

**Problems in Teaching Listening to Libyan 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Year Secondary School Students  
( Assaba Area )**

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### Abstract

Although listening skill plays a significant role in daily communication and education process in teaching English , listening subject has long been neglected in second language teaching. This study aims to explore problems, difficulties and barriers in teaching listening to Libyan students in our case study Alassaba area, 3<sup>rd</sup> year secondary science school, Mosab Ben Omer Secondary School and Omer Ben Alkhtab Secondary school. The participants of our study were 5 teachers. Classroom observation and teacher's interview are used for data collection. It is found that all teachers were using grammar translation method in teaching listening. Most classes were uncomfortable learning atmosphere, beside the absence of technology which used and facilitate teaching listening. The findings based on data analysis and discussion may be of a great significance to find solutions for these problems and improving the way of teaching listening.

### المخلص

تلعب مهارة الاستماع دورا مهما في التعلم والتواصل, وبالرغم من ذلك, فان مادة الاستماع لم تحض بالاهتمام اللازم لتدريس اللغة الانجليزية. و تهدف هذه الدراسة للكشف عن المشاكل والصعوبات والعوائق في تدريس مادة الاستماع للطلاب الليبيين للمرحلة الثانوية في قسمها العلمي في منطقة الاصابة في مدرستي مصعب بن عمير الثانوية ومدرسة عمر بن الخطاب الثانوية. لقد كان المشاركون في هذا البحث 5 مدرسين. واستخدم في جمع البيانات المشاهدة الفصلية ( الملاحظة داخل الفصل الدراسي ) و مقابلة مع المعلمين. حيث وجد ان كل المعلمين استخدموا الطريقة التقليدية في تدريس مادة الاستماع ولقد كان المناخ التعليمي غير مريح في جل الفصول بجانب غياب التكنولوجيا التي تسهل تدريس مادة الاستماع. هذه النتائج لها دور كبير في إيجاد الحلول وتطوير طريقة تدريس مادة الاستماع.

### **1.1. Background of the study**

English language has four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The first skill that humans acquire is listening. Listening plays an essential function in second language teaching for several reasons ( Rost, 1994 ). Listening is a necessary part of the communication process and not only helps you to understand what people are saying, it also helps you to speak clearly, although it hasn't been given much focus as reading and writing in teaching. Rost, (1994 ) Points out , that listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Thus listening is fundamental to speak. It is clearly that listening is very important skill in learning and acquiring a second language.

### **1.2. Statement of Problem.**

The problem noticed to be discussed is that Libyan students of 3<sup>rd</sup> year secondary schools face a number of difficulties in learning listening skills. These difficulties are due to the deletion of the listening lesson by teachers. This deletion is due to lack of modern labs in schools and using of incorrect methodology for teaching listening.

### **1.3. Research question**

The study aims to answer the following question:-

- 1.What is the method that teachers use in teaching listening?
- 2.What are the problems of teaching listening subject?

### **1.4 . The objective of the Study**

This study will explore problems, difficulties and barriers in teaching listening to Libyan students in the case study Mosab Ben Omaer secondary school, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and Omer Ben Alkhtab Secondary school. The study could help second language teachers to realize that mastery of a language rests on the ability to listen well.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The outcome of the research will point out to the main problems in the field of teaching listening. This of course will help teachers in using appropriate ways in teaching listening and reduce barriers that face students in learning listening. Moreover, showing how the technology is essential in teaching listening.

### **1.6. The limitation of the Study**

- 1.It is limited to the Secondary school students .
- 2.It is limited to and aimed at listening .

3. Location: - Secondary school, Mosab Ben Omer Secondary School and Omer Ben Alkhtab Secondary school .

4. Time: - The study is limited at secondary school (2019-2020) in first term.

## **1.7.Methodology**

### **1.7.1Participants**

The participants are five English language teachers ; one is male and the others are females. Only one teacher has high diploma and the rest have bachelor of arts degree in teaching English. All teachers have long experience in teaching, except one , has only one year experience.

The participants of the study are from Mosab Ben Omer secondary school and Omer Ben Alkhtab Secondary school ; third year science branch

The second data gathering instrument that employed in this study is interview with English language teachers. It consisted of ten open-ended questions. The purpose of this interview is to obtain data about the ability of using equipment, that facilitate teaching listening and if they are available in their schools. In addition of asking other questions concerning other problems that they face teaching listening.

### **1.7.2. Data Collection**

The data will be obtained through the classroom observation and the interview. The observation will be in listening class that will take 40 minutes, the procedure which will be 10 issues are prepared carefully to get ideas about how do teachers teach and how they use materials which are available in the class and writing down comments on them. In addition, watching the climate in the classroom; how students feel and how they interact.

Interview will be with five teachers, they will be asked eight question directly face to face.

### **1.8.Apprevation**

L1 = Mother tongue language

CD = Computer Disc

## **2.Literature Review**

### **2.1. Definitions of Listening Skill**

Listening is capability to recognize the verbal language of native speakers. Mendelsohn (1994) listening skill is obviously important since first of all, a good speaker needs to be a good listener. According to Etman & Nur Ziadi (2009) “ Listening is the basic for the development of all other skills and the main channel thorough which the student makes initial contact with the target language and its culture.”

Underwood (1989) simplified the definition of listening process of receiving what the speaker actually says. Listening isn't just hear; it is thoughtful the sense behind voices ( Foresth, 1996 )

Rost (1990 ) listening skill is essential in classroom as it gives input for students without understanding input learning process won't happen, that is why listening is important. Listening is also important for obtaining comprehensible input that is necessary for language development.

## **2.2. Strategies for Listening Skill**

Listening is an active process for constructing meaning in which two kinds of processes are involved simultaneously: bottom-up and top-down strategy (Richards1990) explains these two strategies. Listening successfully requiring making use of both top-down and bottom-up processing skill.

### **2.2.1. Bottom up processing**

It is like reading, learners utilize their linguistics knowledge to identify linguistic elements in an order from the smallest linguistic unit like phonemes ( bottom ) to the largest one like complete texts ( top ). They link the smaller units of the language together to form the larger parts and it's a linear process where meaning is derived automatically at the last stage. It is absolutely that bottom- up rely on the sounds, words and grammar in the message in order to



create meaning. This strategy is the use of knowledge about the language system.

### 2.2.2. Top-down process

On the other hand, top-down process refers to the use of background knowledge in understanding the meaning of a message. Background knowledge may take several forms. It may be previous knowledge about the topic discourse, it may be situational or contextual knowledge, or it may be knowledge stored in long-term memory in the form of "script" plans about the overall structure of events and the relationships between them.

As Vandergrift ( 1999 ) state strategy improvement is essential for listening because it can direct students. And also he mentioned the differences between Top-down process and Bottom-up process as that Top-down process can clearly see the information as you are close to the lesson whereas Bottom- up can give you landscape view to the lesson.

Top-down process and Bottom-up process have an important role in improving listening skill as ( Bacon,S. 1989) stated that the best realize of listening passage happen when Top-down and Bottom-up are used.

### **2.3. Framework of listening activities**

According to Field (2005) The basic framework on which you can construct a listening lesson can be divided into three main stages.

- Pre-listening, during which it help students prepare to listen.
- While listening, during which it helps to focus their attention on the listening text and guide the development of their understanding of it.
- Post-listening, during which it helps students integrate what they have learnt from the text into their existing knowledge.

#### **2.3.1. Pre-listening**

There are certain goals that should be achieved before students attempt to listen to any text. These are motivation and contextualization

- Motivation

It is quite important that before listening students are motivated to listen, so you should try to select a text that they will find interesting and then design tasks that will motivate your students' interest.

- Contextualization

When we listen in our everyday lives we hear language within its natural environment, and that environment gives us a huge amount of information about the linguistic content we are likely to hear. Listening to a tape recording in a classroom is a very unnatural process. The text has been taken from its original

environment and we need to design tasks that will help students to contextualize the listening and access their existing knowledge and expectations to help them understand the text.

### **2.3.2. While Listening**

When we listen to something in our everyday lives we do so for a reason.

Students need a reason to listen that will focus their attention. For our students to really develop their listening skills they will need to listen a number of times - three or four usually works quite well - as I've found that the first time many students listen to a text they are nervous and have to tune in to accents and the speed at which the people are speaking.

Ideally the listening tasks we design for them should guide them through the text and should be graded so that the first listening task they do is quite easy and helps them to get a general understanding of the text. Sometimes a single question at this stage will be enough, not putting the students under too much pressure.

The second task for the second time students listen should demand a greater and more detailed understanding of the text. Make sure that the task doesn't demand too much of a response. Writing long responses as they listen can be very demanding and is a separate skill in itself, so keep the tasks to single words, or some sort of graphical response.

The third listening task could just be a matter of checking their own answers from the second task or could lead students towards some more subtle interpretations of the text.

Listening to a foreign language is a very intensive and demanding activity and for this reason it's very important that students should have 'breathing' or 'thinking' space between listening. It usually gets students to compare their answers between listening as this gives them the chance not only to have a break from the listening, but also to check their understanding with a peer and so reconsider before listening again.

### **2.3.3 Post-listening**

There are two common forms that post-listening tasks can take. These are reactions to the content of the text, and analysis of the linguistic features used to express the content.

- Reaction to the text

Of these two tasks that focus students reaction to the content are most important. Again this is something that we naturally do in our everyday lives. Because we listen for a reason, there is generally a following reaction. This could be discussion as a response to what we've heard - do they agree or

disagree or even believe what they have heard? - or it could be some kind of reuse of the information they have heard.

- Analysis of language

The second of these two post-listening task types involves focusing students on linguistic features of the text. This is important in terms of developing their knowledge of language, but less so in terms of developing students' listening skills. It could take the form of an analysis of verb forms from a script of the listening text or vocabulary or collocation work.

## **2.4.Previous Studies**

### **2.4.1. Difficulties Faced Libyan Students in Learning and Teaching 4 Skills**

The researcher ( Shogmani ) 2015 summed up listening problems in his research paper as following

- 1- The audio tapes were not available for use.
- 2- No use of teaching aids in teaching listening.
- 3- Most of the schools lacked facilities such as *recorder machines and electricity supplies* in class.
- 4- The time devoted to listening activities was not sufficient.
- 5-Teachers at the secondary level made no use for the authentic language in teaching listening comprehension.

6- Most teachers did not prepare materials for teaching listening comprehension in advance.

7-Teachers could not vary activities to suit their student level and interest.

8-Teachers did not teach their students how to monitor their listening comprehension through guessing predicting, eliciting and interacting.

9-Teachers did not prepare any evaluation tasks for listening comprehension.

10-Teachers did not involve listening comprehension in exams.

#### **2.4.2 Teaching English in Libya: Reflective Views**

( Jamal M Giaber 2014 ) mentioned in his research paper about DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR TEACHING LISTENING as following; the three materials development principles suggested by Joan Morley; namely, relevance, transferability/applicability and task orientation, are very important for maximizing the effectiveness of listening experiences; especially in making choices regarding language content and language outcomes. These principles address two significant aspects of the listening teaching process: the way information is presented within the listening instructional materials and the way it is put to use in the classroom and in real life .The three principles can be applied successfully in selecting or designing listening materials for teaching English as a foreign language to Libyan students of English.

**3.Data Collection**

The following tables show summary of data collection which will be detailed in data analysis the 4<sup>th</sup> section

**3.1. Teacher's interview ( see Appendix A )**

Teacher	Summary of answers									
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
<b>Teacher1</b>	No use of technology	Encourage students and motivate them	No training and developing programs	Don't know the name of method which use in teaching listening	No listening equipment	School management is the responsible for absence of listening equipment	No preparation for lesson	Having many problems in teaching listening	Skip listening	Educational inspector didn't ask about skipping listening lessons
<b>Teacher2</b>	No use of technology	No encouragement	No training and developing programs	Don't know the name of method which use in teaching listening	No listening equipment	School management is the responsible for absence of listening equipment	Prepare lesson	Having many problems in teaching listening	Skip listening	Educational inspector didn't ask about skipping listening lessons
<b>Teacher3</b>	Use technology	Encourage students and motivate them	No training and developing programs	Don't know the name of method which use in teaching listening	CD audio player	School management is the responsible for absence of listening equipment	Prepare lesson	Having many problems in teaching listening	Teaching listening	Educational inspector didn't ask about skipping listening lessons
<b>Teacher4</b>	No use of technology	Encourage students and motivate them	No training and developing programs	Don't know the name of method which use in teaching listening	No listening equipment	School management is the responsible for absence of listening equipment	No preparation for lesson	Having many problems in teaching listening	Skip listening	Educational inspector didn't ask about skipping listening lessons
<b>Teacher5</b>	Use technology	Encourage students and motivate them	No training and developing programs	Don't know the name of method which use in teaching listening	No listening equipment	School management is the responsible for absence of listening equipment	Prepare lesson	Having many problems in teaching listening	Teaching listening	Educational inspector didn't ask about skipping listening lessons

**3.2. Classroom observation. ( see Appendix B )**

Class	Summary of answers								
	Issue1	Issue2	Issue3	Issue4	Issue5	Issue6	Issue7	Issue8	Issue9
<b>Class1</b>	No	Class centered teacher/L1/list of words in black board Little attention to pronunciation	Teacher	Problems in understanding lesson	No use of listening framework activities	Teacher didn't check	No interaction	Shape of pairs /Uncomfortable	No
<b>Class2</b>	yes	Class centered teacher/L1/list of words in black board Little attention to pronunciation	Teacher	Problems in understanding lesson	No use of listening framework activities	Teacher didn't check	No interaction	Shape of pairs /Uncomfortable	No
<b>Class3</b>	yes	Class centered teacher/L1/list of words in black board Little attention to pronunciation	CD audio player	Quite good No major problems	Using listening framework activities	Teacher checked	There is interaction	Shape of pairs /Uncomfortable	Encourage
<b>Class4</b>	No	Class centered teacher/L1/list of words in black board Little attention to pronunciation	Teacher	Problems in understanding lesson	No use of listening framework activities	Teacher didn't check	No interaction	Shape of pairs /Uncomfortable	No
<b>Class55</b>	No	Class centered teacher/L1/list of words in black board Little attention to pronunciation	Teacher	Problems in understanding lesson	No use of listening framework activities	Teacher didn't check	No interaction	Shape of pairs /Uncomfortable	No

**4. Data Analysis****4.1. Teacher's Interview**

Data attained from teacher's interview, are analyzed as follows:



In the first question, it's found that the majority of respondents don't use technology to enhance teaching listening. On the other hand, a very few teachers use technology in their teaching listening.

From the question two, it's found that the most correspondents encourage and motivate their students to learn listening.

Question three, showed that all teachers haven't any kind of training which develop their teaching ways.

It can be seen, that all answers from question four around steps, procedures and some techniques about their ways of teaching listening instead of naming the method that they use.

Question five indicated that there aren't technology resources available. Otherwise, Only one teacher said that the school had old cassette.

According to teachers in question six, all agree that the absence of technology is the responsibility of school management.

teachers said in question seven, that they made preparation for lesson in their homes. Meanwhile others said no.

Question eight, showed that all teachers had various problems in teaching listening. They suffered from the lack of labs and equipment such as modern audio players that facilitate teaching listening.

Question nine indicated that the most respondents skipped listening lessons except two teachers they taught listening.

last question showed that all teachers did not ask about skipping listening lessons from educational inspector.

#### **4.2. Classroom Observation.**

A number of issues are taken in concern to be observed and analyzed as follows:

The 1<sup>st</sup> issue was “ do teacher build comfortable learning atmosphere in class “ the observation took in the 1<sup>st</sup> class indicated that, there was no any sort of comfortable learning as noticed that from teacher’s behavior with students. The atmosphere was stressed.

The observation indicated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes that the teachers made comfortable climate in the class and that was clearly from their friendly way.

On the other hand, teachers of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes didn’t make any type of comfortable learning climate in their classes.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue which was “ What is the method that teacher adopted in teaching listening lesson” the observation took in all classes indicated that the teachers used grammatical translation method which was clearly from the procedures and techniques that they used in teaching listening.

In the issue number 3 which consisted of two parts “Where does listening material come from ? CD Audio player , louder speaker or teacher and how it’s equity “ it is observed that in the four classes, the teacher uttered the material except one teacher who used CD audio player. The quality of teachers speech was bad because they had many mistakes in pronunciation and the quality of CD player was poor due to the problems in louder speakers.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> issue which was “ do students have problems in understanding listening texts “ it is noticed that the majority of students in all classes had problems in understanding. They asked about the meaning of words and they didn’t answer teachers’ questions.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> issue which was “ do teachers make pre-listening, while-listening and after- listening” the observation showed only one teacher did these activities. Oppositely the other classes indicated that teachers did not do these activates.

The 6<sup>th</sup> issue that was “ How do teachers ensure that students understand listening lesson” the observation took place in all classes indicated that only one teacher made sure when she ended the lesson by asking some questions which are already available in the book. The rest of classes which observed, teachers didn’t do any kind of evaluation to make sure that students understand the lesson.

In the issue 7<sup>th</sup> which was “ do students interact with the lesson” the observation showed that only one class interacted but in the other classes there hadn't interaction.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> issue which was composed of three parts, the first part “ the description of seating arrangement “ second “ are students listening well “ and finally “ How do they feel “ the observation indicated in all classroom sitting is in the shape of pairs.

The feeling of students was uncomfortable that was clearly from their behavior; they always ask teacher to loud his voice from those who sit in the back of class.

In the last issue which was “Does teacher encourage students to participate ? “ the observation showed that only one teacher encouraged students and pushed them to interact. Meanwhile, the other teachers didn't encourage their students for participating.

## **5.Discussion**

Although it's known that Grammar Translation Method isn't used for teaching listening because it has little attention to listening, it was noticed from classroom observation and teachers' interview that teachers used it in their teaching listening.

After analysis of data, many problems regarding teaching listening have been identified. This section aims to present results and data analysis in order to answer the research questions.

In first research question (What is the method that teachers use in teaching listening) ?This obtain from the two instrument ( teacher interview ) and (? Classroom observation ).

It's find that all teachers are using grammar translation method in their teaching listening lessons by using it's principle, techniques and procedures ( mother tongue language , list of words in the board for memorization , the class is teacher centered and all interaction is from teacher to students ) instead if using Bottom-up process and up-down process which goes with teaching listening

It's find that the educational inspector don't visit teachers in their schools. This courage them to continue in this method.

Lacking of training programs and refresh courses that have an essential role in developing teacher' way of teaching led to weak teachers.

In second research question which was What problems that students face in listening classes? Answers to this question are obtained from second instrument ( classroom observation )

It was noticed that the majority of students suffered from stressful learning atmosphere in the classroom that was created by the teacher behavior.

It was noticed that most students are passive listeners, they didn't participate in any activity in the class due to the way of teaching that teacher adopted in the class ( Teacher is everything in the class ) .

Absence of technology like language lab, cassette and CD audio players made teachers to speak instead of these technology sources which lead students not to exposure to native language speakers.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Findings**

This study is done in the hope of finding out the problems of teaching listening to Libyan 3<sup>rd</sup> year secondary school students in Alasab'a area.

Research results allowed us to findings which were from observation of the five classes and interview their English language teachers who teach listening. It is found that all teachers used grammar translation method in teaching listening which was clearly from techniques, principles and the style of teaching. The goal of grammar translation method is to enable learners to read and translate literature and not develop listening skill.

All respondents ( teachers ) did not take any refresh course in order to develop their English language teaching. In addition, all schools are lacking of facilities

( language lab, Audio DVD Player ) which play an essential role in teaching listening thus students need to listen to native speakers. All listening lessons are supported with dialogues, lectures, radio programmers and stories all takers here are native speakers so students will lose the opportunities of exposure to native language.

The learning atmosphere is stressful in the classes which observed. It is another problem in teaching listening to Libyan secondary schools because when there is high anxiety, the learning process will decrease and when there is low anxiety , the learning process will increase.

## **6.2.Recommendation**

- Teachers should take English language teaching methodology refresh courses.
- The administrators of education should supply schools with equipment that facilities and enhance teaching listening.
- Teachers should create a type of friendly way with students in order to build comfortable learning atmosphere in the classroom.

## **6.3.Recommendation for future research**

- The present study needs to be carried out with large sample because the sample of the study was small to generalize an over conclusion.

- Further research needs to be conducted with more comprehensive samples including the primary, secondary and preparatory levels in order to get a complete picture of the problem.

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## Appendix A

### Teachers' interview

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1-How do you use technology to enhance teaching listening?

2-How do you encourage students to learn listening skill?

3-What have you read/ studied recently that led to develop your teaching methodology?

4-Describe the teaching method , techniques or strategies that you are using in teaching listening?

5-What are technology recourses are available in your school?

6-In terms of absence teaching listening facilities, where do you see the problem, is it in school management?

7-Do you use any prepare listening lesson before giving a lesson ?

8-Do you have any problems in teaching listening ? If the answer yes what are these problems?

9- Do you skip listening lessons ? If the answer yes why?

10-Does the educational inspector asked you about skipping listening lessons?

### Appendix B

#### Classroom Observation

Data \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Issue	Comment
Do teacher build comfortable learner atmosphere in the class	
What is the method that teacher adopt ?	
Where does listening come from ? CD Audio player , louder speaker or teacher and how it's equity	
Do students have any problems in understanding text ( audio material )?	
Do teacher follow frame work activates; pre-listening ,while –listening and after-	

listening ?	
How do teacher ensure that students understand the listening lesson?	
Do students interact with lesson?	
Describing students 'seating arrangement and are they listen well and how they feel?	
Does teacher encourage students to participate ?	