



RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDE AND IMPLEMENTATIONS OF LISTENING SKILL IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: JIMMA TOWN IN FOCUS, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the objective of investigating English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' and students' attitude and implementations of listening skill. The study was carried out in government secondary schools found in Jimma town during the 2016 academic year. Seventeen English language teachers and three hundred sixty nine students were involved in the study. In order to select student participants for the study, the researchers employed simple random sampling. Comprehensive sampling was used to select sample EFL teachers as their number was not larger. In order to collect data for the study, the researchers used questionnaire, observation, and interview. Mixed approach was utilized to analyze the data gathered using different tools. The data from classroom observation and interview were analyzed qualitatively whereas those from the questionnaire were quantitatively analyzed. The findings of the study revealed that the EFL teachers had positive attitude towards the teaching of the listening comprehension skills. However, they did not give much attention to the teaching of the listening lessons provided in the student's textbook. The study also showed that the role played by the teachers to encourage the students to learn listening skills was inadequate. Moreover, it was found out that the EFL teachers often skipped the listening skill sections (lessons) provided in the EFL textbooks in the pretext of covering the annual plan for the academic year on time.

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars state listening as the ability to hear attentively and to understand what others are saying. According The International Listening Association (1996) it is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages. In a related token, Underwood (1989) contends that listening is the ability to hear attentively and to understand the whole meaning of what the speaker is saying in context. This reveals that listening is the skill which aids the comprehension of the message being conveyed. In verbal communication, listening to the utterances of a speaker is indispensable to understand the message. This makes the skill of listening important in learning English. In addition, we want to listen to what English speakers say at a natural speed in order to grasp the information being conveyed. People often enjoy listening to or watching English films, TV programs, music, and announcements and these all necessitate the skill of listening. Listening and understanding to what

speakers say has a great role in making communication interactive. It also leads to real life communication. In other words, the purpose of learning English is to communicate in the real world and this necessitates skills of good listening (Yildirim, 2015). Among the EFL skills, listening is used more than the other skills. According to Renukadevi (2014), when people communicate, they get 45% of language competence from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading and 10% from writing. From this, it is possible conclude that listening is of paramount importance in communication in general and in language classroom in particular. Listening is a very important skill in everyday life in general and in the classroom interaction in particular. According to Renukadevi (2014), if one can learn to listen effectively, obviously his/her life will improve because of it. On the other hand, the importance of listening in language classroom is that it provides input and a means of interaction for the learner. Further, listening exercises provide teachers with a tool for drawing the attention of learners' to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language. As a language skill it makes teaching listening comprehension a

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crucial aspect of the English language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Richards, 2005; Field, 2008).

It has been estimated that adults spend almost half of their communication time listening, and students may receive as much as 90% of this in school information through listening to instructors and to one another Tengf (n.d.). Often, however, language learners do not recognize the level of effort that goes into developing listening ability. Not only students, teachers also assume that listening is an easy task (Underwood, 1989). According to Underwood (1989), listening had been one of the most neglected skills in English language teaching. But the status of listening in language programs has undergone substantial change in recent years from being a neglected skill relegated to passing treatment as a minor strand within a speaking course; it now appears as a core course in many language programs. Even though listening is sometimes wrongly perceived as synonymous to hearing, researchers clearly indicate the presence of a clear demarcation between the two in the process of communication. Many scholars reveal that listening and hearing are not synonym. According to Heinch *et al.* (1989:44), "hearing occurs when one's ears pick up sound waves being transmitted by the speaker while listening involves making sense out of what is being transmitted". In other words, listening involves paying attention to the speech and then interpreting it (Pospiesszynska, 2000). Hamilton (1999:44) states that hearing is with the ear whereas listening is with in mind. This indicates that listening is the skill which necessitates the active concentration of the listeners' cognitive skill. Furthermore, unlike to hearing, which is passive skill, listening requires the listener to actively involve and concentrate on selected aspects of what the listener hears and to associate it with existing knowledge (Fang, 2008; Lindsay & Knight, 2006; Littlewoods, 1981 cited in Yildirim (2015).

On the whole, listening deals with comprehension, while hearing deals with the process of mind transition. In addition, hearing has to do with the response caused by sound waves stimulating the sensory receptors of the ear; hearing is the perception of sound, not necessarily paying attention. Put differently, people must hear to listen, but they need not listen to hear. Based on this ground, this study was aimed at investigating the attitude of teachers' and students' towards this skill and to explore the extent to which the teaching of the skill is implemented by the EFL teachers in the setting.

Statement of the Problem

Listening comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in language learning. It is a critical skill which students need to learn and practice (Underwood, 1989). In Ethiopia, English is used as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary level. Since listening ability plays an important role in helping students to communicate intelligibly and to perform better in other field of studies, it is treated in English Syllabus along with Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills. According to Muluken (2008), though listening is incorporated in English syllabus, it is less practiced. This may be attributed to varieties of factors. Identifying the root causes of the inadequacy of practice can help the immediate stake holders to think of the way out and the areas to be addressed to teach the skill appropriately. Teachers' and students' attitude towards EFL teaching and learning in general, and the teaching and learning of the listening skill is believed to have the direct impact on the

classroom performance and the implementation of the skills for the real life purpose. This calls for investigating teachers' and students' attitude towards teaching and learning the listening skill in the absence of satellite television program and factors that prohibit the teaching-learning process. As far of the knowledge of the researchers is concerned the attention given by researchers to this area is very scanty. As the attitude of teachers and students towards the teaching and learning of the listening skills is less investigated, it is possible to figure out the presence of research gap in this context. In its endeavour to address this issue, the study tried to answer the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of EFL teachers' towards teaching listening skills tasks given in the students' text book?
2. What is the attitude of the students' towards learning listening?
3. To what extent do the EFL teachers encourage their students to practice the different listening activities given in the EFL textbook?
4. To what extent do the students practice the listening activities given in their textbooks?
5. What are the major factors affecting the teaching and learning of the listening skills in grade nine?

Objective of the Study

This study was aimed at investigating grade 9 EFL teachers' and students' attitude and practices towards the teaching and learning listening skill. It also intended to explore the major factors affecting the teaching and learning of the listening skills in grade 9.

Body Text

Review of Literature Review

Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension

The teaching/ learning of language skills may be affected by various factors. The factors affecting each skill and the degree to which they affect may be different according to the type of skill and the context of teaching. Accordingly, there are various factors that impede students' effective listening. Among these factors, the most important ones are discussed below.

Student Related Factors

Motivation and Attitude: According to Harmer (1993:81), "motivation is one kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue course of action". Without motivation teaching and learning may be difficult (Balto, 1996). Motivation plays an important role, during the listening class, in encouraging student to follow the daily lesson.

Attitude: An attitude towards something is the extent to which students accept the subject and their opinion towards it. Attitudes consist of satisfactions and dissatisfactions and the core of likes or dislikes for certain people, groups, situations, objects, and intangible ideas. These cognitions are rooted in strong emotions and can be evaluated using terms—"good", "bad", "desirable", "undesirable". Attitudes are internal,

private events whose existence we infer from our own introspection especially when they are expressed overtly in word or deed. A verbalized attitude is called an opinion (Holland & Rosenberg, 1960). There are three components to study attitudes change: (1), the affective component consists of a person's evaluation of liking of, or emotional response to some object or person; (2), the cognitive component has been conceptualized as a person's beliefs about, or factual knowledge of the object or person, and (3), the behavior component involves the person's overt behavior directed toward the object or person (Zimbardo and Leaped, 1977). People's attitude towards a topic or a person obviously affects their listening. If someone likes the person or topic, he/she tends to listen; if not the reverse is true (Morley, 2001). This indicates that students' and teachers' attitude towards the listening lesson can affect the teaching and learning of listening comprehension. According to Krashen (1982), the general attitude [to listening lesson] is the best determining factor for success. The other factors which affect listening comprehension entail: quick speed of the speaker, listeners inability to get things repeated especially when listening radio and television programs, the listeners' limited vocabulary, failure to recognize signal when the speaker passes from one point to another, inability to concentrate, problem of interpretation, class size and noise, and physical setting (Underwood, 1989)

Teacher Related Factors

Teacher related factors which can affect listening comprehension and its teaching/learning are capacity and level of confidence, and giving feedback.

Teacher's Capacity and Level of Confidence: The teacher's capacity and level of confidence are of great importance in the listening class. A teacher should be able to have adequate knowledge of what he/she has to teach. In addition the teacher needs to have a certain level of self-confidence to conduct the lesson effectively. There are teachers who do not have enough capacity to teach listening skills and this leads to low level of self-confidence. Most of the time this problem comes from the teachers' lack of good training, or the inadequacy of the training they have undergone before coming to teach the skill. In addition, teachers' lack of skill and experience or lack of enough practice in teaching may result in the problem of teaching listening. If teachers don't have the required abilities to conduct the class, it will be frustrating for him/her (Horn Affairs-English, 2013).

Feedback: Teachers' constructive feedback has the power of encouraging students for hard work. Contrarily, negative feedback often kills students' interest and motivation of making efforts. Feedback benefits students if it is given at the appropriate time. Scholars recommend that feedback has to be immediate. According to Ur (1984), if the correction is late students get very little benefit from the given feedback.

Suggestive Measurements to Listen Effectively

Teachers and students have vital roles to play in the enhancement of listening comprehension skills. Students can play roles like taking measures such as setting a purpose of listening, listening for the main idea, capitalizing their listening speed, resisting distraction, and taking notes (Hamilton, 1999; James *et al.*, 1979). Teachers on the other hand can play

pivotal roles in helping their students to develop their listening skills. Among the roles teachers can play are providing the students with suitable listening materials, activating students' background and linguistic knowledge, providing enabling skills, giving useful exercises, and creating conducive classroom conditions. According to Nunan (1998), the teacher must set a purpose for listening, select and design appropriate language-learning materials and activities taking into account the age of the students, their interest and language ability.

The Research Methodology

Design of the study: A descriptive survey design was employed in this study. The research employed both qualitative and quantitative data.

Participants of the study: The participants of the study were secondary school EFL teachers and students in Jimma town of Ethiopia. It focused on grade 9 students and their respective EFL teachers.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: Among grade 9 students in the three sample secondary schools, 370 sample students were selected by using systematic random sampling. The researchers used the students name list from the schools for this purpose. Since the number of the English language teachers was not large, the researchers employed comprehensive sampling in which the whole 17 EFL teachers were made to participate.

Instrumentation: In order to collect pertinent data for the study, the researchers used questionnaires, classroom observation and interview. The questionnaires were distributed to both the EFL teachers and students. The researchers also observed the EFL classes while the teachers were teaching listening skills. Altogether, 6 teachers were observed. Each teacher was observed 3 times while teaching the listening lesson. Totally, the researchers conducted 18 observations. The observations were intended to investigate what the actual listening class and the EFL teachers' performance looked like. Observation checklist was prepared and employed during the classroom observations. In addition, interview was conducted with the EFL teachers who were observed while teaching listening comprehension to their students. The researchers prepared and employed interview guide for this purpose.

Methods of Data Analysis: In order to analyze the data collected by using the instruments mentioned, the researchers employed mixed approach. In other words, both the quantitative and the qualitative methods were used to analyze the data. The data which were obtained from questionnaire were analysed quantitatively and the SPSS software version 20 was used for this particular data. Frequency and percentage were used in the analysis of the data from the questionnaire. Those from interview and observation were qualitatively analysed. In order to analyse the qualitative data from observations and interviews, the researchers grouped the information thematically.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from Ethical Review Board of College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Jimma University. On the basis of the letter of permission received from the college, the researchers contacted the

secondary schools in Jimma town. Having met with the principals of the schools, the researchers explained the goal of the research and got permission to collect the data from the participants. The EFL teachers and students were given explanations on the objectives of the study by the researchers and by the school principals. Having understood that the study does not have any kind of harm on them, the participants agreed to provide the necessary data. The researchers also clearly explained that the information given by the participants would be kept confidential and would only be used for the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results and Discussions of Quantitative Data

The following section focused on the results and discussions of the research. The results were given in the table and were followed by detailed discussions. According to the results in data in the table, the EFL teachers agreed that teaching listening skills tasks provided in the students' textbooks was enjoyable. Among the EFL participants of the study more than half, 52.9% revealed that they enjoy teaching listening from students English language textbooks. In addition, 17.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that teaching listening skills is enjoyable. Only 5.9% of the teacher-respondents were not sure about this fact. Furthermore, those who did not agree with the enjoyableness of the teaching of listening skills from EFL textbooks were only 23.5%. From this it is possible to infer that the EFL teachers agree with the fact that teaching listening on the basis of the tasks provided in the students' textbook is enjoyable. It was also found out that the EFL teachers agree with the that helping students to practice the listening tasks provided in the students textbooks is vital for improving the learners' listening skills. As can be understood from the data in the table those who strongly agreed with this idea were 41.2% and those who agreed were 35.3%. Totally, 76.5% of the respondents indicated that they agree in the importance of listening practice of students' skills improvement. It is possible to figure out from this data that the teachers' attitude towards the role of practice in improving students listening comprehension skills is quite positive. Furthermore, the participants agree that practicing listening helps the students to become effective listeners. As can be seen from the data, 53.9% of the respondents revealed their agreement on the role of practice in making students effective listeners. This also implies that the EFL teachers in the secondary schools are aware of ways of improving students' listening skills and they also have the positive attitude towards involving students in varieties of listening practice tasks.

The finding in this table indicated that the EFL teachers in the secondary schools taught the listening sections of the English textbooks sometimes only. Most of the respondents, 47.1% , revealed that they sometimes teach the listening section. Those who indicated that they taught the listening sections of the textbook most of the time were only 35.3%. This finding shows that the EFL teachers in the secondary schools often skip the listening sections of the students' textbooks. This usually decreases the opportunities which the students were supposed to have for practicing listening. The results of the study in the table also indicated that among the various activities the teachers are expected to expose their students to at the pre reading stage, only explaining difficult words (70.6%) and familiarizing the students to listening

comprehension questions in the book (64.7%) were done most of the time. It was found out that most pre-listening activities like introducing listening lesson by giving hints, using picture at a pre listening stage and encouraging students to predict what the listening text would be about were given the least consideration. From this finding it can be inferred that useful pre-listening activities were over looked by the EFL teachers in the secondary schools.

Regarding the frequency at which the EFL teachers gave while listening activities to their students, the finding the table revealed that telling students to take notes (58.8%), asking students to guess to guess meanings of new words while listening (70.4%), and asking students to express their ideas based on the listening text (84.4%) were the most used ones. Vital activities which could be used by teachers to identify students' comprehension of the listening text presented like encouraging students to reflect on what they heard and doing problem solving activities were given the least emphasis. From this finding, one can conclude that the EFL teachers did not utilize some of the useful while listening activities. This might affect the students' listening skills development. As can be understood from the data in the table, most of the useful post listening activities were not given by the EFL teachers. What the teachers did as post listening activities were asking students to do follow up exercises after listening by discussing in group/pair (58.8%) and inquiring the students to express their ideas/opinion based on what they listened to (58.8%). It is found out that most of the post listening activities were not given to the student by the teachers. It is possible to conclude from this finding that the teachers do not involve their students in post listening activities which could aid the improvement of the students' listening comprehension skills.

According to the data in the table the students have positive attitude towards learning listening skills. This can be confirmed with the 61.8 % of the respondents who stated that learning listening skills from the EFL textbook was enjoyable. In addition, 61% of the student-participants indicated that learning the listening tasks provided in the English language textbooks improve their listening abilities. The result of the study also revealed that practicing listening skills can help the students improve their skills of listening comprehension. Among the respondents, 63.7% indicated that practice in listening would make them effective listeners. The finding in this table on the whole pointed out that the students had positive attitude towards learning the listening sections provided in their textbooks.

B. Results and Discussions of the qualitative Data

As already been pointed out the qualitative data for this research were collected by interview and classroom observation. The results from these tools were discussed in this section. According to the interview, the EFL teachers and the students did not have problems related to interest for listening skills. It had been found out that the majority of the teachers employed the three stages of teaching listening skills in their actual classrooms. The students also involved in different listening tasks during the three stages (pre, while, and post listening stages) under the guidance of their teachers. The interview indicated that the teachers and students believe in the importance of the teaching and learning of listening skills. Their belief in the importance of the skill has a role in encouraging them to involve in it at will.

Table 1. Teacher’s Attitude towards Teaching Listening

No.	Attitude	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Teaching listening from English language text book is enjoyable. Helping students to practice listening activities from the text book is essential for improving their listening skill	3	17.6	9	52.9	1	5.9	4	23.5	0	0
		7	41.2	6	35.3	3	17.6	1	5.9	0	0
2	Helping students to practice the listening activities in the text book help them to become efficient listeners	2	11.8	9	52.9	4	23.5	2	11.8	0	0
4	Teaching listening skill is very interesting.	8	47.1	7	41.2	1	5.9	1	5.9	0	0

Table 2. The frequency at which the teachers’ teach listening sections of the book and give pre-listening activities

Items	Frequency of employing pre-listening activities										
	Always		Most of the time		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Pre-listening tasks											
How often do you teach listening sections in student’s text book?	1	5.9	6	35.3	8	47.1	2	11.8	0	0	
I introduce listening lesson by giving hints	4	23.5	4	23.5	8	47.1	1	5.9	0	0	
I explain difficult words at a pre-listening stage.	1	5.9	12	70.6	3	17.6	1	5.9	0	0	
I use picture at a pre listening stage.	1	5.9	5	29.4	5	29.4	5	29.4	1	5.9	
I familiarize the listening comprehension questions in the book to the students.	1	5.9	11	64.7	4	23.5	1	5.9	0	0	
Before listening I encourage students to predict what the listening text is .	6	35.3	5	29.4	4	23.5	1	5.9	1	5.9	

f=frequency

Table 3. The frequency at which while listening activities given to the students by the EFL teachers

Practice	Frequency of employing while listening activities									
	Always		Most of The time		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I ask students to complete puzzle or solve problem at a while listening stage	3	17.6	4	23.5	6	47.1	0	0	3	17.6
I tell students to take notes at a while listening stage.	5	29.4	10	58.8	1	5.9	1	5.9	0	0
I asking the students to guess meanings of new words at a while listening stage.	1	5.9	12	70.6	3	17.6	0	0	1	5.9
I ask students express their answers.	2	11.8	14	84.4	1	5.9	0	0	0	0
I encourage students to express/reflect their experiences/ opinion related to the listening text.	2	11.8	8	47.1	5	29.4	0	0	1	5.9

f=frequency

Table 4. The Frequency at which the teachers provided post listening activities

How often do you practice the following?	Always		Most of the time		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
	I provide students with reasonable feedback /correction	2	11.8	8	47.1	5	29.4	0	0	1
I extend the listening lesson to writing, speaking or reading exercise related to the listening passage.	2	11.8	6	35.3	7	41.2	2	11.8	0	0
I ask students do the listening exercises.	8	47.1	5	29.4	4	23.5	0	0	0	0
I allow students to compare their works/answers in pairs/ groups	1	5.9	1	5.9	2	11.8	1	5.9	1	5.9
.I ask students to do follow up exercises after listening by discussing in group/pair.	5	29.4	10	58.8	2	11.8	0	0	0	0
.I ask students express their answers	4	23.5	10	58.8	2	11.8	1	5.9	0	0

f=frequency

Table 5. Student’s attitude towards learning listening skill

Attitude	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
	1. Learning listening from English language text book improves my listening ability.	225	61.0	104	20.2	14	3.8	12	3.3	11
2. Learning listening from English language text book is enjoyable.	228	61.8	97	26.3	17	4.6	16	4.3	9	2.4
3. Practicing the listening activities from the text book is essential for improving my listening skill.	212	57.5	96	26.0	13	3.5	30	8.1	15	4.1
4. Practicing the listening activities in the text book helps me to become efficient listener.	235	63.7	103	29.7	12	2.3	6	1.6	10	2.7

f=frequency

Scholars in the area indicate that the belief and attitude which teachers and students have towards the teaching and learning of a language skill have a good value in supporting their performance. According to Yildirim (2015) the positive attitude which people have towards what they do has a constructive power in aiding their performance. This scholar contends that individuals practice a topic if they have positive attitude towards it. The finding also goes in harmony with the theory of Planned Behavior which states that people's behavior or practice can be affected by their attitude towards what they are supposed to do Yildirim (2015). The interview also indicated that the teachers mostly teach the listening lessons provided in the textbooks during the first semester of the academic year. In the second semester, the usually rushed in the name of covering the annual lesson plan. In so doing, they skipped the listening sections of the books and focused on the grammar sections. In relation to this one of the interviewees stated the following idea:

Teaching all the listening tasks provided in the English textbook takes much of my time. The time allowed for one period is only 40 minutes and this cannot suffice for me to cover the listening tasks provided. If I teach all the listening lessons in every chapter, I may lag behind and this can affect my time of covering the plan for the year. This condition often makes me jump the listening sections and focus on the grammar parts in order that I can cover the annual lesson plan and the whole course book before the end of the academic year. I do not do this out of lack of interest to teach listening but to cover the annual lesson on time (Interview No.3).

As can be understood from this quotation, in spite of having the zeal for teaching listening skills, the teachers jump it in the name of covering the annual portion duly. This has affected the attention which should have been given to the teaching of the listening skills. It was also indicated that the EFL teachers focused on some portions of the listening sections of the English textbook during the first semester of the academic year. During the second semester, the teachers mostly rush to cover the whole lesson of the year only by focusing on the grammar sections. The listening tasks in the books were wholly jumped by the teachers during the second semester (February to June) of the academic year. The study disclosed that the teachers were more worried about covering their annual lesson plan rather than intending to achieve the objective of the course for the year. This indicates that the teachers did not care much about how much of the lessons taught the students understood as expected of them.

The interview also pinpointed that the teachers encourage their students to practice the listening tasks provided in the textbooks to a very limited extent. It was evident that the attention given by the teachers to encourage the students was low. The teachers provided pre-listening, while listening and post listening activities to the students. However, the efforts the teachers made to encourage the students was low. It was found out that the students often practiced doing the listening tasks provided in their textbooks under the guidance and encouragements made by their English teachers. The problem identified by the study was that the listening tasks provided were intermittent as the teachers skip some of them to go through the book as swiftly as possible. The result of the study also revealed that poor motivation and large class were the main factors impeding the effective teaching of listening comprehension. It was indicated that the students lack

motivation of paying attention to the listening texts read by the teachers. Teachers often gave them listening comprehension questions and read the text on the basis of which the students answered the listening questions. During this time, instead of listening to the text being read attentively, the students were involved in side talks about irrelevant issues. This was confirmed by the result of the interview made with the teachers and the classroom observation made by the researchers. Even though the data from the questionnaires indicated that the students had positive attitude towards learning listening, the interview result and the classroom observation revealed that the way the students acted in class during the listening lesson was the sign of lack of interest coming from absence of motivation. Scholars indicate that lack of motivation from the students' side discourages teachers from teaching well. According to Balto (1996) and Morley (2001) the success of teaching, in general, and the teaching of language skills in particular in the absence of good motivation is questionable.

Large class was indicated by the participants as a main factor impeding the teaching and learning of the listening skills. The interview and the classroom observation indicated that the number of students in a class were 80 and more. This class size caused the EFL teachers failure to motivate and encourage the students by facilitating activities at different stage of teaching listening. In relation to this, Underwood (1989) stated that large class related problem like noise and the physical setting of the classroom affect the teaching of listening comprehension skills. This scholar also indicated that listeners' limited vocabulary, failure to recognize signals when the speaker passes from one point to another, inability to concentrate, problem of interpretation affect listening comprehension. In a similar manner the informants pointed out that students' lack of concentration related to absence of motivation and inability of understanding the meaning of the vocabulary in the listening text were additional factors affecting the teaching and learning of listening skills.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study was aimed at examining grade 9 English teachers and students' attitude and practice of the teaching and learning of listening skills. It also intended to explore factors that affect the teaching and learning of the listening skill. In order to address the basic research questions, data were gathered using questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. Mixed approach in which both the quantitative and qualitative methods are employed was used to analyze the data. It was found out that both the teachers and students have positive attitude towards the teaching and learning of listening comprehension skills. However, the EFL teachers' focus on the listening sections of the English textbook was low because of their interest to rush in order to cover the annual plan for the academic year in time. The teachers skipped most of the listening lessons and taught grammar sections. It was found out that some attention was given to the teaching of the listening sections during the first semester of the academic year (September to January). During the second semester when the end of the whole academic year approaches, the teachers totally ignored the teaching of listening and completely focused on the teaching of the grammatical sections provided in the books. It was also found out that the teaching of listening comprehension was hampered by factors like

shortage of students' motivation to pay heed to the listening text, large class, and students' lack of adequate listening vocabulary. On the basis of the findings of the study and the conclusion made, the following recommendations were forwarded:

Recommendations

- EFL teachers should focus on improving their students listening skills thoroughly by managing their time appropriately rather than rushing and skipping the listening lessons to cover the annual plan for the academic year.
- The concerned responsible body should be made aware that covering the annual academic plan alone at the expense of achieving the teaching –learning goal of the curriculum is disastrous.
- In spite of their positive attitude towards listening skills and its learning, the students lack good motivation for it. Therefore, the EFL teachers should devise a mechanism to scale up their students' motivation to pay heed during the teaching of listening skills.
- To overcome problems related to large class, teachers should arrange additional spare time to teach listening in the opposite shift by dividing the students in two small groups. Jimma town Educational Office in collaboration with Jimma University should give training to grade 9 English teachers on how to implement teaching listening and on how to finish the text book in the appointed time table.
- EFL English teachers should take time and prepare thoroughly before they come to class to teach listening so that they can catch their student's attention.
- The department of English language in the secondary schools should plan to invite native English speakers who work in Jimma University to read the listening passages with manageable speed and intelligible pronunciation. The listening texts read by native speakers should be recorded and used by the EFL teachers.
- To minimize noise and students' involvement in side talks during listening, teachers should engage their students in pair /group, and give them different listening activities and clear instructions.
- The school in collaboration with the zonal education office and other concerned body should arrange refreshing trainings for the EFL teachers on the teaching of English Language skills.

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