; that is, they are special to the society the listener belongs to. Previous studies have no similar findings. Most of the participants are of the Eastern region of the country which means they are brought up in patriarchal family structures where children are generally conditioned to listen and obey. Unfortunately, this tendency can be transmitted to classroom settings which results in a unidirectional teacher-student interaction. However it is a controversial issue whether 'respect' is a negative characteristic for a language learner in listening where the listener is expected to have the merit of listening in a non-disturbing manner.

Extraversion

A number of studies have examined the impact of extraversion on language learning (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999; Ehrman, Betty & Oxford, 2003; Kiany, 1998; Oxford & Anderson, 1995; van Daele, Housen, Pierrard & DeBruyn, 2006; Wong, 2011). As a personality factor, extraversion is suggested to affect a learner's learning style and proficiency in a positive way as it is associated with sociability, assertiveness etc. (Barrick & Mount,

1991). Participants of this study reported two main categories of extraversion: sociability and enthusiasm (Appx. Table 5) which revealed six unique characteristics of listeners:

- a. Being open-minded
- b. Being empathic
- c. Making eye contact
- d. Context-bound willingness
- e. Content-bound willingness
- f. Mood dependent willingness

It is notable that nearly all of the participants (7 out of 10) reported at least one of the characteristics inferable from extraversion. Being 'open-minded' was emphasized as meaning that the participant is open to new ideas as well as newly presented information. As they stated, newly presented information is acceptable even it contrasts with their existing knowledge (Q #10, Q #11).

As an emotional and cognitive term, empathy was reported by the participants several times. Those who defined themselves as 'empathic' related the term to the necessities of classroom atmosphere (Q #12, Q #13).

Making eye contact during listening was reported by most of the participants. Like 'respect', 'eye contact' is also typical to cultural context (Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005). Several studies emphasize that as a paralinguistic feature of communication, eye contact is an important tool for listening comprehension allowing the listener to understand the message better (Heaton, 1978; Pennycook, 1985; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005). Some participants identified it with 'caring the speaker' or 'giving feedback'; some others revealed cultural and traditional stereotypes as the underlying reason for making eye contact (Q #14, Q #15, Q #16, Q #17).

There is much research on 'task difficulty' as a factor determining comprehension of the L2 listener (Brindley & Slatyer, 2002; Ghahdarjani, 2012; Révész & Brunfaut, 2013). Task difficulty should be assessed as a content-bound factor affecting listening comprehension. However it is obvious that there are other factors as well. The participants reported 'willingness' with three sub-variables: context-bound, content-bound and mood dependent willingness to listen.

Context-bound willingness, content-bound willingness and mood dependent willingness were reported as follows (Q #18, Q #19, Q # 20, Q # 21, Q #22).

The characteristics revealed in this theme are more likely to be correlated to personality factors. Personality factors are suggested to have a key role 'on the development of L2 basic interpersonal skills' (Ellis, 2004, p. 541). Liyanage (2004) pointed out the impact of a learner's cultural background on her/his communication behaviour. Willingness and motivation have been listed as two of the personality factors (Ellis, 1994; Dörnyei, 2005). Willingness of our participants to listen is found to have been determined by three factors which can be concluded as being sources of motivation. Lightbown and Spada (2006) mentioned 'willingness' as one of the characteristics of a good language learner.

In their pioneering study on the characteristics of listeners, Steil et al. (1983) mentioned 'being open minded, making eye contact' and 'willingness' as good characteristics of language learners. However their study lacked a detailed categorization of 'willingness'. Purdy and Newman (1999) listed 'willingness' under the name of 'caring attitude' however it is obvious that 'caring' differs from willingness in that the former is related to 'kindness' while the latter is content-bound or context-bound which suggests 'motivation'. Besides, willingness has psychological and cognitive backgrounds which mean 'willingness' is much more complex than was estimated by previous studies. It is more than 'making listening classes attractive' or 'choosing listening material to attract the learners'.

The participant's answers to interview questions gave hints of psychological and cognitive factors affecting their listening behaviour. It is obvious that their readiness and willingness to change depend on both internal

and external factors. Listening types, material or topic, and the setting have influence whether a listener is open to comprehend or not.

Being sociable should be considered in terms of personality factors which cause a listener to be good at interpersonal relationships. For example, a listener who feels isolated from her/his social context may not find it easy to make eye contact while listening in a foreign language.

Openness

Associated with elaborative learning (Geisler-Breinstein, Schmeck & Hetherington, 1996; Slaats, Van der Sanden & Lodewijks, 1997) and constructive learning (Busato, Prins, Elshout & Hamaker, 1999), Intellect (Bidjerano & Dai, 2007) or Openness to Experience (McCrae & Costa, 1985) has been found to correlate with metacognitive listening skills (Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011).

This theme gave two categories: curiosity and imagination (Appx. Table 6) which revealed five characteristics of listeners:

- a. Asking for repetition
- b. Asking for clarification/simplification/examples
- c. Opening debate
- d. Imagining
- e. Retrospective imagining

Asking questions is found to be related to curiosity. Non-interruptive listeners noted that they would ask questions after listening finishes. All of the participants who reported 'curiosity' or 'asking questions' also stated that they use eye contact and/or gestures or mimics to give the message of 'asking for clarification/simplification/examples' or 'asking for repetition'. Participants revealed their characteristics of curiosity as follow (Q #23, Q #24, Q #25, Q #26, Q #27).

Another way of asking questions has appeared to be 'opening debate'. Only one of the participants reported that she opens debate during listening. She supposes the speaker to reveal cues to allow her comprehend (Q #28).

Imagining was reported as a characteristic of listeners. It is important to note that those participants who described themselves as 'daydreamer' and 'non-focused' also reported to be imagining while listening (Q #29, Q #30).

Interviews revealed an interesting characteristic which is described as 'retrospective imagining'. Some participants, who rely on their imaginations, expressed that they continue imagining what they have listened to even after the class or the conversation. It is obvious that this kind of 'imagining' more frequently occurs when the listener cannot reach a sufficient comprehension during listening (Q #31, Q #32).

As important ways of obtaining new information, asking questions, asking for repetitions and simplifications are among the characteristics determined by previous studies (Purdy & Newman, 1999; Steil et al., 1983). 'Open debate' is found to be a newly reported characteristic by listeners. It is reasonable to think that those listeners who revealed 'opening debate' are extraverts as is the case with our participants.

Asking questions is one of the most commonly used ways of facilitating comprehension in EFL listening. Learner asks questions in various forms and for various purposes, however all of these questions have only one purpose: making comprehension better. Traditionally listening courses have been designed as 'listen and repeat' settings. The teacher is the speaker (or there is an audio/video source), s/he repeats as many times as s/he wants. Then the students are expected to repeat. However, today our conceptualization of listening comprehension class is far beyond this. The listener's role is active (as it should be) and listening is not just a 'listen and repeat' activity. As a result of taking an active role, the listener participates more and has the option of asking questions for various reasons. While giving the message of 'asking for

clarification/simplification/examples' or 'asking for repetition', the participants reported using gestures and mimics as well as eye contact. Several scholars studied positive effects of using gestures in listening comprehension (Cabrera & Martinez, 2001; Cassel, McNeill & McCullough, 1999; Goldin-Meadow, 1999; Hattori, 1987; Riseborough, 1981).

Imagination has a reflection in cognitive strategies listeners use. Among cognitive strategies, visualization which is described as 'forming a mental picture of what is heard' (Yavuz, 2004, p. 32) should be broadened to 'imagination' to cover both concurrent and retrospective imagining. Visual scenarios are known to be helpful for a better comprehension in listening (Yavuz, 2004). The listener has an active role in forming a mental picture as s/he listens. Therefore comprehension is directly related to the skill of imagining.

Conformity

Conformity, which has been called as conscientiousness (Ames et al., 2012; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Botwin & Buss, 1989; Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011; Hakel, 1974; McCrae & Costa, 1985; Norman, 1963), dependability (Hogan, 1983) or will (Smith, 1967; Wiggins, Blackburn & Hackman, 1969; Digman, 1989) is related to educational achievement measures and volition; that is, 'being thorough, organized and planful' or being 'hardworking and persevering' (Barrick & Mount, 1991, p. 4). Whichever definition or denomination is chosen, it is predominantly associated with high academic performance (Abe, 2005).

The theme 'Conformity' revealed 'planfulness' and 'goal-directed behaviour' with several characteristics of listeners. Among all, 'text dependency' and 'text independency' are significant characteristics to be reviewed as they have not been identified by any previous studies. There are also some characteristics which have close connections with metacognitive strategies (Appx. Table 7). The characteristics revealed under this theme are:

- a. Pre-reading/pre-listening
- b. Note-taking
- c. Being focused
- d. Being text dependent
- e. Being text independent
- f. Paraphrasing

Depending on the type of listening task and material, 'pre-reading' is one of the characteristics of listeners. They reported depending on a text before coming to classes. It is obvious that 'pre-reading' is a characteristic they developed over time to overcome the difficulties they encountered. In this sense, it can be evaluated as a strategy as well (Q #33, Q #34, Q #35).

As a metacognitive strategy, 'pre-reading' was mentioned as 'advance preparation' in previous studies (Yavuz, 2004). However this definition is rather restricted if the case is a learner's characteristic which is adopted as a result of above mentioned factors complicating listening comprehension. Besides, pre-listening was also reported by one of the participants. Pre-listening is not restricted to the listening material that is used in the classroom. Some participants reported that they use movies or songs to study for listening. They claimed that listening to 'anything' in English helps them overcome listening comprehension problems in the classroom (Q #36).

Note-taking was revealed to be used for asking questions. However some participants reported that note-taking is an important part of their listening experiences (Q #37, Q #38); some of them reported that they use notes to clarify the vocabulary or obscure points (Q #39).

A second set of characteristics that are drawn under the theme 'conformity' is goal-directed behaviour. The effect of texts provided along with listening gives two characteristics. Some participants identified themselves as text-dependent while some others pointed out their text-independent manner in listening. Text-independents even revealed that presence of a text along with listening distracts them and they experience difficulty in focusing (Q #40, Q #41).

On the other hand, text-dependent listeners reported that they feel anxious in the absence of text while an accompanying text raises their willingness (Q #42, Q #43).

Willingness to listen and anxiety have key roles on text-dependency/independency. Willingness to listen was explained in detail as a characteristic belonging to the group of 'enthusiasm'. Anxiety, the other factor affected text-dependency and also affected by it, is a trendy issue of SLA research. There are several studies investigating the effects of anxiety on language learning (Bailey, 1983; Dörnyei, 2005; Horwitz, 2001; Tsui, 1996) as well as on listening (Elkhafaifi, 2005; In'nami, 2006; Vogely, 1998; Vandergrift, 1999). Only one of the participants reported himself as 'paraphrasing' while listening (Q #44)

As a cognitive listening strategy, reconstruction is defined as 'the listeners' reshaping their understanding' (Yavuz, 2004, p. 32). According to Yavuz (2004) listener achieves it either during listening or after listening. The words heard during listening or notes taken by the listener can be used for reconstruction. However the paraphrasing listener differs from the one who uses reconstruction in that s/he uses original material.

'Being focused' was reported frequently by the participants. Generally, this concept was observed as embedded in other characteristics. Verbal reports revealed that listeners need to focus on the subject as well as the task itself. Task difficulty and text difficulty are important factors for a listener to focus on. This characteristic seems to be opposed to a poor characteristic, 'being non-focused', which will be defined in the next theme (See Theme 4: Neuroticism) in terms of its causes and effects on listening. Phonetics, outer factors and topic are the causes of being focused or non-focused. One of the participants reported these factors (Q #45). Another participant emphasized the importance of outer factors on her focusing (Q #46).

Only one of six characteristics reported in this study was mentioned in Purdy and Newman's 1999 work. Text-dependency/independency is defined to be a novel characteristic which does not exist in previous studies. Note-taking, being focused and paraphrasing were mentioned in several studies dealing with language learning strategies. However these terms reflect different profiles when they are described as the characteristics of a learner. Using a strategy mostly needs an awareness or training while these characteristics have self-developed and self-directed natures. Probably the listener transfers these characteristics from her/his everyday communicational nature.

Neuroticism

There are several factors affecting neuroticism. Anxiety (Fayyaz & Kamal, 2011), depression, anger, embarrassment and excitement (Barrick & Mount, 1991) are common traits associated with neuroticism. Eysenck (1967) suggested a relationship between neuroticism and lack of effective cognitive skills. The characteristics revealed under this theme seem to be 'poor' listener's characteristics (Appx. Table 8). Research in the literature suggests that poor listener characteristics can be associated with gender differences (Borisoff & Purdy, 1991; Purdy & Newman, 1999). As gender is not among concerns of this study, it will not be reviewed here. The characteristics obtained under this theme are:

- a. Being distracted
- b. Being non-focused (because of phonetics, topic or outer factors)
- c. Being unsociable
- d. Being close-minded
- e. Daydreaming
- f. Having eyes wander
- g. Being judgmental

Being 'distracted' and 'non-focused' are two significant characteristics of listeners. Both of them are dealt with in relation to a broader term: 'anxiety'. One of the participants reported himself as distracted (Q #47); another one mentioned linguistic factors (Q #48). Non-focused listeners, sometimes, find the topic irrelevant or they blame outer factors (Q #49, Q #50, Q #51).

These characteristics are reported to result from several linguistic or paralinguistic factors. Phonetics, topic, loudness, rate and fluency are among the causes of being a distracted or a non-focused listener. These factors have been described as the sources of problems of listening process (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Ur, 1994; Yagang, 1993).

'Unsociability' and 'being close-minded' were also reported among characteristics of listeners. Obviously they appeared to be poor listener characteristics as the participants expressed their discontent on these. According to them, being unsociable and close-minded trouble their listening (Q #52, Q #53).

Undoubtedly, Bandura's (1977) 'social learning theory' contributed much to this issue. Social setting and learner's adaptation to this setting is extremely important for a satisfying extent of learning. There are several studies on sociocultural theory and its effects on language learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2004). Also research proved that the successful L2 learner should adopt various aspects of target language's linguistic and cultural patterns (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Ushida, 2005). Obviously close-minded and unsociable listeners lack the features of a well-socialized language learner who is open to adopt new ideas as well as new learning opportunities during L2 listening.

'Emotional lability' which revealed three characteristics can be described as cognitive and affective instability of listeners. 'Being judgmental' and 'daydreaming' are two examples reported by the participants. They also mentioned having 'eyes wander', as well as 'daydreaming' when they feel distracted or lose their attention during listening (Q #54, Q #55). 'Being judgmental' was reported along with 'jumping to conclusions' which are both indicates 'impatience' (Q #56, Q #57).

Listener characteristics reported under the theme 'neuroticism' are the characteristics of the poor listener or they reflect poor aspects of a listener. Though the literature suggests a great deal of studies on poor listeners, there are few works describing their very basic characteristics. Apart from 'unsociability', all of these characteristics were reviewed by previous studies (Purdy & Newman, 1999; Steil et al., 1983). Unsociability has its roots in cultural stereotypes as well as psychological agents. As discussed above, these are social and affective barriers listeners have. An unsocial learner benefits less from social learning settings. The family, traditions, beliefs and social context in which s/he is brought up may cause a listener to become unsociable. Proficiency level, listening comprehension and motivation are also affected by unsociability. Being close-minded should also be attributed to the social context of the listener.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

All the characteristics reviewed under the five main themes have one thing in common: they reflect the listeners. It is the broader picture of listeners as language learners which is drawn out with an inventory of listening strategies. In total 30 characteristics have been defined under 5 themes and 11 categories. All characteristics reported by the participants are listed according to their frequency of occurrence in verbal reports (Appx. Table 9) and the ranking of themes in terms of frequency of all characteristics are shown (Appx. Table 10).

The characteristics of listeners as language learners may provide new research questions from various perspectives. These characteristics can be studied independently as well as dependently in relation to one another or in relation to other internal and external factors of the language teaching/learning process. There are newly defined characteristics such as 'being text-dependent, text-independent, respectful' which can lead to further research to investigate cultural and personal contexts in more depth. Gender, age and task type have not been taken into consideration for this study. Thus, further research may go beyond this study by using these variables in new research questions.

Teaching listening is an arduous task for teachers. It is not easy for the learners as well. This study is believed to light the path to a better understanding of listening comprehension courses as well as second language listening outside of the language classroom.

Though the characteristics defined in this study need to be validated by further studies, it should not be ignored that understanding the characteristics of any learner helps the teacher broaden her/his understanding of the personality of the listener as language learner.

IJONTE'S Note: This paper is based on a doctoral dissertation titled "A Qualitative Investigation of the Characteristics of Language Learners as Listeners According to the Strategies They Use in EFL Listening".

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APPENDIX-1: Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of Listeners (Steil, Barker and Watson, 1983, p. 56).

Good listeners are:	Poor listeners are:
Alert	Inattentive
Responsive	Defensive
Patient	Impatient
Non-interrupting	Interrupting
Empathic	Disinterested
Interested	Insensitive
Understanding	Self-centered
Caring	Uncaring
Attending	Quick to judge
Other-centered	Distracted
Curious	Apathetic
Effective evaluator	Emotional
Non-emotional	
Not distracted	

Table 2: Characteristics of Good and Poor Listeners (Purdy & Newman, 1999 p. 35).

A good listener	A poor listener
Uses eye contact appropriately	Is impatient, interrupts the speaker
Is attentive/alert to speaker's verbal/non-verbal behaviour	Doesn't give eye contact (eyes wander)
Is patient and doesn't interrupt (waits for the speaker to finish)	Is distracted (fidgeting), not paying attention to the speaker
Is responsive using verbal/non-verbal expressions	Is not interested in the speaker (doesn't care, daydreaming)
Asks questions (in a non-threatening tone)	Gives little or no (verbal/nonverbal) feedback to the speaker
Paraphrases/restates/summarizes what the speaker says	Talks too much
	Changes the subject
Provides constructive (verbal/nonverbal) feedback	Is judgmental, jumps to conclusions
Works to understand the speaker (is empathic)	Is closed-minded
Shows interest in the speaker as a person	Is self-centered, self-preoccupied
Demonstrates a caring attitude (is willing to listen)	Gives unwanted advice
	Not focused
Doesn't criticize, is non judgmental	Too busy to take time to listen
Is open-minded	

Table 3: OCSI Scores of the Participants*

PSEUDONYMS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS	OCSI Score
Ahmet	4.33/5
Ali	4.33/5
Burcu	4.5/5
Cenk	4.25/5
Deniz	4.5/5
Ebru	4.33/5
Elif	4.25/5
Melek	4.95/5
Nur	4.95/5
Su	4.5/5

*The names are in alphabetical order.

Table 4: Theme 1: Agreeableness

THEME 1: AGREEABLENESS	
CATEGORIES	CODES
Category 1: Kindness	Respectful Non-interruptive Caring Giving feedback
Category 2: Cooperative Behaviour	Participatory Responsive

Table 5: Theme 2: Extraversion

THEME 2: EXTRAVERSION	
CATEGORIES	CODES
Category 1: Sociability	Open-minded Empathic (making) Eye contact (context-bound) willing
Category 2: Enthusiasm	(content-bound) willing (mood dependent) willing

Table 6: Theme 3: Openness

THEME 3: OPENNESS	
CATEGORIES	CODES
Category 1: Curiosity / Ask Questions	Ask for repetition Ask for clarification/simplification/examples Open debate
Category 2: Imagination	Imagining Retrospective imagining

Table 7: Theme 4: Conformity

THEME 4: CONFORMITY	
CATEGORIES	CODES
Category 1: Planfulness	Pre-reading / Pre-listening Note-taking Focused
Category 2: Goal-directed behaviour	Text dependent Text independent Paraphrasing

Table 8: Theme 5: Neuroticism

THEME 5: NEUROTICISM	
CATEGORIES	CODES
Category 1: Anxiety	Distracted Non-focused Phonetics Outer factors (sound, interruption etc.) Topic
Category 2: Low self-esteem	Unsociable Close-minded
Category 3: Emotional lability	Daydream Eyes Wander Judgmental

Table 9. The Characteristics Reported by Listeners

Sequence	The Characteristic Reported	Theme/Category	Frequency of Occurrence (approximately)
1	Non-focused	Neuroticism/Anxiety	6
2	(making) Eye contact	Extraversion/Sociability	5
3	Pre-reading/Pre-listening	Conformity/Planfulness	5
4	Focused	Conformity/Goal-directed behaviour	5
5	(being) Respectful	Agreeableness/Kindness	4
6	Ask for repetition	Openness/Curiosity – Ask questions	4
7	Ask for clarification/simplification/ examples	Openness/Curiosity – Ask questions	4
8	Willingness*	Extraversion/Enthusiasm	4
9	Text-dependent	Conformity/Goal-directed behaviour	3
10	Text independent	Conformity/Goal-directed behaviour	3
11	Non-interruptive	Agreeableness/Kindness	3
12	Open-minded	Extraversion/Sociability	3
13	Participatory	Agreeableness/Cooperative behaviour	3
14	Imagining	Openness/Imagination	3
15	Retrospective imagining	Openness/Imagination	3
16	Note-taking	Conformity/Planfulness	3
17	Unsociable	Neuroticism/Low self-esteem	3
18	Close-minded	Neuroticism/Low self-esteem	3
19	Daydream	Neuroticism/Emotional lability	3
20	Eyes wander	Neuroticism/Emotional lability	3
21	Judgmental	Neuroticism/Emotional lability	3
22	Empathic	Extraversion/Sociability	3
23	Distracted	Neuroticism/Anxiety	2
24	Caring	Agreeableness/Kindness	2
25	Giving feedback	Agreeableness/Cooperative behaviour	2
26	Responsive	Agreeableness/Cooperative behaviour	2
27	Paraphrasing	Conformity/Goal-directed behaviour	1
28	Open debate	Openness/Curiosity – Ask questions	1

* Willingness stands for three characteristics related to the term: content-bound willingness, context-bound willingness and mood dependent willingness.

Table 10. The Ranking of Themes in Terms of Frequency of all Characteristics

Sequence	Theme	Number of Categories	Frequency of All Characteristics
1	Neuroticism	3	23
2	Conformity	2	20
3	Agreeableness	2	16
4	Extraversion	2	15
5	Openness	2	15

APPENDIX-2: Quotes

Agreeableness

RESPECT:

Quote – 1 (Q1) “I show respect to the words of speaker. While listening to him/her I do not want to seem disrespectful with my manner and behaviour. Sometimes people may pose reckless attitude towards the teacher or even their friends while listening. I can’t stand it because there is someone speaking.” (Melek)

(Q2) “In my opinion, if I want to be listened carefully, I should listen to him/her. This is something like a mirror. Think that, someone is speaking and you do not respect him. For example you seem irrelevant, you act rudely and disrespectfully... and what do you expect?” (Elif)

(Q2) “English is our aim here. We learn it to have a better career and a better job, of course. But listening is not restricted to English. We listen to Turkish more than English. If we do not respect what is being said and who is saying it, then we will seem inconsiderate.” (Cenk)

NON-INTERRUPTIVE:

(Q3) ‘Sometimes we listen to passages from various topics. They can contrast with my previous knowledge but I do not interrupt it or object. The same thing is valid also for my teachers and friends or even for a foreigner... If I object and interrupt it, it means that I do not know listening and I am a know-it-all. Yet my aim is to learn while listening to English. Not only the knowledge itself but also pronunciation, vocabulary etc.’ (Elif)

(Q4) ‘I never interrupt. Because it is worse than the speaker’s mistake. Also I hate being interrupted.’ (Ebru)

CARING:

(Q5) ‘... for example last year our teacher would read passages and he would summarize with his own words to make us understand the text better. While listening to him, I tried to grasp the topic and seemed interested. Whether the speaker is a teacher or a friend, it doesn’t differ. Sometimes my classmates make presentations. I should be careful even with my sitting style on the desk. If I sit in a reckless style, it means that I do not notice him/her. Then s/he will be insulted. This is the same for everyone regardless of their position. My friend, my teacher or a foreigner ... I have got some foreign friends on Skype and Chatroulette, I do not spoil them while listening.’ (Nur)

GIVING FEEDBACK:

(Q6) ‘When I listen my teacher or my classmates I take notes and later I contribute her/him in that ‘you said this and I have a different idea on the subject’ or sometimes I criticize her/him and I can use her/his expressions which show that I have a full comprehension of her/his words.’ (Ahmet)

PARTICIPATORY:

(Q7) ‘I do not just listen. I attend my teacher. I do not like listening without any reaction.’ (Nur)

(Q8) ‘Sometimes I share my opinions on the topic. For example I may ask for a right to speak and probably say ‘Excuse me, in my opinion it should be in this way’ or I may accept and contribute to her/him by saying ‘I agree with you’.’ (Burcu)

RESPONSIVE:

(Q9) ‘It is annoying if you are listening without any reaction. I cannot be indifferent to the speaker whether it is a classroom activity or an ordinary communication. At least I say a couple of words after listening to her/his speech.’ (Melek)

Extraversion

OPEN MINDED:

(Q10) 'I listen whatever the speaker tells. Because maybe I will learn new thing from her/his words. Even if they are too different for me, I do not stop listening or leave the topic. I try to relate it with my existing knowledge.' (Su)

(Q11) 'There occurred many cases when I listened and changed my existing beliefs or knowledge. I think a learner should be open to everything. Otherwise how can we learn? While listening in English I change my pronunciation and sometimes I learn new words that are more suitable than my vocabulary. I adopt them.' (Nur)

EMPATHIC

(Q12) 'In the classroom I try to empathize with the other. While listening I do not confine myself to my own ideas or feelings or understanding.' (Elif)

(Q13) 'According to me, the listener should empathize with the speaker, so that s/he can understand all the message the speaker wants to give. I do this during listening in listening classes.' (Nur)

EYE-CONTACT:

(Q14) 'Our listening and pronunciation courses depend on classroom interactions. Sometimes we listen from a CD player and sometimes our teacher talks. When I listen to my teacher or my classmates I rarely lose eye contact because I feel not caring the speaker when my eyes wander.' (Su)

(Q15) '... and eye contact is crucial for me to comprehend what I am listening to.. yes, eyes are important to indicate it (comprehension).' (Burcu)

(Q16) 'Sometimes I miss the point. For example while listening to my teacher, when I face with a word or phrase that I have never heard before, I miss the point. Our teacher understands it from my eyes. I should give this message to my teacher through eye contact.' (Melek)

(Q17) '... eye contact is necessary sometimes. It may distract my teacher if I look at other things while s/he is speaking. Yet listening to my friends is different from it.' (Ahmet)

WILLINGNESS:

Context-bound willingness:

(Q18) 'While watching a film or listening to a foreigner (a tourist), I mean out of the classroom, I feel more willing to listen to. I study at home before coming to class and I get bored when listening the same thing over and over. You have to understand the topic. There are orders you should follow: listen, answer ... It is not enjoyable listening for the lesson. I do not get bored while watching a film in English.' (Burcu)

Content-bound willingness:

(Q19) 'Generally, I get bored easily if the topic is not interesting. For example we have a coursebook for listening and pronunciation class. It has many interesting topics but some others are rather dull and boring. In fact I do not want to even attend to class on those days. Our teacher tries hard to make the lesson interesting but if the topic is dull we get bored easily.' (Su)

(Q20) 'I am more interested into it if the topic is one of my favorites.' (Melek)

(Q21) '...for example my best friend is Murat and we do speaking practices. I try to find interesting topics to make him listen to me eagerly. I ask the same thing from him. His words should appeal to my interests. For example, he knows that I like learning about new places in the world and he tells me about interesting places all over the world' (Ali)

Mood dependent willingness:

(Q22) 'It depends on my mood. If I do not feel good while listening to English whether it is classroom or at home, it affects my enthusiasm.' (Burcu)

Openness

ASK QUESTIONS

(Q23) 'I ask her/him to repeat when I do not understand.' (Burcu)

(Q24) 'If I can't hear or I have any difficulty in comprehending it, I ask the speaker to slow down or to repeat it. If the problem goes on I ask her/him to paraphrase. While listening or watching on my own, I replay it as much as I need to understand.' (Ahmet)

(Q25) '... native speakers use too much contractions. Even our teachers sometimes use difficult idioms or phrases. If I do not understand it or I have a problem in perceiving it, I try to express it through mimics or gestures.' (Melek)

(Q26) 'When I do not understand I say: 'Could you repeat it please.' In listening and pronunciation classes it is easy to ask our teacher to replay it or restate it, even I think our teacher understands from my eyes or mimics, however it is a big problem while listening to a foreigner. I generally ask her/him to restate it with simple words and slowly.' (Nur)

(Q27) 'Not to disturb her/him, I wait till s/he finishes his words or at least I wait for an appropriate interval then I kindly request her/him to repeat it.' (Elif)

OPENING DEBATE

(Q28) '... listening and pronunciation classes are based on listening and comprehension of topics which are of various subjects. When I have difficulty in comprehending any word, expression or concept, I try to discuss the topic with our teacher or my classmate. In this way s/he gives me elaborated explanations of the topic. I can infer the meaning in this way.' (Elif)

IMAGINING

(Q29) 'While I am listening, there should be a full silence because I can't focus on it if there is loud. Silence is very important because sometimes I shut my eyes and try to see the picture. It helps me understand.' (Burcu)

(Q30) 'I reflect it into my mind: I try to imagine what is being said or what can be said there. I fill the blanks with my imagination and deductions.' (Deniz)

(Q31) 'I do not understand sometimes. It affects all my day. For example if I can't understand something it becomes somehow obsession for me. It puzzles me. I go on thinking on it. Trying to see the picture and fill in the gap(s) I have from the listening, I keep focused on it. Later on, I can find and say 'Oh! Yes. It was machine not vaccine.' My roommates get angry with me. They warn me to leave the subject in the classroom but I can't stop thinking a gap from any listening.' (Burcu)

(Q32) '... Though not being very often, I may keep thinking on a point which I could not catch during listening. I try to think the event or concept from various perspectives. It helps me understand even the class and listening is over.' (Ali)

Conformity

PRE-READING

(Q33) 'I read two or three times before coming to classroom. It helps me understand better while listening. If we have the listening track itself I listen to it several times beforehand.' (Ahmet)

(Q34) 'We have a textbook and I think it becomes easier to understand the teacher if I read the text before the class.' (Ebru)

(Q35) 'There is too much noise in the classroom while we are listening to our teacher or one of our classmates because we are trying to catch the meaning. Generally my friends make noise while asking each other. Sometimes I focus on but I get distracted on a question raised by one of my classmates. Because of these, I read the text in my room before I come to the class. It helps me comprehend better. I hope we had texts even before the exams.' (Burcu)

PRE-LISTENING

(Q36) '... for example if I have listening class tomorrow, I listen to some music or watch a film. Then, the next day I feel at ease during listening and pronunciation class. I feel that I comprehend better.' (Deniz)

NOTE-TAKING

(Q37) '... generally I note down the important points.' (Melek)

(Q38) 'Listening to an audio or to our teacher is much more difficult than listening to our classmates. They speak more fluently which makes it difficult to understand. I take notes during listening and then I check them.' (Nur)

(Q39) 'I try to write down the words that I can't understand totally. Then I look up for it. If I can't find it, I consult to my friends or teacher.' (Cenk)

TEXT-DEPENDENT

(Q40) 'I should be all alone with the voice. How can I match them together? Looking at the text or listening? I can't focus on the listening task while there are words and letters in front of my eyes.' (Deniz)

(Q41) 'I do not prefer using a text if I do not have to use it. It distracts my attention. I may miss the audio or the voice while trying to match them with the written material.' (Ali)

TEXT-INDEPENDENT

(Q42) 'It is very easy if we have an accompanying text. Think that you do not know what is going to be said. You have no idea on what are you going to listen. The topic ... the vocabulary... they are very difficult and obscure. When I have a text in my hand, I feel better, no matter how difficult it is.' (Burcu)

(Q43) 'Last year, we didn't use a course book for listening. For this reason it was boring. I didn't know what to study or what to listen on that day. I felt unwilling for listening. This year, we use a course book which has topics for each day. Therefore I can see the topic of the day. I feel better now.' (Ahmet)

PRAPHRASER

(Q44) 'I think about it and try to construct a new expression with my own words.' (Ali)

BEING FOCUSED

(Q45) '...it becomes easy when the topic is a familiar one. Then I focus on easily. I should have something as previous knowledge in my mind before listening to any topic.' (Melek)

(Q46) 'Our dormitory is crowded which makes it unsuitable for listening. When I'm in the classroom, I feel it easy to focus on the subject. Because everybody is doing the same task and they do not make noise or other things.' (Burcu)

Neuroticism

DISTRACTED

(Q47) 'I feel distracted when I miss a word or even I can't catch the topic.' (Cenk)

(Q48) '...the most arduous aspect of listening in English is pronunciation. It is pronounced in a different style from its written form so whenever I hear a difficult expression to pronounce or to comprehend I get annoyed.' (Nur)

NON-FOCUSED

(Q49) 'I warn my classmates or flatmates: please be silent and do not make noise while I am listening to something or studying for listening class. Any noise, even sometimes a door creaking disturbs me. I can't concentrate on.' (Burcu)

(Q50) 'I do my best to be successful. However our listening and pronunciation class gets unbearable sometimes. We may study nonsense and irrelevant topics. It makes me non-focused.' (Deniz)

(Q51) '... listening is different from writing because it perplexes me whenever I hear a difficult word. Our teacher helps us but while watching a film or chatting with a foreigner ... it is really different.' (Ahmet)

UNSOCIABLE/CLOSE-MINDED

(Q52) 'In classroom, I do not have very close relationships with my classmates. I have good friends but they are very few. I don't attend many classroom activities. Our teacher asks us to form groups with our classmates and prepare presentations. These all help us to develop our listening ability but I do not attend group works because I can't be very close with others. As a result I have only few friends to communicate.' (Cenk)

(Q53) 'I do not accept easily. I have to judge for a long time to accept any new idea. Otherwise I can't convince myself. This sometimes causes me stick into my own feelings. Think that I am listening to an audio or my teacher. S/he is teaching something or even her/his pronunciation teaches me but my mind is close to it. I do not receive it. As if I know it all the best. However I am a learner here and I should learn. But I fail to do this especially for pronunciation.' (Deniz)

DAYDREAMING/EYES WANDER

(Q54) 'Listening is very different... while listening to an audio or someone speaking I imagine the scene. It facilitates my comprehension. However there is a problem while imagining. I can't focus on one topic and find myself dreaming something else. Once I wanted to think of an airport to imagine a conversation there I found myself thinking about my future plans to go abroad which were rather irrelevant to the topic.' (Burcu)

(Q55) 'Listening to one of my classmates or my teacher is better than listening to an audio file since it helps me focusing on. Otherwise I interest in other things. I look out of window or I check missing calls from my cell phone.' (Cenk)

BEING JUDGMENTAL

(Q56) 'It puts me into trouble to prejudice while listening. We listened to a crime report and all my classmates made fun of me. I suspected nearly all characters in the story.' (Ali)

(Q57) 'While listening to others, I come to a decision too early which makes me embarrassed. I make up my mind and express it, soon after that it turns out to be wrong. It is important for me to learn wait' (Ebru).

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