EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Teaching Listening in a Primary School

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Abstract

Previous research on listening in English as a foreign language setting mainly focused on the students' experiences and skills rather than examining teachers' roles, beliefs, and practices. Exploring teachers' cognitions and practices on teaching listening is key to understanding challenges and tensions in the teaching context and to providing solutions. To address this gap, the current study investigated 4 EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening in a primary school via semi-structured interviews, lesson recordings, and artifacts. Findings indicated that there is a mismatch between the teachers' beliefs and actual practices regarding listening pedagogy mainly owing to the limited time and curriculum load. Findings are discussed and implications for teachers and teacher education programs are provided.

Keywords: listening, teachers' beliefs, English as a foreign language, cognition

Introduction

Investigating teachers' thoughts, beliefs and opinions allows us to have a deeper understanding of their practices and different dynamics in teaching and interactions. Teachers' beliefs and practices are operationalized in this study based on Borg and Burn's (2008) definition as "what teachers know, think and believe and its relation to their classroom practices" (p. 457). Teacher cognition is a vast area that can examine an unlimited number of factors and issues in the teaching and learning process. So far, many studies have been designed to understand teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching grammar, reading, writing, and speaking. Teaching listening, on the other hand, has been ignored compared to the other skills mainly because it is a receptive skill and difficult to assess. However, from the learners' perspective, they have difficulty in listening due to its sub-skills that are needed to be performed very quickly and synchronously such as encoding speech, separating speech boundaries, and inferencing via pragmatic knowledge (Vandergrift, 2007). Therefore, this study aims to understand the teachers' cognition on teaching listening. The terms English as a second language and as a foreign language are used interchangeably in the study as well as the terms beliefs and cognition.

Literature Review

Listening, which is a very prevalent activity both in daily life and for academic purposes, has been regarded as one of the most challenging skills for L2 learners (Graham, 2009). Despite being a very prominent skill in daily life and being demanding for L2 learners, research about teaching listening is very limited. Especially, teachers' beliefs and practices in EFL listening are neglected compared to the other language skills such as reading, speaking, and writing (Goh, 2010). Yongbai (1992) suggests three main reasons for the scarcity of listening research. First, listening is regarded as playing an audio and completing questions as a construct. Second, assessing listening skills is thought to be taxing for teachers and researchers in the classroom environment. Third, listening is considered a skill that can be improved automatically. On the other hand, students have difficulty in listening especially in a foreign language because there are several factors that they need to process and manage at the

same time, and they often fail to improve their listening skills when they are not knowledgeable about the effective strategies to do so. The factors that cause difficulty in listening range from decoding skills, lack of vocabulary knowledge, accent, speech rate to general world knowledge (Goh, 1999). Listening becomes even more problematic for L2 learners when it is "unidirectional"; that is, learners do not have a chance to stop and ask for replay (Graham et al., 2014). They often encounter "unidirectional" situations in daily life and school environments; however, they hesitate to ask for repetition regarding what the interlocutor is saying because they do not want to lose face.

Previous studies regarding teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening mostly revealed that there is a tension between what teachers believe and do in the real teaching process (Graham et al., 2014; Karimi & Nazari, 2017; Sah & Shah, 2020). To illustrate this mismatch, the study by Graham et al. (2014) investigated 115 EFL teachers' cognitions and practices regarding listening pedagogy in a high school via a questionnaire and two open-ended questions. Findings suggest that teachers usually implement listening as a "comprehension check" activity in which students listen to the audio, answer the questions, and go on with the next activity (Field, 2008). While doing so, the focus is more on the understanding of content rather than the listening skills and strategies (Goh, 2010). Although teachers believe that listening is a skill that can be taught effectively, they mostly follow a "product-oriented" approach rather than a "process-oriented" approach during their actual practices (Graham et al., 2014). For instance, teachers in the study state that students are often engaged in the during-listening activities rather than pre- and post-listening activities in listening instruction.

A very recent study addressed teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening in a quantitative design via questionnaires with 25 teachers from five different schools (Sah & Shah, 2020). Similar to the findings of the previous studies, there was a divergence between the teachers' cognition and practices in listening pedagogy. For instance, although teachers put forward that they aim to train students' listening skills via strategies and help them be autonomous learners, what they generally do in their actual practices is to focus on traditional methods such as exercises from workbook, repetition, and direct instruction (Sah & Shah, 2020). Also, teachers mainly care about the correct answers that students can provide during the listening activity instead of providing them helpful tips to improve in the next trial.

Most of the previous studies relied on the teachers' "stated" beliefs in questionnaires and their anecdotal notes while investigating teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching EFL listening. In contrast, Siegel (2013) aimed to investigate the issue via the teachers' actual practices by analyzing 30 lesson recordings of 10 EFL teachers in Japan. The results were more optimistic in that teachers were found to use various techniques in teaching listening rather than only standard traditional methods, and there was a convergence between some of the teachers' practices and beliefs. Some teachers implemented several listening strategies in their lessons while others used more traditional methods of teaching by regarding listening as an end-product (Siegel, 2013). Teaching listening techniques that were experimented with in the study were "comprehension approach", "bottom-up activities", "prediction", "metacognitive listening strategies", "transfer to other listening situations" and "teacher modeling". The authors of the study believe that ineffective teaching in listening instruction stems from teachers' lack of detailed knowledge about teaching listening and insufficient teacher education program objectives.

Another study was carried out by Karimi and Nazari (2017) to analyze the incongruity between the teachers' beliefs and actual practices in listening instruction. In addition to the

modified version of the questionnaire used in the study by Graham et al. (2014), interviews and observation were included in the data collection procedure. The study included participants holding BA or MA degrees in teaching and aimed to address whether there is a difference between the teachers holding different degrees in terms of listening pedagogy. According to the findings, there was no relationship between the teachers' beliefs and practices regarding listening instruction even if they hold a BA or MA Degree. Based on the answers given in the interviews, there are five main reasons for the divergence between the teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening. These are "limited time", "lack of facilities", "low prior knowledge on the topic", "accent" and "inappropriate level of proficiency and audio" (Karimi & Nazari, 2017). First, although the teachers are endowed with the necessary skills and strategies for listening instruction, they tend to skip listening activities as quickly as possible due to the time limit and rush to complete the other curriculum goals. This problem also emerges when it comes to the "accent" in the listening instruction. They recite that students have difficulty because they encounter various accents in audio; however, they do not have enough time to draw their attention or practice variations of English. Next, teachers find the equipment that they use to teach listening inappropriate due to technical problems or extra noises during the listening instruction. Finally, they mention the level of student proficiency and the lack of prior knowledge as a barrier that refrains them from reaching their goals in teaching listening because it becomes demanding for them to find appropriate materials and audio that are in line with the students' level, needs, and general knowledge.

Based on the readings in the literature regarding the issue, the studies about teachers' cognition and teaching listening are very limited. Most of the previous studies were applied to teenagers or adult learners. Besides, previous studies generally used surveys and questionnaires in quantitative design. To the best of my knowledge, there is a further need for more qualitative study designs that investigate teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening, especially to EFL young learners in primary schools. Qualitative research design can allow for a more contextualized, in-depth, and multidimensional analysis of the issue. Unlike quantitative research design, in which the main goal is the generalizability of the findings, this kind of qualitative study can provide the bigger picture of the issue in the specific context by drawing on the participants' experiences, beliefs, and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, considering previous studies and the need for further qualitative research design in teaching EFL listening, the current study attempts to explore the following research questions:

1) What are the beliefs of the teachers regarding teaching listening in an EFL context in a primary school?
2) Is there a convergence between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening?

Methodology

Participants

The participants are 4 EFL teachers in a private primary school in Turkey. Their country of origin is Turkey, and they speak English as a foreign language. The teachers are female and have 3-10 years of experience in teaching. Participants' ages range from 25 to 45. Three of the participants have a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching. One of the participants has a bachelor's degree in English Literature and she acquired an English Language Teaching certificate by completing additional training after graduation. They teach

Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the school. They did not receive any specific training or instruction regarding teaching listening. English is taught as a foreign language. The school's curriculum follows a communicative approach and content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) approach. The participants were recruited through convenience sampling. They were working at the same institution with the researcher at the time of the study. They were selected based on their voluntary consent and willingness to take part in the interview and contribute to the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study was implemented in a qualitative design with 4 EFL teachers for 12 weeks. Semi-structured interview (Appendix B), lesson recordings and artifacts were used as data collection instruments. One semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. The researcher and the participants stayed in contact and the participants responded to some of the follow-up questions that emerged after the initial interviews either via text message and email or during follow-up meetings. The interview questions were piloted with another teacher beforehand and necessary modification and adjustments were done in terms of the simplification of wording and avoiding field-specific terminology such as "strategies", and "bottom-up, top-down skills". The interviews were completed via Zoom, recorded by permission (Appendix A), transcribed for coding, and analyzed. They included open-ended and scenario-based questions to elicit the teachers' verbal commentaries in a deeper way and help them visualize the situation under investigation. Semi-structured interviews were deliberately chosen instead of structured interviews to create more space for the teachers' beliefs. They lasted around 20-30 minutes. The questions were shared with the participants beforehand and implemented in English because all the participants had a very good command of English and the interview transcription software that I had access to was available in English. The interview questions were prepared based on the readings in the literature and my own teaching experience. During the interview, summary cards were created to be used in the analysis part. To explain the summary cards further, the researcher noted down some of the frequently mentioned keywords or content by the participants on a piece of paper during the interview. These notes helped the researcher in the analysis process by providing a summary of the interviews and highlighting some key aspects of the data.

The interviews were transcribed via an online application called Voice Note. The analysis of the responses was carried out by following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The analysis can be described as an inductive analysis with latent themes. That is, the researcher did not rely on any pre-existing coding scheme during the analysis; instead, the codes, themes and patterns were generated from the data. The six phases of thematic analysis were followed during the analysis. These phases are "familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some of the emerging codes in the initial analysis were comprehension check, receptive skill, and teacher-centered instruction. Building on the codes and the iterative process of reading and re-reading the data, codes and themes, 6 themes were found in the final thematic analysis. During the coding procedure, another experienced graduate student-researcher in Applied Linguistics took part in the analysis to ensure the reliability of the study. She was provided with the information on the study and methodology. There was an 80% agreement over the coded data. The items were discussed again and agreed upon by consensus.

In order to explore teachers' practices in teaching listening, 2 video recordings from each teacher's lessons were taken, transcribed, and coded for analysis. Each lesson recording

lasted around 30-40 minutes. Video recordings were preferred to lesson observation on purpose to avoid observer effects, changes in the teachers' regular styles or any biases in the study. The lessons were conducted in a hybrid system in which both face-to-face students and students in online teaching could participate in the lesson synchronously during Covid-19 pandemic. Since every lesson needed to be recorded as a school policy during the hybrid system, participants were used to being recorded during teaching. That is why, regular practice was followed instead of attending and observing the lesson as the researcher. The class size was around 18-20 students. Students were engaged in listening activities during the lessons. The analysis of the lesson recordings was actualized retrospectively via an existing observation coding scheme (Appendix C) that was adapted from a previous study by Karimi and Nazari (2017). In addition to the video recordings of the lessons, lesson artifacts were scrutinized to grasp a better understanding of teachers' practices and for triangulation. The artifacts included teaching listening materials, coursebooks, lesson plans, lesson PowerPoint slides, teaching objectives, curriculum, European Language Portfolio Assessment (ELP) and samples from standardized tests.

Research Positionality and Reflexivity Statement

The role of the researcher needs to be recognized in qualitative research because the findings are co-constructed between the participants and the researcher in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2009). That's why, I have been aware of my multiple identities as a fellow teacher in the institution where this study takes place at the time of the inquiry, as the researcher of the study, and as the interviewer of the participants. My roles and positions might, therefore, have an impact on the way I analyzed the data. Recognizing this impact is related to reflexivity. Reflexivity can be defined as "thoughtful and methodological self-consciousness that involves a shift from treating data as objective truths to considering it as subjective co-constructions of reality which need to be acknowledged within the analysis of a project." (Rabbidge, 2017, p. 962). I engaged in various reflexivity practices to ensure the reliability and validity of the study considering my multiple roles and positions during the course of this research study. One of the practices was keeping a reflexivity journal where I noted down my potential biases or pre-conceptions as a fellow teacher in the same institution to consider during the analysis and findings sections. Another significant step was the triangulation of the data by using a variety of data collection tools. Lastly, I acknowledge that being the researcher and the interviewer at the same time might run some risks in terms of potential biases. However, under the circumstances, it was not feasible to find someone else to conduct the interviews because the person needs to be knowledgeable about the research topic and background and might need to ask follow-up questions depending on the responses elicited from the participants during the semi-structured interviews. To refrain from potential biases, I prepared the interview questions in a non-leading manner and also included an inter-coder during the analysis of the responses.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the interview responses and artifacts revealed significant insights about the teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening. Some of the major findings tackle the role of the teacher, students' views, useful practices, and challenges in teaching listening. Based on the responses elicited from the teachers, 6 themes emerged as follows: *teaching listening to understand the interlocutor*, the *teacher's role as a facilitator*, *the importance of teaching strategies and variations of English*, *challenges in teaching listening*, *use of post-listening activities* and *instructors' perceptions of listening as an easy skill for students*. The themes are connected in that the role of the teacher and the students' views on

listening played a role in the practices in the classroom environment and created some challenges in teaching listening. The themes are discussed in relation to the participants' responses and to the previous studies below.

Teaching Listening to Understand the Interlocutor

The participants' responses to the first and second interview questions about the definition of effective listening in young learners and the purpose of teaching EFL listening elicited the first salient theme in this study: *teaching listening to understand the interlocutor*. The participants defined the purpose of the EFL listening instruction as "facilitating sustainable communication with an interlocutor". The specified interlocutors in the teachers' minds were different from one another. For instance, one of the participants explained that effective listening can be defined as "listening and understanding the teacher's talk during the lesson". The interlocutor was stated as the "teacher" herself and effective listening was mostly related to "comprehending the teacher and the instruction" according to this teacher in the study. On the other hand, the second teacher in this study emphasized the listening skill as "a part of communication with native speakers of the language" and "the importance of listening to understand the spoken language". This time, the interlocutor was specified as a native speaker in the listening process. The way the teachers viewed effective listening instruction played a role in their practices in teaching listening. Therefore, the next section discusses the second theme: *teachers' role as a facilitator*.

Teachers' Role as a Facilitator

The teachers' stated roles varied from each other in this study such as being an audio-player, facilitator, guide, or modifier. However, the most common response given by the participants to the questions about the role of the teacher in teaching listening was being a facilitator. The teachers shared that they feel responsible for helping students to understand the audio better during listening instruction and they try to manage this in different ways. The following excerpt exemplified the teachers' role as a facilitator and the practices that were in line with the stated role:

> *I try to help my students to concentrate and catch the keywords or target structures in the audio. Sometimes the speaker in the audio speaks too fast. Then, I stop the audio, imitate the spoken part in my own speech by slowing it down and play the audio again. I generally repeat the sentences in the audio for my students to help them understand better. (P1, Interview, June 9, 2021)*

One of the teachers expressed her role as an audio player rather than being a facilitator. Her stated role also had an impact on her practices during teaching listening. For example, when she was asked to explain one of her regular listening lessons and the procedures she follows, she expressed that she basically follows the coursebook material, students listen to the audio and check their answers. She added that if students need to listen to the audio again, she replays it. Based on her responses, she does not engage in facilitatory or additional steps during a listening task but, rather, she plays the audio and students complete the questions. My analysis indicates that the teachers who regard their role as a "facilitator" are found to show more convergence between their beliefs and practices than the ones who regard themselves as audio players. For instance, the teacher in the facilitator role tries to make use of pre-listening activities, include different variations of English, and ask learners the parts they find difficult during listening to improve them for the next trials. Like Siegel's (2013) study that identified differences in teachers' practices and techniques in teaching listening, this study also found differences in teachers' practices that mainly originate from their stated

role. To illustrate this, teachers who adopted the facilitator role in this study tended to experiment with various strategies such as asking students to read the questions beforehand or teacher modeling. On the other hand, teachers who named themselves as audio players used more comprehension questions by focusing on the correct answers instead of helpful tips.

The Importance of Teaching Strategies and Variations of English

The participants' responses revealed that they are aware of the listening strategies and the importance of the integration of varieties of English. However, the teachers' opinions about whether listening strategies should be taught to young learners or not were divided. Two teachers believe that the strategies should be taught to learners. In their opinion, students do not have to know about the metalinguistic names or terminology of the strategies, but they should be able to use them when they have difficulty. One of the teachers gave examples of strategies she tries to draw the students' attention to as follows:

> *I ask my students some background questions or present them with some keywords to prepare them for the audio before they listen to something. After listening, I ask them what was difficult for them in the audio. I think identifying the problem is the key here. I tell them not to get stuck in a word if they do not understand something while listening and keep listening. (P2, Interview, June 9, 2021)*

On the contrary, the other two teachers do not believe in the necessity of teaching strategies to young learners. They stated that strategies would be more suitable for adult learners but not for students in primary school. Besides, they think that listening is a natural process that children can improve automatically as part of their language system unlike reading or writing because the last two skills (reading and writing) need direct instruction in terms of coding abilities.

Unlike the teachers' divided opinions on the integration of listening strategies in teaching young learners, the teachers agreed on the importance of varieties of English and accents during listening instruction. The teachers believed that students should be familiar with different variations of English to be capable of communicating with people from different L1 backgrounds. However, they mentioned that even though they try to use different variations of English in videos, songs, or audio, they do not draw students' attention to the accent or the name of the variation explicitly "because this is a young learners' class and students do not have to name the accent". One of the teachers explained the issue from an English as a Lingua Franca perspective as follows:

> *I love integrating different accents and variations of English. We add videos, songs, and movies with different accents. I believe in the importance of English as a Lingua Franca. Students should be able to understand and communicate with native speakers and non-native speakers of the language. My students realize the differences even if they cannot name it as British or American. Sometimes they find some accents or pronunciations of the speakers in the video very funny… (P2, Interview, June 9, 2021)*

Challenges in Teaching Listening

When it comes to the fourth theme named *challenges in teaching listening*, the teachers in this study shared several difficulties in teaching listening. One of them was limited time. The teachers commented on the loaded curriculum which leads them to

rush and ignore some listening activities because listening is referred to as a more "receptive skill" that can be improved in time. However, they try to make use of the limited time focusing on more productive skills such as speaking and writing. One of the teachers touched upon this topic by illustrating the positive effects of online education in teaching listening regarding the limited time and ways to compensate for the time restrictions.

> *We have a loaded curriculum and a number of objectives. Sometimes we may pass the listening activities very quickly, but we try to support struggling students via extra videos or listening exercises they can do by themselves outside the class time. Individual learning is important for us… 2 years ago, I would find listening instruction more difficult but now, online education allows us to implement lots of materials, online quizzes, interactive games and we can encourage students to listen more in that way. (P3, Interview, June 19, 2021)*

As for the other main challenges in teaching listening, the teachers also named lack of equipment, hybrid teaching, finding appropriate listening materials suitable to students' level, classroom management and curriculum load, lack of vocabulary, anxiety, and general knowledge. The following excerpt from one of the interview responses exemplified how teaching listening can be even more challenging in a young learners' class:

> *There are a lot of things to consider in teaching listening. Especially in a young learners' class...For me, the most difficult part is to make sure that everyone is listening to the audio attentively. It is even hard to start playing the audio because you need to make sure everyone in the class settles down and they are quiet. That is why, I believe it is difficult to do what we actually think in the classroom. (P2, Interview, June 9, 2021)*

Most of the findings were in line with the results of previous studies in different context and with various age groups (Graham et al., 2014; Karimi & Nazari, 2017; Sah & Shah, 2020). Teachers stated several main problems for the difficulty in teaching listening similar to the ones elicited in Goh's (1999) study such as "accent", "vocabulary", "speech rate", "general knowledge" and "input type". However, the teachers in this study added "classroom management" as a novel challenge, unlike previous studies. This probably springs from the age and maturity of the learners because they are in primary school, and they tend to be very active and noisy as a typical young learners' class. Teachers in this study often mentioned the difficulty in keeping students attentive and engaged during the listening activities.

Use of Post-Listening Activities

Next, the teachers elicited the procedures they followed during listening instruction. The most frequent procedures are summarized in Table 1 with the categorization of activities as pre-, post-, or during-listening. One of the key themes was *the use of post-listening activities* in teaching listening. Teachers benefit from post-listening activities to a great extent such as asking further comprehension questions about the audio, commenting on different aspects and topics in the listening activity, drawing or writing about the topic after listening and so forth. When the stated beliefs and lesson recordings including actual practices of the teachers regarding listening pedagogy were carefully analyzed, a divergence between the teachers' stated beliefs and practices in teaching listening was found. Table 2 summarizes the tensions in their beliefs and practices.

Table 1

Categorization of Listening Activities

Procedures	Categorization
I ask learners to …	
• Skim through the vocabulary.	Pre-listening
• Catch the target structure.	During-listening
• Listen for keywords.	During-listening
• Read the instructions.	Pre-listening
• Understand the reasons for difficulty in their understanding.	Post-listening
• Comment on the audio after listening.	Post-listening
• Write about the topic after listening.	Post-listening
• Draw a picture about the listening afterwards.	Post-listening
I play the audio at least twice.	During-listening
I give some background knowledge to the students.	Pre-listening
I make use of post-listening activities.	Post-listening
I listen to the audio before I present it to my students.	Pre-listening
I create a list of unknown words in the audio and explain them to my students before listening.	Pre-listening
I ask for their reactions at the end.	Post-listening
I give feedback on the students' performance.	Post-listening
I play the audio more slowly.	During-listening

Table 2

Teachers' Stated versus Observed Practices

Stated Belief	Observed Practice
Listening activities should follow pre-, during- and post-listening design.	Underuse of pre-listening activities
Different variations of English should be integrated in tasks.	British English and American English are the main varieties included in the audios.
Teacher should behave like a facilitator during the listening instruction.	Teacher's role as an audio player
Students' listening skills should be assessed regularly.	Listening part is mostly not included in the assessment due to technical problems.

Considering these, although teachers try to implement follow-up activities after listening tasks such as commenting on the audio or writing a sentence about a related topic, the recordings of lessons revealed that teachers make very little use of pre-listening activities in contrast to their beliefs regarding the importance of pre-listening activities as well. The reason behind this may be the limited time and the loaded curriculum. However, it is essential to include pre-listening activities such as talking about the vocabulary before listening and guessing the topic of the audio can prepare the learners for the listening task and facilitate the listening process.

Instructors' Perceptions of Listening as an Easy Skill for Students

One of the surprising findings of the study was about *instructors' perceptions of listening as an easy skill for the students.* Teachers stated that they do not observe their students having difficulty in listening activities compared to speaking and writing. Most of the time, listening activities for young learners are not very demanding; instead, they are integrated with other skills and activities such as "listen and draw" or "listen and point" in which the output is only one or two words at a time. In that sense, the objectives of listening skill are manageable for young learners. In contrast to other studies completed by young adults or adult learners in high school or university settings in which learners feel the least confident in listening skill (Graham, 2006), the teachers in this study maintained that their students do not have much difficulty in listening; rather, they find it easy and can do the tasks without much effort.

The above-mentioned finding was contrary to the expectations based on the readings in the literature and my own experiences as a teacher and learner; however, one possible reason for this could be about the level of objectives that is expected from the students at a very early stage during listening. The lesson artifacts and European Language Portfolio Assessment objectives used in the school suggest that students are expected to listen for one

or two-word answers only and the audios are not very authentic in that they are very slow and clear without any background noise or other variations of English in general. In that sense, it seems that audios and instructions are very manageable for the students. That's why, when the teachers were asked whether they would agree with the idea of school administration's allocation of one extra hour for teaching only listening, three teachers stated that they would not support this idea because their students do not have difficulty in listening.

> *I wouldn't support allocating one extra hour to teaching listening. It is a receptive skill. The students in my class like to produce more in writing and speaking! I also believe that language skills should not be taught separately; they should be taught together because they always interact with each other. (P4, Interview, June 10, 2021)*

However, one teacher expressed that she would definitely support this idea and stated that listening comes first for her among all the other skills because listening is the way children acquire language and learn new things.

Conclusion and Implications

Listening is one of the major skills in a foreign language to cope with daily life tasks and academic purposes. This is generally how students learn things by listening to the teacher or the instructor. Listening entails various sub-skills such as decoding, making inferences, using background knowledge, and so on (Vandergrift, 2007), which can be even more demanding for foreign language learners. Despite the importance of listening for learners, studies about teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening were very scarce due to some limitations such as the difficulty of assessing listening. This research study extended the issue by investigating teachers' beliefs and practices regarding listening pedagogy in a primary school. The results revealed that there is an incongruity between the teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening in a primary school mainly due to limited time and loaded curriculum. Even though the teachers are knowledgeable about the importance of pre-, during- and post-listening activities in listening instruction, they tend to omit pre-listening activities most of the time in their actual practices with a focus on during- and post-listening activities. Consequently, listening instruction might fail to go beyond "a comprehension check activity" instead of providing beneficial strategies and tips for learners. The findings of this study about the teachers' cognitions and practices in teaching listening are in line with previous studies (i.e. Graham et al., 2014). However, the current study contributes to the existing literature by adding new dimensions to the issue such as "classroom management" as a novel challenge in the specified context. Understanding the different kinds of challenges that the teachers face in the targeted context can be essential to address the incongruity between the teachers' beliefs and practices because, most of the time, the challenges hinder teachers' actualizing their ideal practices in their stated beliefs.

The study can have pivotal implications for teachers and teacher education planners. The first implication is about the teachers' role in teaching listening. Widdowson (1993) suggests that the definition of teachers' role should be revised in order to encourage autonomous learners in teaching and learning process. This idea is in line with the findings of this study. Second, the teachers in this study expressed several challenges while teaching listening such as classroom management, lack of equipment, and time constraints. These challenges might prevent them from reflecting their beliefs about teaching listening on their actual practices. Therefore, teacher education programs should be modified considering the tensions in the beliefs and practices of teachers regarding listening pedagogy and they might encourage pre-service teachers or teacher candidates about potential challenges they might

encounter while teaching skills (i.e. listening) and how to overcome these challenges. That way, the teachers might feel more prepared when they face these challenges, and they can still implement what they believe works best during listening instruction. Third, one main reason for the tensions in the teachers' cognition and listening instruction was the limited time. When the curriculum is packed with too many structures and objectives, teachers tend to implement listening activities very quickly by only focusing on the correct answers given by the students. Considering this, curriculum planners should be aware of this issue and keep the results in mind while designing the curriculum to let teachers implement what they believe in the real classroom environment. Another step that can be taken by curriculum designers and administrators to improve the congruity between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening is to re-visit the student learning objectives in listening and adjusting accordingly because whether one-word or two-word listening comprehension activities stated in the curriculum can meet young learners' needs or goals is open for further discussion.

As for the limitations of the study, the participant number was restricted to four teachers. The number of participants can be expanded and teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching listening can be explored further in future studies. This would help to ensure the credibility and validity of the findings on this topic.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Supporting Research: Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University

The Study: Language Teachers' Cognitions and Practices Regarding Teaching EFL Listening in a Primary School

Researcher: XXXX

E-mail Address: XXXX

Phone: XXXX

Dear Participant,

This is a research study that is carried out under the scope of FLED 590: Teacher Cognition Course. The study aims to investigate the way listening skill is taught in primary school in an EFL context. You will be asked to answer questions in a semi-structured interview. You are expected to spend around 20-30 minutes for the interview and provide sample lesson recordings. The interview will be audio-recorded depending on your consent. The research is not expected to impose any risks to the participants. All the information and data taken from you will be kept anonymous. You can stop participating in the study if you do not want to continue further for any reasons. If you have further questions, you can contact XXXX (email) any time.

I understood what I was told and what was written above. I agree to participate in this study of my own free will.

Participant Name-Surname: …………………………….

Signature: ……………………….

Date: …………………………….

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Questions concerning teachers' cognitions about EFL listening

1. How do you define effective EFL listening in young learners?
2. What is the purpose / What are your objectives of teaching EFL listening?
3. What do you believe your role is as an EFL listening teacher? (Audio player, role model, helper, instructor etc.)
4. What do you think about the integration of different accents or variations of English during teaching listening?

Questions concerning teachers' reflections on teaching listening

1. Could you please tell me about one of your regular listening lessons?
    a. What do you usually include in the teaching material?
    b. What are the main procedures you usually follow during the listening instructions in the classroom?
2. How do you measure/ assess students' listening skills?
3. If the students cannot understand the audio / listening script during the listening activity, what do you do?
4. In most of the primary schools, listening is taught as a part of the main course lessons. If the school planned to allocate an extra hour to teaching listening, how would you respond?
5. Do you believe you implement what you think regarding teaching EFL listening in your classroom practices?

Appendix C

Observation Coding Scheme - Adapted from Karimi and Nazari (2017)

Before Listening

1. The teacher made learners aware of the vocabulary linked to the topic.		
2. The teacher gave learners the vocabulary items that will be used in the text.		

3. The teacher asked learners to predict vocabulary they might hear in the text.		
4. The teacher asked learners to think of ideas that might be discussed in the text.		
5. The teacher asked learners to discuss possible answers to the questions asked before the text.		

While Listening

1. While listening, the teacher asked learners to verify their predictions.		
2. While listening, the teacher asked learners to focus on key words.		
3. During the listening, the teacher paused the audio when the passage was played for the first time.		
4. When the teacher paused the audio, he/she paused it at the end of each line.		
5. The teacher paused the audio at the end of each paragraph.		
6. The teacher played the audio as many as two or three times.		
7. While listening, in short times, the teacher asked learners to present a summary of what they have heard.		

After Listening

1. The teacher told leaners the answers to the questions.		
2. The teacher asked about learners answers to the questions.		
3. After listening, the teacher asked learners some real-world-contexts-related questions.		
4. After listening, the teacher asked learners to present summaries.		
5. The teacher asked learners to paraphrase the story.		
4. After listening, the teacher asked learners how they felt about the task.		
5. The teacher advised learners how to deal with understanding difficulties next time.		