

The difficulties faced by English teachers in implementing authentic listening material in their classrooms for primary stage students

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the obstacles of using audio material in the classroom, from the point of view of the teachers of the English language for the basic stage in the north and central Jordan. The study followed the descriptive approach and applied the questionnaire as a data collection tool. The study populations are the male teachers and female teachers of the basic stage in the northern and central governorates during the second semester 2018/2019. The study sample was randomly selected. The results of the study of the obstacles of the use of the original audio material in the classroom showed that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance of $\alpha = 0.5$, which is very much related to the learners. The difficulties are increased when the number of students in the classroom increases. Also, these obstacles are related to gender. While there are no statistical differences at the level of significance of $\alpha = 0.05$ due to the years of experience or maintenance or the difficulty of evaluation or curriculum.

Keywords: Primary stage, Listening, English teachers, Difficulties.

الصعوبات التي تواجه معلمي اللغة الانجليزية في تفعيل مادة الاستماع الأصلية في صفوفهم لطلبة المرحلة الأساسية

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المخلص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على معيقات استخدام المادة السمعية في الغرفة الصفية من وجهة نظر معلمي اللغة الانجليزية للمرحلة الأساسية في مناطق شمال ووسط الأردن. واتبعت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي وطبقت الاستبانة كأداة لجمع البيانات. وقد تكون مجتمع الدراسة من معلمي ومعلمات المرحلة الأساسية في محافظات الشمال والوسط خلال الفصل الدراسي الثاني 2018/2019 وقد اختيرت عينة الدراسة بطريقة عشوائية. وأظهرت نتائج دراسة معيقات استخدام المادة السمعية الأصلية في الغرفة الصفية أن هناك فروقاً ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة $\alpha=0.05$ مرتبطة بشكل كبير بالمتعلمين حيث إن الصعوبات تزداد عند زيادة عدد الطلبة في الغرف الصفية وأيضاً هذه المعوقات ترتبط بالنوع الاجتماعي حيث الصعوبات لدى المعلمين أكثر منها لدى المعلمات ومن ناحية أخرى لا توجد فروق ذات دلالات إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة $\alpha=0.05$ تعزى لسنوات الخبرة او المحافظة أو صعوبة التقييم أو المنهاج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المرحلة الابتدائية، الاستماع، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية، الصعوبات.

Introduction:

"When an English teacher teaches English as a foreign language, he/she is supposed to develop learners' abilities in both communicative competence and linguistic competence. Some researchers such as Alex Wright think extensive reading is considered as the written input and extensive listening is considered as the spoken input. But there are some difficulties associated with teaching extensive listening, and it is important to be aware of them.

In this research we will look deeply into this neglected skill of English language from the teachers' point of view. Listening is an important skill, but there is a big difference between the application and theory. Most teachers know that according to the ministry of education the listening skill should be given a higher mark than reading and writing, which means teachers, should give the listening skill more attention, especially for young learners. Teachers play an important role in teaching learners strategies and how to apply them in the listening task. These are suggestions to solve the problems as well as to upgrade the listening skill for students."

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In this research we will look deeply into this neglected skill of English language from the teachers' point of view. Although listening is important skill but there is a big difference between the application and theory. Most teachers know that according to the ministry of education the listening skill should be given a higher mark than reading and writing which means teachers should give listening skill more attention especially for young learners. Teachers play an important role in teaching learners strategies and how to apply them into the listening task. These are suggestions to solve the problems as well as to upgrade the listening skill for students.

Listening plays an important role in daily lives. People listen for different purposes such as entertainment, academic purposes or obtaining necessary information. As for foreign language learning, listening is essentially important since it provides the language input (Rost 1994:141-142). Without understanding input appropriately learning simply cannot get any improvement. In addition, without listening skill, no communication can be achieved (Cross, 1998). As for that, language learners, especially those who learn English as a foreign language in a non-native setting, find it difficult to acquire good listening skill. This small research is an attempt to identify the difficulties that are faced by English teachers in implementing extensive listening skill using authentic material. This research would concentrate on these matters below:

The way teacher deal with the listening skill

The most common problems they encounter

The strategies which will help them to get over these problems also they help to succeed in teaching listening skill and implementing authentic material.

Supposing that a listener is able to predict the topic, tries to grasp unknown words or utterances from the context, uses his knowledge of the world, find the main idea by deleting or adding the utterances around the main idea under the light of discourse matters, it may easily be concluded that the English teacher has had a positive influence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are certainly some difficulties in listening; the first is that people cannot communicate face-to-face unless the two types of skills (listening/speaking) are developed in the same time. Rehearsed production is useless if the interlocutors are unable to respond to the reply generated from our interlocutor. (Anderson and Lynch, 1988 p. 1)

The second problem is that under many circumstances listening is a reciprocal skill. People cannot practice listening in the same way as they can rehearse speaking, or at least the part of speaking that has to do with pronunciation, because the listener cannot predict the communication. (Anderson and Lynch, 1988). Another problem connected with the second one is comprehension of what they are listening to as English has become a worldwide language and there are millions of people learning and speaking it, the main learning problem is that they cannot understand what they are listening. The learners may have developed other skills to some degree but English teachers recognize that listening is the major skill enabling the learners to use their other skills.

As stated by Krashen (2009) only comprehensible input is necessary and makes sense if the purpose of language education is to make learners acquire the kind of language that they need to express themselves. So by improving the comprehensible syllabus for students, education can serve to the purpose.

Listening is a crucial part of interaction. It is not just hearing the other side but through the message having an agreement or giving the right response with the help of grammatical knowledge. In addition, listening is the understanding of the speakers' accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.' (Howatt and Dakin, 1993 p.16).

Listening received little attention in language teaching and learning, because teaching methods emphasized productive skills and listening was characterized as passive activity (Richards & Renandya, 2010). However, researchers have revealed that listening is not a passive skill but an active process of constructing meaning from a stream of sounds. Listening can be considered the fundamental skill to speaking, because without understanding the input at the right level, any learning cannot begin.

Various listening sources can be used in a language classroom. These are teacher talk, student talk, guest speakers, textbook recordings, TV, video, DVD, radio, songs and the internet (Wilson, 2008). Teacher talk is valuable input for learners of a foreign language. The teacher can regulate the pace of speaking according to the students' level and interest, repeat important parts and change the input as desired. Teacher talk can also be evaluated in terms of its quality. It should be clear, coherent and interesting for listeners. Teacher talk should be interactive in a way that students can ask questions and get an answer, which facilitates and supports student talk. Another way of exposing students to an authentic conversation is inviting guest speakers to the classroom, which provides learners a chance to interact in a more authentic way the classroom, which provides learners a chance to interact in a more authentic way.

Vandergrift (1999) states that listening sequences improve students' metacognitive abilities, especially in the first two years of language learning. These listening sequences may be divided into three stages as pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening and each of the three stages has its own specific purpose (Underwood 1988).

While- listening activities are the main activities of the listening tasks. Learners listen to the input and make decisions about the strategies to use according to the requirements of the task. Finally, in post-listening activities, learners discuss and evaluate their strategies choices and their effectiveness. Feedback is provided by self- evaluation and also group discussion (Guan, 2015)

Listening plays an important role in second language instruction for several reasons (Rost, 1994). If you cannot hear it well you will find it hard to communicate or perhaps you cannot pass your listening examination for instance. In fact, students often take the wrong way when listening and this leads them to the poor result. It should be noted that the learner's perception of their listening problem and strategies can affect their comprehension both positively and negatively (Wenden, 1986). Thus, in order to help students get improved with their listening skill, it is needed finding out their listening problems which cause difficulties to them. According to Yagang (1994), the problems in listening were accompanied with the four following factors: the message, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. Furthermore, a numbers of research have been carried out to pick out the problem in listening. The problems were believed to cause by the speech rate, vocabulary and pronunciation (Higgins, 1995). As Flowerdew & Miller (1996) assumed that the problems of the students were for the speed of delivery, new terminology and concept, difficulty in focusing and the physical environment. As Nguyen Ngoan stated in his article "listening to VOA: advantages, problems and solutions" the students have to face these three problems. First of all, the students find it hard to understand proper names as they have never heard about it before. In other words, they have no background knowledge about what they are listening. The second problem is believed to rise from the unfamiliar, uninteresting and too long listening which makes the students feel strange, discouraged and bored of what they are hearing. The last one is assumed to be about the sound connections and intonation spoken by native speakers with different accents.

The research available on second-language listening comprehension is insufficient. Comparing with other skills, Goh (1997:161) said that "there are fewer insights about the process of listening and the way it is learnt". Similarly, Richards (1985:189) stated that: "there is little direct research on second language listening comprehension". As for that, I am doing this research not only to help students in our school with better listening but also to contribute a small part to enrich the listening research which has been done so far.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

1- Aims of the study

Throughout visiting the teachers' classroom we have observed that they concentrate on reading and writing more than listening and speaking. Although any mother language is learnt in this order listening, speaking, reading then writing. Any language consists of these four integrated skills.

This research attempts to explore ways employed by teachers while doing implementing listening. It also aims to find out difficulties as well as to provide some recommendation for improvement. The problem and the questions of the research:

II. Justification

Listening is almost ignored skill in primary and secondary school, where students spent twelve years in English language learning. But we still have poor results in listening. As compared with other language skills, listening is considered the most challenging subject. Therefore low scores in listening are unavoidable.

III. Sources of study

- Article
- Books
- Questionnaire

Questions of the study:

- 1- What are the difficulties faced by English teachers in implementing authentic listening material in their classrooms for primary stage students?
- 2- Are there statistical differences in the difficulties faced by English teachers in implementing authentic listening material in their classrooms for primary stage students related to gender, teaching experience, number of students, assessment and directorate?

IV. Methodology

In terms of the method, questionnaire was employed for this study. Questionnaires, in Nunan's words, are more amenable to quantification, cheap and easy to answer. They are good ways for collecting information (Cohen & Manion 1989, Weir & Roberts 1994). Moreover, questionnaires considered more reliable ways since they are anonymous and this encourages greater honesty (Cohen et al 2000:269).

Questionnaire included closed ended questions. The purpose of closed ended responses is easier to collate and analyze. The participants consist of 79 female English teachers and 33 male teachers. They are from north and middle area in Jordan from primary public schools.

V. Defining Listening

Some various definitions of listening are presented below to highlight its different aspects.

Listening, as Howatt and Dakin (1974) define, is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent and pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary and grasping his meaning.

Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and/or non-verbal messages (Brownell, 2002 Listening is an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear (Helgesen,2003).

Listening comprehension is a highly complex problem-solving activity that can be broken down into a set of distinct sub-skills (Byrnes, 1984).Listening is an active and interactional process in which a listener receives speech sounds and tries to attach meaning to the spoken words. The listener tries to understand the intended message of the oral text to respond effectively to oral Listening and hearing are considered different process. While hearing is considered passive communication and natural process, listening is physical & mental, active and learnt process and defends as a skill.

Comparing listening in one's native language, listening in a foreign language is a more challenging task: "How well L2 listeners cope with these limitations will depend on their ability to make use of all the available resources to interpret what they hear" (Vandergrift, 2007, p. 193). Therefore, in a listening phenomenon, the use of appropriate listening sources has a crucial effect in comprehension.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Reliability of the Instrument:

Cronbach's alpha used to test internal consistency, see Table (1).

Table (1) Reliability coefficients of the study instrument

	Cronbach alpha
Difficulties related to teachers	0.76
Difficulties related to curriculum	0.72

Cronbach alpha	
Difficulties related to learners	0.73
Difficulties related to assessment	0.75
Total score	0.81

These values of Cronbach's alpha were considered enough for the purpose of this study.

Table (2) The distribution of the study sample according to the variables of the study

	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	33	29.5
	Female	79	70.5
Your teaching experience	1-5	33	29.5
	6-10	23	20.5
	11-16	33	29.5
	More than 16	23	20.5
Directorate	North	85	75.9
	Middle	27	24.1
Average number of students in your classroom	10-21	39	34.8
	22-33	46	41.1
	34 & more	27	24.1
	Total	112	100.0

No	field	Mean	SD	rank
3	Difficulties related to learners	3.40	.502	1
2	Difficulties related to curriculum	2.77	.598	2
4	Difficulties related to assessment	2.38	.640	3
1	Difficulties related to teachers	2.190	.4602	4
	Total score	2.55	.356	

rank	No	Item	Mean	SD
1	4	Teaching using translation for the listening material is easier	3.31	1.074
1	3	The tape or the CD has bad quality	3.17	1.375
1	6	Listening class takes time so I prefer to read the exercise	2.84	1.339
	30	I can design listening activities for my students	2.31	1.099
	22	I use the listening material when it is needed	2.24	1.050
	10	I apply the while listening phase	2.22	1.054
	12	Teachers play the cassette at least 3 times	2.19	1.143

rank	No	Item	Mean	SD
	11	I apply the post listening phase	2.15	1.050
	1	I do not know how to use the listening material tools.	2.14	1.184
	26	I follow the methodology that is mentioned in the teachers' book for the listening material	2.05	1.073
	9	I apply the Pre-listening phase before listening	1.99	.954
	5	I think listening is a waste of time	1.72	1.109
	19	I think there is a strong relationship between listening and speaking	1.57	.898
	24	I use clear instructions before listening	1.49	.723
	25	Planning for listening is important	1.45	.757
		Difficulties related to teachers	2.190	.4602

rank	No	Item	Mean	SD
	2	There is lack of listening tools.	3.43	1.292
	16	A large number of the listening exercises are connected to grammatical rules	3.23	1.031
	7	The time of the classrooms is not enough to cover the listening material	2.87	1.270
	13	The listening material is boring	2.71	1.241
	20	Listening is more effective when there are pictures with it such as videos	1.63	.995
		Difficulties related to curriculum	2.77	.598

rank	No	Item	Mean	SD
	21	Students ask me to repeat the listening material because they do not understand what is the speaker is saying (the speed of the speaker's talk is very fast)	4.22	.984
	28	Students ask about the new words or the unfamiliar words while listening	3.92	1.124
	8	The learners trend towards the listening skill is negative	3.54	1.308
	15	Most students have already answered the listening exercises in their homes	3.17	1.328
	14	Most students can answer the listening exercises before they listen from their back ground knowledge or other sources	3.13	1.186
	27	My students follow certain strategies to understand the listening task such as using context of the listening exercise	2.42	.992
		Difficulties related to learners	3.40	.502

rank	No	Item	Mean	SD
	17	The listening skill is not easily measured	3.36	1.106
	18	I have an assessment record for the listening skill	2.41	1.277
	29	It is easy to know if my students comprehend the listening task or not	1.98	1.053
	23	I provide feedback after the students answer the listening activity	1.76	.913
		Difficulties related to assessment	2.38	.640

T-Test results (T) according to gender variable

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Difficulties related to teachers	Male	33	2.477	.4700	4.630	110	.000
	Female	79	2.071	.4020			
Difficulties related to curriculum	Male	33	2.88	.536	1.189	110	.237
	Female	79	2.73	.620			
Difficulties related to learners	Male	33	3.24	.380	-2.237	110	.027
	Female	79	3.47	.533			
Difficulties related to assessment	Male	33	2.80	.557	4.911	110	.000
	Female	79	2.20	.593			
Total score	Male	33	2.74	.345	3.755	110	.000
	Female	79	2.48	.333			

This table - shows there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) due to gender in all variables except for Difficulties related to curriculum, in favor of males in Difficulties related to teachers, Difficulties related to assessment and Total score, and in favor of females in Difficulties related to learners.

T-Test results (T) according to Directorate variable

	Directorate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Difficulties related to teachers	North	85	2.194	.4754	.132	110	.895
	Middle	27	2.180	.4171			
Difficulties related to curriculum	North	85	2.75	.629	-.839	110	.403
	Middle	27	2.86	.489			
Difficulties related to learners	North	85	3.42	.515	.629	110	.531
	Middle	27	3.35	.467			

	Directorate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Difficulties related to assessment	North	85	2.40	.639	.753	110	.453
	Middle	27	2.30	.651			
Total score	North	85	2.56	.371	.193	110	.847
	Middle	27	2.54	.309			

Table - shows there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) due to Directorate in all variables

Descriptive

Your teaching experience

	Categories	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Difficulties related to teachers	1-5	33	2.224	.4055
	6-10	23	2.113	.5335
	11-16	33	2.301	.3948
	More than 16	23	2.061	.5237
	Total	112	2.190	.4602
Difficulties related to curriculum	1-5	33	2.73	.634
	6-10	23	2.64	.539
	11-16	33	2.90	.550
	More than 16	23	2.79	.665
	Total	112	2.78	.598
Difficulties related to learners	1-5	33	3.23	.482
	6-10	23	3.44	.404
	11-16	33	3.59	.522
	More than 16	23	3.33	.523
	Total	112	3.40	.502
Difficulties related to assessment	1-5	33	2.43	.751
	6-10	23	2.37	.703
	11-16	33	2.36	.590
	More than 16	23	2.33	.491
	Total	112	2.38	.640
Total score	1-5	33	2.54	.357
	6-10	23	2.50	.354
	11-16	33	2.67	.312
	More than 16	23	2.47	.396
	Total	112	2.55	.356

ANOVA

Results of the analysis of the variance according to the variance of experience

	Contrast Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Difficulties related to teachers	Between Groups	.965	3	.322	1.541	.208
	Within Groups	22.545	108	.209		
	Total	23.510	111			
Difficulties related to curriculum	Between Groups	1.020	3	.340	.950	.419
	Within Groups	38.670	108	.358		
	Total	39.690	111			
Difficulties related to learners	Between Groups	2.234	3	.745	3.119	.029
	Within Groups	25.786	108	.239		
	Total	28.020	111			
Difficulties related to assessment	Between Groups	.166	3	.055	.132	.941
	Within Groups	45.333	108	.420		
	Total	45.499	111			
Total score	Between Groups	.644	3	.215	1.732	.165
	Within Groups	13.393	108	.124		
	Total	14.037	111			

Table - shows there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) due to teaching experience in all variables except for Difficulties related to learners. Pair wise Multiple Comparisons Post Hoc Test using Scheffe method was conducted as in table.

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Scheffe results of Difficulties related to learners

(I) Your teaching experience	(J) Your teaching experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1-5	6-10	-.21	.133	.479
	11-16	-.35(*)	.120	.039
	More than 16	-.09	.133	.919
6-10	1-5	.21	.133	.479
	11-16	-.14	.133	.759
	More than 16	.12	.144	.885
11-16	1-5	.35(*)	.120	.039
	6-10	.14	.133	.759

(I) Your teaching experience	(J) Your teaching experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
	More than 16	.26	.133	.286
More than 16	1-5	.09	.133	.919
	6-10	-.12	.144	.885
	11-16	-.26	.133	.286

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The above table shows there are statistically significant difference at ($\alpha=0.05$) 1-5 and 11-16 in favor of 11-16.

Results according to the variable number of students

	Categories	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Difficulties related to teachers	10-21	39	2.267	.4435
	22-33	46	2.201	.4765
	34 & more	27	2.062	.4445
	Total	112	2.190	.4602
Difficulties related to curriculum	10-21	39	2.67	.555
	22-33	46	2.78	.625
	34 & more	27	2.92	.601
	Total	112	2.78	.598
Difficulties related to learners	10-21	39	3.17	.403
	22-33	46	3.55	.528
	34 & more	27	3.48	.481
	Total	112	3.40	.502
Difficulties related to assessment	10-21	39	2.45	.626
	22-33	46	2.39	.682
	34 & more	27	2.25	.588
	Total	112	2.38	.640
Total score	10-21	39	2.54	.323
	22-33	46	2.59	.387
	34 & more	27	2.51	.352
	Total	112	2.55	.356

Results of the analysis of the variance according to the variable number of students

	Contrast Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Difficulties related to teachers	Between Groups	.679	2	.340	1.622	.202
	Within Groups	22.830	109	.209		

	Contrast Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Total	23.510	111			
Difficulties related to curriculum	Between Groups	1.017	2	.508	1.432	.243
	Within Groups	38.673	109	.355		
	Total	39.690	111			
Difficulties related to learners	Between Groups	3.298	2	1.649	7.270	.001
	Within Groups	24.722	109	.227		
	Total	28.020	111			
Difficulties related to assessment	Between Groups	.645	2	.323	.784	.459
	Within Groups	44.854	109	.412		
	Total	45.499	111			
Total score	Between Groups	.126	2	.063	.494	.611
	Within Groups	13.911	109	.128		
	Total	14.037	111			

Table - shows there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) due to number of students in all variables except for Difficulties related to learners. Pair wise Multiple Comparisons Post Hoc Test using Scheffe method was conducted as in table.

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Scheffe results of Difficulties related to learners

(I) Average number of students in your classroom	(J) Average number of students in your classroom	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
10-21	22-33	-.38(*)	.104	.002
	34 & more	-.31(*)	.119	.034
22-33	10-21	.38(*)	.104	.002
	34 & more	.07	.115	.851
34 & more	10-21	.31(*)	.119	.034
	22-33	-.07	.115	.851

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The above table shows there are statistically significant difference at ($\alpha=0.05$) between 10-21 and 22-33 in favor of 22-33, between 10-21 and 34 & more in favor of 34 & more.

Recommendations:

- 1- The number of the students in a foreign language class should be between 20 to 25.
- 2- English teacher should use listening material because reading skill is different from listening skill.
- 3- English teacher should use other ways to explain the listening material other than translation such as using flash cards or real objects.

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