



A Correlational Study: Listening and Reading Anxiety of Turkish Children During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: As the source of an individual's learning, listening and reading skills are also a prior condition to use speaking and writing skills. Therefore, eliminating the problems encountered in these skills is also important for the development of other skills. In this study, the aim is to determine the listening and reading anxiety levels of students and the relationship between them in terms of various variables during the Covid-19 pandemic which has been emphasized in various studies to cause learning losses. In accordance with the stated aim, the target population of the research consists of secondary school students. Data from the participants were collected with the use of the Listening Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students and the Reading Anxiety Scale, and the SPSS program was used to analyze the data. As a result, it was determined that listening anxiety levels of the participants were moderate and reading anxiety levels were low, and there was a positive and significant relationship between the listening and reading anxiety levels of secondary school students.

Keywords: Covid-19, listening anxiety, secondary school students, reading anxiety.

Introduction

In classroom practices, teachers often ask questions such as "Is there anything that is not understood? Do you understand?" and receive feedback on the course process through such questions. Actually, this type of questions can be considered as an introduction to giving hints in order to support meaning-making processes of students. Comprehension means a complex process taking place through listening and reading. Being a main predictor of the success of students in native language education, the development of comprehension skills is described as a necessary skill not only for the individual's academic life, but also for establishing healthy relationships throughout life, not suffering from lack of communication, and achieving new learning.

Comprehension is a way of thinking about the information received through listening, reading and visual reading, analyzing the reasons, drawing conclusions and evaluating (Güneş, 2007, p. 229). According to Demir (2010), comprehension is the way an individual perceives and internalizes the stimuli consisting of a written text, a verbal expression or a visual element through his/her senses and identifying them in his/her mind, reconstructing them by blending them with his/her previous knowledge, and using them in his/her life as a different knowledge. Comprehension skill consists of two dimensions as being listening and reading skills. Listening skill has the feature of being the first skill acquired by an individual since it includes a process that starts in the womb. It is defined as following a speech in order to pay attention and draw a conclusion (Göğüş, 1978) with the aim of understanding what one hears, and as paying attention to receive and internalize what is heard or to understand what is heard (Sever, 2000). Listening acts as a source for the acquisition of other language skills (Mackay, 1997). Considering the use of skills in the communication process, it is emphasized that listening covers 40% of it while speaking, reading, and writing cover 35%, 16%, and 9%, respectively (Burley-Allen, 1995). Tompkins (1998) states that the time an

individual spends for listening equals to the total time spent on other skills. In this context, it can be stated that an individual dedicates 55% of his/her daily life to listening (Peterson and Karschnik, 2011).

Well, how can listening, which has such an important role in the continuation of daily life, act as a source for an individual's learning? The answer to this question varies depending on the person's listening education status. According to Yalçın (2002), a person who has not received listening education can remember only a quarter of what s/he listens to. Therefore, listening constitutes the basis of learning for the individual, who is subjected to a systematic listening education with his school life. Considering that listening is the most employed skill in the classroom environment (Taylor, 1964), it can be stated that listening is an important skill in constructing meaning.

Although reading, which constitutes another dimension of comprehension and is acquired through school, is explained as recognizing the letters and words forming the text and comprehending meanings of these (Göğüş, 1978) or as seeing the word shapes as a result of the eye jumping over the lines, understanding and vocalizing their meanings (Öz, 2001, p.193), Akyol (2005, p.1) defines reading as the activity of generating meaning based upon the interaction between the author and the reader in an appropriate environment and in line with an appropriate method and aim by using prior knowledge. Karatay (2010) also states that reading is beyond deciphering the known fonts of a written text with or without sound; it is to comprehend the feelings, thoughts and messages in the text. Uyar (2015, p. 37), on the other hand, states that it is impossible to unite around a single umbrella definition of reading because the perception of what reading is varies by person, aim of reading, environment, and time.

It is clear that at all levels of the Turkish national education system, reading skill is given more importance than other skills, and a special place is reserved for reading in curricula (MEB, 2019; 2006). Despite this, it is a fact that the performance shown in reading is not at the desired level. According to 2018 data of UNESCO Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Turkey ranks 86th in the world in terms of reading. Although national-scale exams are built on reading, there are students who get "0" points from these exams (<https://dokuman.osym.gov.tr/pdfdokuman/2020/GENEL/yksdegraporweb27112020.pdf>). Uyar (2015, p.2) emphasizes that the results obtained in international exams such as PIRLS (MEB-EARGED, 2003) and PISA (MEB-EARGED 2005, 2007, 2010), in which reading skills are decisive, are also far from meeting the expectations. Indeed, it is not the right approach to evaluate the development or success of reading skills only through the success obtained in exams. However, it is observed that the stated situation is also emphasized in national studies carried out on the subject (Aksoy, 2018; Gürsoy, 2018; İşcan, Arıkan and Küçükaydın, 2013; Arıcı, 2008; Urgan, 2008; Balcı, 2009; Dökmen, 1994).

Listener's/reader's inability to construct meaning is at the root of the problems encountered in listening and reading. Listening/reading comprehension means the comprehension of the listening/reading material. If the listening/reading process does not result in comprehension, it is not possible to call the action as listening/reading. If comprehension is not realized, the process in listening means hearing, and the process in reading means the vocalization of written

symbols. If comprehension is realized, the process shall be called listening or reading. In addition to cognitive and metacognitive factors, affective factors like anxiety, attitude, and motivation also take part in constructing meaning in listening and reading. It can be stated that anxiety has a special place in terms of negatively affecting the interaction among the listed factors. In general terms, anxiety is the feeling experienced in the face of the possibility of danger arising from the inner and outer world or in any situation that is perceived and interpreted as dangerous by the person (Işık, 1996). In the context of listening and reading anxiety, it is thought that it would be more useful to analyze the concepts under separate headings.

Listening Anxiety

Listening anxiety is a response to listening. The emergence of this reaction can occur when listening is mandatory, like in the case of a listening activity carried out in the classroom or of a listening activity carried out in exams, or it can occur in the form of stopping listening when listening is not mandatory. Listening anxiety usually arises in situations where students undertake a challenging or unfamiliar listening task; while they continue to have difficulty in hearing and understanding words, to misinterpret the sounds s/he hears, or to make incorrect inferences, the level of anxiety keeps increasing. During the listening process, the listener has little or no control over the sound quality and the speed of the speech (Buck, 2001). It makes the listening process including various difficulties more complicated (Nurkhamidah, 2020, 141). When the listener cannot reach the speed of listening-comprehension, the listening goal cannot be achieved and the level of anxiety increases. According to Joiner (1986), when the anxiety level increases, students start losing their self-confidence. Tobias (1986) suggests addressing listening anxiety in three stages as being pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. When there is a distraction or/and lack of knowledge related to the listening material which is to be carried out, these factors cause anxiety in the pre-listening process. While reasons such as difficulty in following the text, insufficient vocabulary, and hearing problems during the listening activity cause anxiety, the level of anxiety increases in situations where students cannot create a connection between what they have just learned and what they have already known after the listening activity. Considering individual differences, reasons for listening anxiety may vary. Listening anxiety has negative impacts on students at every stage of a listening activity; as the level of anxiety increases, the student avoids listening activities. As discussed by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), when the student starts achieving the aims in listening skills, these negative impacts begin to disappear and the student tends to perceive these experiences in a more positive way. It is observed that this situation is also emphasized in the conducted studies (Scovel, 1991; Kim, 2000).

Reading Anxiety

Reading anxiety occurs as a response towards reading and it usually emerges when there is a compulsory reading activity like in the case of a reading activity carried out in a classroom environment or in an exam (Torgesen, 2000). Some of the reasons of anxiety about reading are personal and interpersonal concerns, earlier perceptions on reading, lack of knowledge about reading strategies, principles in the classroom, teacher's perception on reading, preservice teacher interaction, test anxiety, and features of the reading material (Bell and Perfetti, 1994; Koizimu,

2002). When the student has significant level of anxiety, it causes problems in comprehending and remembering the text and thus, they tend to avoid reading activities (Lien, 2011). Such situation is observed in reading exams or exams consisting of mainly reading, and students who have reading anxiety at a significant rate get low scores in tests based on reading (Ergene, 2003). When the reading anxiety is analyzed and explained, reading process should be taken as the basis (Sellers, 2000; Zin and Rafik-Galea, 2010). A reading activity includes three steps as being pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. Anxiety at pre-reading stage might be caused by many factors such as the cases when the student cannot determine the aim of the activity, when they are not able to select the appropriate strategy, when they are distracted, or when they do not have enough knowledge about the text they are supposed to read. Anxiety at the while-reading stage usually manifests when the number of unknown words in the reading material is high. When students are not able to create a connection between what they have just learned and what they have already known at the post-reading stage, it can be stated that the level of anxiety will increase (Koizimu, 2002). These factors prevent the reading process from taking place in a healthy way.

High levels of anxiety prevent comprehension (Carpenter, Miyake, & Just, 1995). By its nature, reading anxiety is more difficult to detect compared to listening anxiety; because situations in which reading anxiety occurs do not manifest themselves with immediate reactions as it happens in listening anxiety. Detection of listening anxiety and reading anxiety is important for every age group and educational level. The earlier these concerns are identified and solutions are produced, the more healthy the development of skills shall be.

The current conditions make it a necessity to obtain more in-depth information about the affective dimension in native language education. The form of education that has obligatorily changed in the world with the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the academic development of students not only in a cognitive way but also in an affective way. It is not yet known to what extent this process causes a learning loss in students. Therefore, studies discussing the process from different perspectives are needed in order to make an inference about how the education and training lives of students are affected during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research aims to detect the anxiety levels of Turkish students who study at secondary schools and receive distance education due to the Covid-19, regarding the comprehension skills, which is a dimension of native language education, in a correlational way. In accordance with this general aim, the below given questions were attempted to be answered:

- What is the level of listening anxiety of secondary school students?
- Do secondary school students' reading anxiety differ according to gender and grade level?
- What is the reading anxiety level of students who study at secondary schools?
- Are gender and grade level determinant in reading anxiety levels of students who study at secondary schools?
- Is there a relation between the listening anxiety and reading anxiety?

Methods

Research Model

The research was designed in the correlational survey model, which is one of the quantitative research methods. Quantitative research is a set of interrelated structures that have become propositions or hypotheses determining the relationships between variables (Creswell, 2013, p.54). Correlational survey model is a research method providing the opportunity to make in-depth analysis in determining the relationships between variables (Gökçe, 2018; McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

Target Population and Research Sample

The target population of the research consists of secondary school students studying in Kırıkkale province in the 2020-2021 academic year, and the sample consists of a total of 650 secondary school students determined by the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher forms the working group by focusing on the most easily accessible items in the immediate environment in order to minimize the loss of time, effort and cost and also to add practicality to the research (Patton, 2015; Erkuş, 2013). Considering the Covid-19 pandemic process, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to use this type of sampling. The distribution of the students in the sample by class and gender is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Information about the Sample

| Gender | 5th Grade | 6th Grade | 7th Grade | 8th Grade | Total |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Female | 39 | 96 | 151 | 97 | 383 |
| Male | 51 | 82 | 87 | 47 | 267 |
| Total | 90 | 178 | 238 | 144 | 650 |

When the information in Table 1 is analyzed, it is observed that 90 fifth grade, 178 sixth grade, 238 seventh grade and 144 eighth grade students participated in the research. In addition, 383 of the students in the sample are female and 267 are male.

Data Collection Tools

Two different data collection tools were used in the research. Explanations on data collection tools are presented under the following headings.

The Listening Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students

The Listening Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students developed by Melanlıoğlu (2013) was used in order to determine the listening anxiety of the students participating in the research. The validity research and reliability research of the scale were carried out with the participation of a total of 520 secondary school students studying in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient determined within the scope of the validity and reliability research of the scale is .92 for the overall scale. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient determined within the scope of this research is .90. The scale consisting of five factors and 37 items was graded in a 5-point Likert type scale. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 37, and the highest score is 185. There is no reverse scored item in the scale, and an increase in the score obtained from the scale indicates an increase in listening anxiety.

The Reading Anxiety Scale

The Reading Anxiety Scale developed by Melanlıoğlu (2014) was used in order to determine the reading anxiety of the students in the sample of the study. The validity research and reliability research of the scale were carried out on the data collected from 616 secondary school students studying in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient determined within the scope of the validity and reliability research of the scale is .87 for the overall scale. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient determined within the scope of this research is .84. There are 14 items in total in the scale consisting of three factors. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale graded in the 5-point Likert type scale is 14, and the highest score is 70. There is no reverse scored item in the scale, and an increase in the score obtained from the scale indicates an increase in reading anxiety.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data of the research were collected between December and March in the 2020-2021 academic year. The collection of data was carried out in a process where students continued their education through distance education due to the Covid-19 outbreak. For this reason, first of all, the school administrators were contacted; and information about the aim and implementation of the research was provided. The scales to be used in the research were transferred to Google Form's environment, and the online link address required to participate in the research was delivered to the students through school administrators. Before participating in the research, the students were asked to approve a page stating the aim of the research, the approximate response time of the scales, and that they voluntarily participate in the research. By this means, it was ensured that the students voluntarily participate in the research.

The acquired data were transferred to the SPSS program after 31st March 2021, which was the deadline to participate in the research. During the data analysis process, the first thing to be analyzed was whether the total scores of the students from the sub-dimensions and general of the measurement tools showed normal distribution or not. Findings related to the normality test is presented in Table 2.

According to Table 2, the scores students obtained from the Listening Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students and the Reading Anxiety Scale used in the research show a normal distribution both in the sub-dimensions of the scales and in the overall scale. For this reason, parametric statistics tests were used in the research. The independent samples t-Test was used in order to determine whether listening and reading anxiety of students differed by gender, and ANOVA was used to determine whether they differed by their grade levels. The relationship between the sub-dimensions of the listening anxiety scale and the reading anxiety scale and the general listening anxiety and general reading anxiety were analyzed through Pearson correlation analysis. In addition to these, descriptive statistics results were used in order to determine the listening and reading anxiety levels of the students.

Table 2

Normality Test Results for the Research Data

| Scale | Dimension | N | Z | P | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|--|-----|------|------|----------|----------|
| | Evaluating Listening | 650 | .056 | .103 | .087 | -.726 |
| The Listening Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students | Monitoring the Listening Process | 650 | .057 | .117 | .252 | -.553 |
| | Individual Differences in Listening | 650 | .054 | .083 | .026 | -.623 |
| | Focus on Post-Listening | 650 | .137 | .079 | .548 | .649 |
| | Listening Barriers | 650 | .095 | .071 | .344 | -.658 |
| | Overall Scale | 650 | .043 | .119 | .103 | -.635 |
| | Planning the Reading Process | 650 | .089 | .089 | .423 | -.659 |
| Reading Anxiety Scale | Factors Supporting the Reading Process | 650 | .097 | .137 | .028 | -.623 |
| | Reading Comprehension and Support | 650 | .118 | .098 | .567 | .225 |
| | Overall Scale | 650 | .067 | .069 | .345 | -.633 |

Findings

In this section, the findings on the listening and reading anxiety levels of students participating in this research, on the difference between listening and reading anxiety when analyzed in terms of gender and grade, and on the connection between listening and reading anxiety are given. The findings regarding the listening anxiety of the students participating in the sample are revealed in Table 3.

Table 3*Listening Anxiety Levels of Students*

| Dimension | N | The Lowest | The Highest | \bar{X} | S | Level |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Evaluating Listening | 650 | 7 | 35 | 20.87 | 6.35 | Moderate |
| Monitoring the Listening Process | 650 | 11 | 54 | 28.52 | 8.52 | Moderate |
| Individual Differences in Listening | 650 | 9 | 45 | 26.06 | 7.18 | Moderate |
| Focus on Post-Listening | 650 | 5 | 24 | 9.56 | 3.67 | Low |
| Listening Barriers | 650 | 5 | 25 | 12.57 | 4.45 | Moderate |
| Overall Scale | 650 | 41 | 160 | 97.57 | 25.22 | Moderate |

As can be understood from the above given table, listening anxiety of students in the working group is *low* in the scale for *Focus on Post-Listening* sub-dimension, which was used in this research, and it is *moderate* in other sub-dimensions and in the entire scale. Outcomes related to the independent samples t-Test, which was carried out to reveal whether the listening anxiety of students participating in the research differ by gender are given in Table 4.

According to Table 5, listening anxiety of students studying at secondary schools and participating in this research differs significantly by the educational grade of students in the scale's all sub-dimensions and in overall scale. Accordingly, the significant difference in the *Evaluating Listening*, *Monitoring the Listening Process*, *Focus on Post-Listening*, and *Listening Barriers* sub-dimensions is in favor of the students studying in the upper grades in the comparison made between fifth graders and seventh and eighth graders; and between sixth graders and seventh and eighth graders. A significant difference was observed in *Individual Differences in Listening* sub-dimension and in overall scale among all groups apart from the fifth graders and sixth graders. Considering the average scores, it is noteworthy that listening anxiety decreases as the grade level increases in all sub-dimensions and in overall scale. Analyzing values of the effect size, it has been observed that the effect in *Evaluating Listening*, *Monitoring the Listening Process*, *Focus on Post-Listening*, and *Listening Barriers* sub-dimensions is *medium*, and that the effect in the *Individual Differences in Listening* sub-dimension and in overall scale is *large*. According to these findings, it can be stated that the grade of education is an effective variable on listening anxiety and as the grade level increases, listening anxiety decreases significantly.

Table 4*t-Test Results of the Listening Anxiety of Students by Gender*

| Dimension | Gender | N | \bar{X} | S | Sd | t | P | Cohen's d |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----|-----------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----------|
| Evaluating Listening | Female | 383 | 20.99 | 6.53 | 648 | .626 | .532 | .05 |
| | Male | 267 | 20.68 | 6.09 | | | | |
| Monitoring the Listening Process | Female | 383 | 28.14 | 8.24 | 648 | 1.348 | .178 | .11 |
| | Male | 267 | 29.06 | 8.90 | | | | |
| Individual Differences in Listening | Female | 383 | 26.03 | 7.15 | 648 | .146 | .884 | .01 |
| | Male | 267 | 26.11 | 7.24 | | | | |
| Focus on Post-Listening | Female | 383 | 9.07 | 3.33 | 648 | 4.079 | .000* | .33 |
| | Male | 267 | 10.25 | 4.00 | | | | |
| Listening Barriers | Female | 383 | 12.26 | 4.42 | 648 | 2.158 | .031* | .17 |
| | Male | 267 | 13.02 | 4.48 | | | | |
| Overall Scale | Female | 383 | 96.50 | 24.94 | 648 | 1.306 | .192 | .10 |
| | Male | 267 | 99.12 | 25.59 | | | | |

* $<.05$

According to the results presented in Table 4, listening anxiety of students differs significantly in favor of female students in the *Focusing on Post-Listening* and the *Listening Barriers* sub-dimensions. There is not any significant difference by gender in other sub-dimensions as well as in overall scale. Values related to effect size revealed that the effect in the *Focusing on Post-Listening* sub-dimension was *small* while the effect in other sub-dimensions was at the level of *no effect*. As can be understood from the findings obtained, it is safe to say that gender is not an effective variable on listening anxiety. The difference in students' listening anxiety by the grade of education was analyzed through ANOVA. Table 5 presents findings related to the conducted analysis.

Table 6 presents the findings regarding levels of reading anxiety of students studying at secondary schools and included in the research.

Table 5*ANOVA Results of Students' Listening Anxiety by the Grade of Education*

| Dimension | Grade | N | \bar{X} | S | F | P | Difference | Cohen's d |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|--------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Evaluating Listening | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 22.86 | 5.84 | 17.619 | .000* | 1-3 | .69 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 22.80 | 5.59 | | | 1-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 20.10 | 6.45 | | | 2-3 | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 18.49 | 6.33 | | | 2-4 | |
| Monitoring the Listening Process | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 31.71 | 7.98 | 20.776 | .000* | 1-3 1-4 | .75 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 31.25 | 8.55 | | | 2-3 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 27.21 | 8.16 | | | | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 25.31 | 7.71 | | | | |
| Individual Differences in Listening | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 28.90 | 7.05 | 22.591 | .000* | 1-3 1-4 | .82 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 28.33 | 7.22 | | | 2-3 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 25.14 | 6.62 | | | 3-4 | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 23.01 | 6.57 | | | | |
| Focus on Post-Listening | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 11.33 | 4.56 | 13.945 | .000* | 1-3 1-4 | .71 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 10.14 | 3.37 | | | 2-3 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 8.97 | 3.47 | | | | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 8.71 | 3.19 | | | | |
| Listening Barriers | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 14.11 | 4.23 | 15.206 | .000* | 1-3 1-4 | .71 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 13.68 | 4.47 | | | 2-3 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 12.14 | 4.32 | | | | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 10.97 | 4.14 | | | | |
| Overall Scale | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 108.91 | 23.09 | 27.253 | .000* | 1-3 1-4 | .89 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 106.20 | 23.95 | | | 2-3 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 93.55 | 24.48 | | | 3-4 | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 86.48 | 22.94 | | | | |

* < .05

Table 6*Reading Anxiety Levels of Students*

| Dimension | N | The Lowest | The Highest | \bar{X} | S | Level |
|--|-----|------------|-------------|-----------|-------|----------|
| Planning the Reading Process | 650 | 7 | 32 | 15.84 | 6.09 | Low |
| Factors Supporting the Reading Process | 650 | 3 | 15 | 8.34 | 2.56 | Moderate |
| Reading Comprehension and Support | 650 | 4 | 19 | 9.25 | 2.81 | Low |
| Overall Scale | 650 | 14 | 60 | 32.49 | 10.74 | Low |

According to Table 6, students' levels of reading anxiety are *moderate* in the *Factors Supporting Reading Process* sub-dimension, and *low* in other sub-dimensions and in overall scale. Table 7 presents the findings of the independent samples t-Test, which was carried out to reveal if the reading anxiety of students participating in the research differ by gender.

Table 7*t-Test Results of the Reading Anxiety of Students by Gender*

| Dimension | Gender | N | \bar{X} | S | Sd | t | P | Cohen's d | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|-----|-----------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-----------|--|--------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-----|------|-----|-------|-------|-----------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-----|------|-----|-------|-------|---------------|--------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|
| Planning the Reading Process | Female | 383 | 14.12 | 5.40 | 648 | -9.154 | .000* | .73 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Male | 267 | 18.31 | 6.19 | | | | | Factors Supporting the Reading Process | Female | 383 | 8.29 | 2.48 | 648 | -.538 | .591 | .04 | Male | 267 | 8.40 | 2.67 | Reading Comprehension and Support | Female | 383 | 9.14 | 2.66 | 648 | -1.145 | .253 | .09 | Male | 267 | 9.40 | 3.00 | Overall Scale | Female | 383 | 29.50 | 9.65 | 648 | -9.012 | .000* |
| Factors Supporting the Reading Process | Female | 383 | 8.29 | 2.48 | 648 | -.538 | .591 | .04 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Male | 267 | 8.40 | 2.67 | | | | | Reading Comprehension and Support | Female | 383 | 9.14 | 2.66 | 648 | -1.145 | .253 | .09 | Male | 267 | 9.40 | 3.00 | Overall Scale | Female | 383 | 29.50 | 9.65 | 648 | -9.012 | .000* | .72 | Male | 267 | 36.78 | 10.79 | | | | | | | | |
| Reading Comprehension and Support | Female | 383 | 9.14 | 2.66 | 648 | -1.145 | .253 | .09 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Male | 267 | 9.40 | 3.00 | | | | | Overall Scale | Female | 383 | 29.50 | 9.65 | 648 | -9.012 | .000* | .72 | Male | 267 | 36.78 | 10.79 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall Scale | Female | 383 | 29.50 | 9.65 | 648 | -9.012 | .000* | .72 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Male | 267 | 36.78 | 10.79 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*<.05

t-Test results presented in the above given table show that reading anxiety of students differs significantly for female students in *Planning the Reading Process* sub-dimension and in overall scale. According to the analysis of values of the effect size, it has been determined that the effect in *Factors Supporting the Reading Process* and *Reading Comprehension and Support* sub-dimensions was at the level of *no effect*, and that the effect in *Planning the Reading Process* sub-dimension and in overall scale was *medium*. Findings obtained reveal that gender is a significantly

effective variable on reading anxiety. Table 8 presents findings of ANOVA test which was carried out to reveal if reading anxiety of the participants differs by the grade of education at which students study.

Table 8

ANOVA Results of Students' Reading Anxiety by the Grade of Education

| Dimension | Grade | N | \bar{x} | S | F | P | Difference | Cohen's d |
|--|---------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|---------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Planning the Reading Process | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 20.81 | 6.01 | 41.818 | .000* | 1-2 1-3 | 1.15 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 17.30 | 5.38 | | | 1-4 2-3 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 14.09 | 5.55 | | | 2-4 | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 13.82 | 5.62 | | | | |
| Factors Supporting the Reading Process | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 8.83 | 2.47 | 5.664 | .001* | 1-4 | .44 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 8.72 | 2.54 | | | 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 8.24 | 2.57 | | | | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 7.70 | 2.46 | | | | |
| Reading Comprehension and Support | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 10.67 | 3.08 | 21.464 | .000* | 1-3 1-4 | .30 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 9.96 | 2.83 | | | 2-3 2-4 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 8.76 | 2.51 | | | | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 8.29 | 2.47 | | | | |
| Overall Scale | 1-5 th graders | 90 | 41.91 | 10.81 | 46".643 | .000* | 1-2 1-3 | .43 |
| | 2-6 th graders | 178 | 34.89 | 8.92 | | | 1-4 2-3 | |
| | 3-7 th graders | 238 | 29.43 | 9.97 | | | 2-4 | |
| | 4-8 th graders | 144 | 28.68 | 9.69 | | | | |

*<.05

Table 8 proves that participant students' reading anxiety shows significant difference by the educational grade of students in each single sub-dimension as well as in overall scale. It has been detected that the significant difference in *Planning the Reading Process* sub-dimension as well as in overall scale is in favor of the students studying in the upper grades in the comparison made between fifth graders and students who study in other grades, and between sixth graders and seventh and eighth graders. The difference in the sub-dimension of *Factors Supporting the Reading Process* is in favor of eighth graders in the comparison made between eighth graders and fifth and sixth graders. The difference in the sub-dimension of *Reading Comprehension and Support* is in favor of the students studying in the

upper grades in the comparison made between fifth graders and seventh and eighth graders, and between sixth graders and seventh and eighth graders. According to the average scores of the groups, reading anxiety decreases as the grade level increases. According to the analysis of values of the effect size, it has been observed that the effect in the sub-dimension of *Planning the Reading Process* is *large* while the effect in other sub-dimensions and in overall scale is *small*. According to these findings, it can be stated that although it is at a low level, the grade of education is an effective variable on reading, and as the grade level increases, reading anxiety decreases.

Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to detect if there was a relationship between the listening anxiety scale's sub-dimensions and the reading anxiety scale's sub-dimensions, which were used in the study, and between general listening anxiety and general reading anxiety. Table 9 presents the acquired findings.

Table 9

Results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis on the Relationship Between Listening Anxiety and Reading Anxiety

| | Planning the Reading Process | Factors Supporting the Reading Process | Reading Comprehension and Support | General Reading Anxiety |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Evaluating Listening | .259** | .506** | .493** | .292** |
| Monitoring the Listening Process | .294** | .492** | .639** | .320** |
| Individual Differences in Listening | .272** | .711** | .650** | .289** |
| Focus on Post-Listening | .252** | .434** | .563** | .294** |
| Listening Barriers | .254** | .453** | .488** | .270** |
| General Listening Anxiety | .324** | .639** | .693** | .355** |

**<.01

According to Pearson correlation analysis results seen in the above given table, it is observed that the relationship between listening anxiety scale's all sub-dimensions and general listening anxiety and reading anxiety scale's all sub-dimensions and general reading anxiety is positive and significant. The relationship between Reading Anxiety scale's *Reading Comprehension and Support* sub-dimension and Listening Anxiety scale's all sub-dimensions and general listening anxiety is moderate and significant. Similarly, it has been determined that the relationship between all sub-dimensions, apart from the sub-dimension of *Reading Comprehension and Support* and the sub-dimension of *Individual Differences in Listening*, and general listening anxiety is moderate and significant. The relationship between *Factors Supporting the Reading Process* sub-dimension and *Individual Differences in Listening* sub-dimension is high and significant. It has been determined that the relationship between general listening anxiety and general reading

anxiety is moderate and significant. With regard to these findings, it is safe to state that the relationship between listening anxiety and reading anxiety is significant.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The study attempts to analyze listening and reading anxiety of students studying in secondary schools in terms of various variables during the Covid-19 pandemic, and to determine the relationship between listening anxiety and reading anxiety. The results obtained from the study can be expressed as follows:

- Secondary school students' levels of listening anxiety were low in the Focus on Post-Listening sub-dimension of the scale used in the research; and it is moderate in other sub-dimensions and in overall scale.
- Although secondary school students' listening anxiety differs significantly for female students in the Focus on Post-Listening and Listening Barriers sub-dimensions of the scale, it does not show a significant difference in other sub-dimensions and in overall scale by gender variable. While such result coincides with the findings of studies carried out by Ateş (2018) and Arslan (2017), it does not coincide with the result of Uçgun's (2016) research.
- Secondary school students' listening anxiety differs significantly in accordance with the grade level of education. As the grade level of education increases, listening anxiety decreases significantly. In this context, it is possible to state that grade level is an effective variable on listening anxiety. Ateş (2018) also emphasizes that grade level is an effective factor on listening anxiety. However, contrary to the result acquired in this study, the study conducted by Arslan (2017) revealed that listening anxiety increases as the grade level increases.
- Secondary school students' levels of reading anxiety were moderate in Factors Supporting the Reading Process sub-dimension of the scale used in this research, and it is low in other sub-dimensions and in overall scale. The study conducted by Çevik, Orakçı, Aktan, and Toroman (2019) also reveals similar results. On the other hand, it is known that at primary school level, reading anxiety of students is low and moderate (Katranacı and Kuşdemir, 2016; Dursun and Özenç, 2019).
- As a result of the analysis carried out to determine if gender variable is determinant in secondary school students' reading anxiety, it has been revealed that in the sub-dimension of Planning the Reading Process and in overall scale, the difference is significant and in favor of female students. While the stated result shows similarity with what was put forward by İzci and Kaya (2021) and Ramirez et al. (2019), it contrasts with the findings of Tonka (2020) and Çevik, Orakçı, Aktan, and Toroman (2019). The study conducted by Katranacı and Kuşdemir (2016) found a significant difference in favor of male students. Different results obtained from similar studies might be due to the individual differences in the meaning-making skills of the students participating in the research.

- Secondary school students' reading anxiety differs significantly in terms of grade level. In his research carried out with eighth graders in secondary school, Türkben (2020) found out that reading anxiety levels are low. This finding supports the result of this research.

- It has been understood that the relationship between secondary school students' listening and reading anxiety levels is positive and significant. Results of the research are in line with the results suggested by Uçgun (2016). Therefore, it can be stated that Covid-19 pandemic period had no effect on students' anxiety about listening and reading skills.

The ultimate goal of native language classes, which are systematically taught in schools, is to improve students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and to enable them to acquire the habit of using these language skills effectively throughout their lives. To achieve the mentioned aim, it is essential to identify the problems experienced in native language education and to develop solutions targeting them. One of these problems is anxiety which deeply affects students in an affective way. It is considered that by determining the anxiety levels of the students regarding the skills starting from the lower classes, native language education can be carried out more efficiently, and it shall enable students to turn listening, speaking, reading and writing skills into habits. The study analyzes the anxiety states students may experience in the dimensions of listening and reading skills, which are considered comprehension skills. There is a need for studies especially analyzing the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has continued since March 2020, on students from various perspectives. Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) state that the pandemic has negative effects on the education process (<https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-education>). When the results of this research and the results of the study conducted by Uçgun (2016) are evaluated together, it can be assumed that the anxiety levels in listening and reading, which are the source of students' learning during this period when they are away from face-to-face education, have not been adversely affected by the process. This result is interpreted as striking data. The emergence of such a result is justified by the fact that the participants did not have difficulty in the process of constructing meaning in both listening and reading. Considering that the change in the anxiety levels of students shall not occur in a short time or instantaneously, the justification given seems reasonable (Harmankaya and Melanlıoğlu, 2017). Tayşi (2019) also emphasizes that the relationship between listening comprehension skills of students and their listening anxiety is negative and significant. In the study conducted by Katrancı and Kuşdemir (2016), it was stated that the relationship between reading comprehension skills and reading anxiety is negative and significant.

The biggest solution offer for reducing the listening and reading anxiety felt by students is to turn these skills into habits. It is stated that the fact that students consider themselves competent in reading and able to cope with the obstacles they shall encounter during reading and that they define themselves emotionally close to the act of reading reduces the anxiety they may experience while reading (Kandemir, 2020). In order to achieve this, students should be enabled to establish a bond with the book and to gain the habit of reading books. Baki (2017) specified that reading habit is a significant and direct predictor of the reading anxiety levels of students. Tonka (2020) also states that reading

anxiety of students who have acquired the habit of reading books reduces. In order for listening and reading skills to turn into habits, students should be motivated and they should be trained on strategies supporting meaning-making. Acquisition and education of native language is possible through the spiral development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Failure in any of these skills shall negatively affect other skills. The knowledge that is the source of speaking and writing is acquired through listening and reading skills. Therefore, attention should be paid to listening and reading skills education from an early age, and measures should be taken to address the problems encountered in the process. In this study, as one of the problems that can be encountered, anxiety is discussed specifically in terms of secondary school students. In similar studies, other affective factors, which are thought to be effective on listening and reading comprehension skills, can be analyzed in terms of various variables at different levels of education.

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Please Cite: Melanlioğlu, D. & Katrancı, M. (2022). A Correlational Study: Listening and Reading Anxiety of Turkish Children During the Covid-19 Pandemic. *The European Educational Researcher*, 5(3), 277-296. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31757/euer.533>

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Conflict of Interest: We confirm that there is no conflict of interest between the authors in this study.

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Data Availability Statement: Data can be provided upon request.

Ethics Statement: This study has been prepared in accordance with scientific research and publication ethics.

Author Contributions: The authors contributed equally to this work.

Received: March 08, 2022 ▪ Accepted: August 15, 2022