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Developing the listening skills of Arab learners of English as a foreign language in the UAE

By

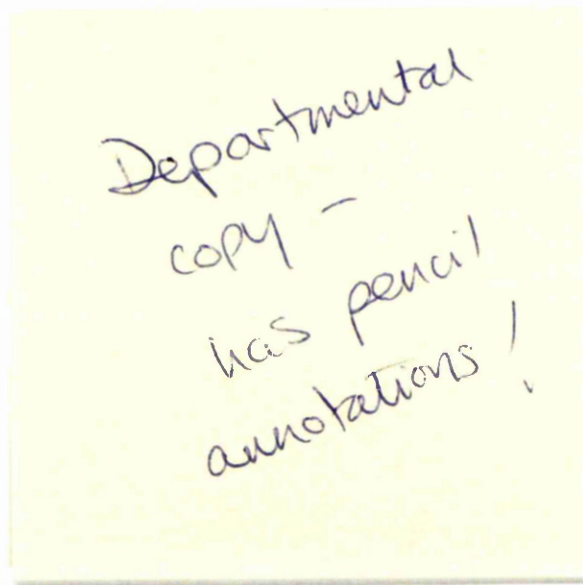
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Supervised by

Mr. Douglas Graham

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy in the University of Glasgow

Thursday, 19 April, 2001



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Abstract

The research consists of four parts, which investigates the importance of listening in teaching English to Arab learners and how to improve the teaching of this important skill.

In Part One, Chapter One the paper describes the ELT situation in the government secondary schools in the UAE and discusses the reasons that make learning English not fully successful. Besides, the paper indicates how listening skill is neglected in teaching English as a foreign language and the significance of technology in improving oral skills learning.

The Second Part of the research falls into six chapters.

In chapter Two I will deal with the definitions of listening given by Underwood and others and I will point to the difference between hearing and listening.

Chapter Three evaluates the importance of listening. We can not communicate face to face unless we are able to respond to the speaker. In this chapter I will discuss the relationship which obtains between listening and speaking, showing that effective speaking depends on successful listening.

Chapter Four looks at the purposes and situations in listening as an important factor in teaching this skill in the real world.

In the Fifth Chapter the features of spoken English are delineated as they differ from written discourse.

In Chapter Six I will move to potential problems that the foreign learners face in learning to understand spoken English, concentrating on the Arab speakers.

Chapter Seven looks for the appropriate methods and techniques in teaching listening and discusses the difference between authentic and non-authentic listening materials, concentrating on the teacher's role including using audio-visual aids to facilitate learning to guide and support learners.

Part Three, Chapter Eight will deal with the experimental fieldwork undertaken which pinpointed the weakness of the experimental group in English Language listening, which negatively affected their performance in other skills. The experiments however, suggested this could slightly be improved through some innovations attempted, e.g. using language laboratory, other media and varying methods and techniques.

Part Four, Chapter Nine the study will end with conclusions and some recommendations in the light of the foregoing discussion.

Introduction

We cannot communicate face to face and express ourselves without understanding what we are hearing. Listening is an essential factor of communication. We spend much of our time in listening. *"Listening is a fundamental component of communication and we spend a great deal of time engaged in this activity."* (Pearson and Nelson; 1991, page 73). Therefore, there is growing support to the view that listening should play a central role in teaching foreign language but without neglecting the other skills, speaking, reading and writing. Teaching listening has begun to be taken seriously, and without having been taught listening, foreign learners may not be able to acquire the foreign language. Exposure to oral English is very important for ELT; the students need to hear the spoken language over a great deal of time in order to acquire it.

"It would seem logical that listening should be actually taught along with speaking, and the learners should be exposed, quite early on, to as many different types of listening as possible."

(Hubbard; 1993, page 80) Learners' listening abilities precede their expressive language abilities.

As a teacher of English language in the UAE, I began to take an interest in this significant skill and found out it was very necessary to investigate such an area deeply and insightfully. From this point of view the study discusses teaching the listening skill in the UAE to seek if this skill is taught adequately or not. Thus, several experiments were conducted and I held an interview with many teachers and supervisors, including the senior supervisor for English Language (EL-Oais). The study also drew upon a report that was published on 15-Feb 1999 (English Language Teaching in the UAE) compiled by Bryan Loughrey as a team leader and others. The report found that the real level of student attainment in English was extremely poor at Grades 12 (third secondary), 9 (third preparatory) and 6 (Primary). Despite relatively high marks obtained in national examinations, when given internationally referenced examinations, adjusted to take account of cultural difference, students struggled badly and the report gave an example.

- i. from a large sample less than 1% of Grade 12 students achieved a score adequate by international standards to enter an English medium university.
- ii. less than 7% of the students sampled at Grade 12 had even

achieved an intermediate level, which would have indicated the ability to follow a university course through the medium of English after a further year's intensive study of the language;

iii. these results were confirmed by survey responses from higher education and employers. (Loughrey, 1999 pages 3 and 4)

with respect of the previous outcomes, the investigator thinks that the cause of weakness in English may stem from weakness in listening skill that affected negatively speaking abilities in particular and learners' language skill in general. *"The neglect of listening causes frustration on the part of EL learners. Thus, after seven or eight years of English instruction, secondary school graduates find it difficult to understand spoken language or follow a conversation with native speakers of the target language, though many of them have a good grasp of grammar, vocabulary, reading and composition."*

(Al-Mutawa & Kailani; 1998, page 95)

In the following chapter I will give a general description of English Language Teaching in the Government Schools in the UAE.

PART ONE

Chapter One

1.0 ELT Situation in the UAE

In the UAE there is a growing tendency of laying emphasis on teaching English. This is apparent in the fact that teaching English was started from 4th Primary by the Ministry of Education since the UAE was announced in 1971. In 1990 teaching English was started from 1st Primary and The UAE is the first country in the area to teach English from very early stages. The question is why the UAE is attaching this great importance to English. The answer here is inseparable from the world scene.

There is no doubt that English is an international language.

It is not only for communication between non-native speakers and native speakers, but it is also a language of communication among non-native speakers all over the world, including Arab and Asian countries.

Harmer (1991) asks the following questions:

Why do people learn languages?

Why do people want to learn foreign languages?

Why do people want to study English?

Is it for pleasure?

Is it for getting a job?

Do we learn to expand our knowledge?

Is it necessary for academic study?

Do we learn English to know how to use computer? (page 1)

There are number of different reasons for language study and the following list will give an idea of the great variety of such reasons.

1. School curricula

Probably the majority of language students in the world learn English because it is on the school curriculum whether they like it or not.

2. Academic study

Many people hope to continue their academic study in the UK or USA, Thus they take an interest in learning English

3. Promotion

Some people want to study English because they think it offers opportunity for advancement in their professional lives. They will get a better job with two languages than if they only know one.

4. Target Language community

The students who are learning in foreign countries are forced to pick up the language so as to feel at ease when they are involved in any form of communication. *"Some language students find themselves living in a target language community (either temporarily or permanently) A target language community (TLC) is one where the inhabitants speak the language which the student is learning."*

(Harmer; 1991, page 1)

5. Knowledge

Some students study English because they feel that they may expand their knowledge and get to know the culture of countries in which English is used as official language.

6. Entertainment

There are many other reasons for learning English as a foreign language, such as, fun, tourism, watching TV, attending plays by Shakespeare, etc.

7. The computer

It has become a part of our modern life and the language of computing is English, so learners all over the world began to pursue the study of English for this reason. ||

Of the seven aforementioned reasons, the most relevant ones are the second, third, fourth and seventh, which are indicated in the Ministry of Education documents by the foreign language policy planners.

These documents will be reviewed in 1.2

For the above reasons and as we are a part of this complex world, English has been chosen as the main foreign language to be taught in government schools in the UAE. In fact, it is a compulsory subject in all stages, primary cycle, preparatory cycle and secondary cycle. English also has been chosen not only because it is the most international language but also because of its unique significance in the UAE. Nowadays English is the most widespread foreign language in the UAE and it plays an important part in the daily and business life of the country. Furthermore, English is the language of many courses at the UAE University and the Higher Colleges of Technology.

"English teaching has a dominant position in Arab schools and is relatively well established. English has occupied a prominent place in the school curriculum for at least half a century. It is taught in all government schools as a compulsory subject and as the first foreign language." (Al-Mutawa & Kailani; 1998, page 4)

1.1 Aims of Teaching English in the UAE

The documents of the UAE Ministry of Education outline the ELT policy as follows:

- to consolidate the spiritual and intellectual feeling of the students according to the teachings of Islam.
- to help in developing the country in many fields.
- to qualify the learners for higher studies (University, Higher Colleges of Technology etc.)
- to introduce the learners to other cultures and expand their knowledge.
- to qualify the students to take up employment that requires the use of English.
- to enable the pupils to use English in their real life and recognize the language of native speakers.
- to get the pupils use the language accurately and fluently.
- to enable the pupils to acquire a basic communicative competence in English in all the four language skills.

1.2 Features of the curriculum in the UAE (Secondary Cycle)

In English for the UAE, First published in 1990, The Ministry of Education tried to make the curriculum fit the cultural values and reflect the teaching and heritage of Islam because first, The UAE is an Islamic country. Second, it is an Arab country

- The curriculum aims at developing the character of the students in the UAE to love truth and justice, respect labor and increase the feeling of responsibility.
- Learning English for furthering international understanding and tolerance in social, cultural, economic and scientific domain.
- The Course is supposed to strike a balance between the communicative approach and teaching of grammar and vocabulary.
- The course takes into account the needs of other school subjects.
- The course concentrates on the two skills of reading and writing in order to meet the requirements of the UAE University

1.2.1 About the course

Crescent English for the Arab World was taught till 1989. After that date the Ministry decided to make a course linked to the culture, norms and the values of the society (the UAE). So the Ministry commissioned its inspectors as well as some teachers to perform that task for all the stages Primary, Preparatory and secondary cycles.

Since 1990 English for the UAE has been taught in all government schools in the UAE.

The Course adopts the communicative approach. This means that structural correctness and knowledge of grammatical forms, although important is not the ultimate goal. The aim is to enable the pupils to communicate in spoken and written language. It is the everyday language of the real world. Thus,

The Course highlights the functions of the language.

Activities inside the classrooms are to prepare students to be able to use English in real situations correctly, fluently and confidently.

1.2.2 Teaching Grammar and Functions in the course

Throughout teaching the course, grammar is taught according to learners' needs, and this is clear in the declared objectives in the Pupil's book and in the exercises in Workbook.

Structures include tenses, If conditional, unless, passive voice, reported speech, relative pronouns, connective words (so – that, although, but, in order to, so as to, in spite of etc) comparatives, superlatives, used to, etc

Functions are taught throughout the course and this is also indicated in the declared objectives in Pupil's book and in the drills in the Workbook.

The functions taught throughout the course include; suggestions, advice, polite request, agreement, disagreement, possibility and others which can be used in real world language.

"The Course mainly follows the communicative approach, which focuses on teaching learners to communicate fluently, appropriately and spontaneously in the cultural context of the language taught. It has shifted the main focus of teaching away from structural aspects towards the cultivation of fluent and appropriate language."

(Teacher's Guide Page 6)

The course materials reflect some of the future needs of the students for social interaction, higher study and work purposes. At this secondary stage, emphasis is laid on the two skills of reading and writing. Oral activities are derived from the discussion of the taped materials and written exercises.

Aims and objectives of the four skills are indicated in the Ministry documents as follows:

1.2.3 Listening

The aim of listening is to

- recognize spoken language in real life situations.
- qualify students to follow lectures in the university.
- understand the language spoken on the radio.
- receive oral messages or instructions given by radio or phone.

1.2.4 Speaking

The aim of teaching speaking is to

- enable the student to participate in a conversation, dialogue and encourage him/her not to be shy or afraid when he/she makes mistakes.
- recall a short story after paraphrasing it.
- make short notes or summaries of prepared topics.
- express feeling towards some given situations relevant to real life situations.

1.2.5 Reading

The aims of teaching reading are enable students to;

- read for many purposes at a speed of not less than 150 wpm.
- extract information from tables, graphs, diagrams etc.
- understand letters from a variety of correspondents.
- read independently using reference books, catalogues, bulletins and brochures.
- understand instructions.
- use dictionaries.
- follow narrative texts extracted from newspapers or magazines.
- differentiate facts, opinions, fallacies and implications.

1.2.6 Writing

The aims of teaching writing are to enable students to;

- write personal and informal letters.
- describe people, places, properties and processes.
- complete or fill in forms, tables, disembarkation cards etc.
- write paragraphs about different themes related to given lessons.
- write cables, telexes, telephone messages etc.

1.3 Course Components

The course contents are:

- 1.Pupil's Book.
- 2.Workbook.
- 3.Teacher's Guide.
- 4.Class Tape.
5. Laboratory Book.
- 6.Laboratory tape.

The course at secondary stage (Book 7, Book 8, Book 9)

Each book consists of six units and each unit consists of about 15 steps.

Book 7

The first unit is about **places and holidays**. (Tourist attractions in the UAE and other countries like Egypt, Australia).

The Second unit is about **jobs** (describe some jobs).

The Third is about **health**. (some dangerous diseases such as AIDS, Cancer etc.)

The Fourth is about **Sport**. (A sound mind in a sound body)

The Fifth is about **leisure**. (Where to spend your free time and how)

The Last unit **Events** which focuses on events happened in the Arab World and famous persons who made important contributions for the human being.

Book 8

Unit one **Back to School**. (emphasizes the importance of choosing the job in the future and to decide which section to join, science section or literary section.

Unit two about **Agriculture** in the Arab World and in the UAE in particular, focusing on its importance and how to develop agriculture to prevent starvation.

Unit three about **Arts**, the effectiveness of the arts towards our feelings, and how the arts plays a vital role in our life.

Unit Four, **Energy** (every thing needs energy to work, to move, to drive, and the sources of energy)

Unit Five, **Communication** (talks about communication in the past and how it has been developed nowadays and advertising, advantages and disadvantages of advertisements).

Unit Six, **People and events** which focuses on famous persons, inventors and events that happened in history and Holy Places for

Muslims, Christians and Jews.

Book 9

Unit one about **Future Career** (Education in the UAE in the past and at present, Higher Education; UAE University and Higher Colleges of Technology)

The second Unit **The environment** (Danger of pollution, kinds of pollution and the effects of pollution on the environment and how to decrease pollution)

Unit Three: **Unity** (The importance of The Arab World, early civilizations, Arab Scientists, the formation of the UAE)

Unit Four:, **Science and Technology** (about scientists and their contributions to humanity, space, computer, Technology is a mixed blessing, and great scholars)

Unit Five: **Literature**, (poets, poetry, and a story)

Unit Six: **Peace and War**, (Islam and peace, UAE is a peace loving country, armament, UNO, some headlines got from a newspaper and Military service).

1.4 The language taught in the Course

Tenses, Passive, Reported speech, suggestions and recommendations, comparatives, superlatives, obligation, contrast, warning, Because, so, too --- to, so ---- that, conditionals and relative pronouns, apology, question tags , requests, agreement, disagreement, partial agreement, Quantifiers, Time conjunctions, adverbs, questions, prohibition, inversion with 's' , blame and release from blame, intention, advice, Likes and dislikes, not only -- , Omission of who and which, too/enough, compound adjectives/used to, surprise, probability, short forms and abbreviation, Must have + past participle, as – as, so-- as, indifference, anxiety. Teacher's Guide (pages 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11)

1.5 MEDIA

Teaching English language can be improved by utilizing the media, TV, Radio and newspaper. They are as part of an English course. Audio-visual aids play an important part in teaching foreign language. A tape-recorder enables the learner to listen to the foreign language in different accents and also to listen to the news, reports, conversations, etc. A video-cassette helps the teacher to point out many visual clues and helps the listener to see while hearing which

means he/ she can see the speaker and his/ her facial expressions, head nods etc. All these factors are significant.

"The increased use of non-verbal materials (photographs, maps, graphs, tables, etc) in listening activities is largely the result of a growing concern with helping the learners to focus their attention on the relevant information in the recorded text rather than distracting their attention with potentially confusing printed information".

(Anderson & Lynch; 1988, page 90).

The more senses we use, the better we learn.

English for the UAE provides flash cards, wallsheets, picture cards and maps. In addition, the class cassette and of course board are already available. However, utilization of other media is expected from the more experienced teachers. They can make their own aids or contact the Audio-Visual Department of the Educational Zones and the Ministry for more communication media.

1.6 Teaching Listening (English for the UAE)

Listening to English for the UAE depends on a cassette for each grade and most of the materials are dialogues. The teacher is supposed to bring the cassette to the classroom and play cassette for about five minutes after writing two or three questions on the chalk board and giving an idea about the topic that he/she is going to teach.

1.6.1 The subsequent aims as indicated in Teacher's Guide (Page 42)

Most listening activities in first secondary class consist of listening to the teacher or to each other. Listening in general aims to develop these types of activity.

- listening for pronunciation.
- listening for gist.
- listening for specific information.
- listening for consolidation i.e.; listening to recorded texts after the pupils have read them.

The following points for preparing listening activity.

The teacher's aim is to:

- specify the sub skill he/she is going to teach. Such as, extensive, selective, or detailed information.
- check the cassette before playing it.
- listen to the cassette and follow the text in pupil's Book till the students understand it.

- mark the different words, phrases and decide if they require to be taught in advance.
- decide the clues that enable the learners to understand the unfamiliar words and phrases.
- divide the text into sections and decide where to pause the cassette.
- set a warm up for the text you are going to teach.
- prepare questions before you let the students listen to the text.
- prepare questions and write them down before the pupils listen to the text.
- check the cassette recorder before entering the classroom.

Instructions for the use of the class cassette;

- be sure that the counter is set at 000, before starting the cassette.
- adjust the sound appropriately. It means don't turn the volume high or low and the loud speaker should be pointed out towards the students.

1.6.2 Suggested procedures for teaching listening according to the Teacher's Guide Page 43;

The teacher's task in the classroom is to;

- prepare the students for listening to the text, by telling them the kind of text they are going to hear. For instance, a conversation, a telephone call, etc, names of the speakers, location, etc, unless it is part of the task.
- ask the students questions orally or write them on the chalkboard before playing cassette.
- play cassette without pauses for first time and then ask questions. If there is any difficulty, play the cassette with pauses. If it is necessary, ask the questions and play part containing the answer to the questions.
- play the cassette when it has finished, ask the questions again. If the class cannot answer, repeat the tape again but don't give an impression that you (teacher) may repeat the tape many times. This will reduce the learners' concentration and the effectiveness of their listening.

1.6.3 Listening to a dialogue in secondary cycle

The following procedures are suggested by the (Teacher's guide page 46) to teach a dialogue. The teacher his task is to;

- introduce the situation in Arabic or in English .
- set two or three simple pre-questions, students to be told that they

will answer them as they listen.

- play cassette while learners listen with closed books.
- remind the students of the pre-questions and allow pairs/groups to discuss the questions for a short time.
- ask the pre-questions.
- play the cassette again while pupils listen to the cassette with open books.
- get the pupils to read the dialogue silently, underlining new or difficult words.
- check if the students have understood the words.
- get the students to repeat certain difficult words, phrases; choral and individual practice.
- get the learners to repeat the whole dialogue after the cassette and pause at the end of each meaningful utterance.
- ask pupils do a role play in a variety of situations.
- get the pupils speak the dialogue in pairs, and observes them.
- bring a good pair to the front to act out the dialogue for the class.

Conclusion

English is the first foreign language in the UAE. It is taught in all government schools. In this chapter I have indicated the aims of teaching English language in the UAE. I have highlighted on the features of the curriculum in the secondary stage and the media that are used in the course. I have tackled teaching the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) with the expansion of teaching listening in the course. In Part two, Chapter Two I will give many definitions of listening and we will look at the difference between listening and hearing as well as between listening in L1 and L2. We will also see how listening is affected by many factors. The following chapter will tackle kinds of listening and what effective listening requires. Finally I will discuss how listening was neglected in the past but in recent years in the USA and many other countries this skill is given more attention in the school system.

END OF PART ONE

Part Two

Part Two

Chapter Two

2.0 Definitions of listening

Listening is a vital part of effective communication and relationship. It has regarded as an active skill rather than a passive one. It is a fundamental component of any language course. Listening is the most important skill a human can possess. It requires comprehending, acquiring and responding to the message. It requires responding to aural, oral and visual stimuli that one has made a conscious effort to attend. There follow many definitions given by many specialized persons in teaching foreign language.

"Listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear." (Underwood page; 1989, page 2)
And as Pearson & Nelson (1991) defined listening, It is the process of receiving and interpreting aural stimuli, and is more complex than simply hearing a sound.

"Listening is a selective activity that includes both reception and the interpretation of aural stimuli." (Underwood, 1989, page 2)

"Listening is an integral part of oral communication, especially when engaging in person to person, small group, and some public communication situations such as debates, following speeches."

(Capp; 1990, page 34)

Brown (1993) argues that it means to understand what somebody has said. It means if the listener could learn the text as he heard it, he would probably be said to have understood it.

All the definitions of listening which I have quoted above focus on different sides of the skill but these sides are integrated and there are no contradictions between them. The Listening act is hearing but with understanding and analyzing. It is a more complex process than hearing. If a listener wants to listen, he should hear with awareness and without any distraction.

2.1 What is the difference between listening and hearing?

Listening is more than hearing. Listening is more sophisticated than hearing. The first step of listening is hearing. Hearing and listening are not the same.

"Hearing is a natural, physiological function we have unless we suffer a physiological loss." (Pearson & Nelson; 1991, page 70)

Listening is always an active process but hearing is a passive process. The listening act is hearing, analyzing, assigning meaning to and responding to aural, oral and visual stimuli that one has made a conscious effort to attend to.

Listening is arguably the most important skill a human can possess.

Listening is not a passive skill as it is thought, because it demands active participation from the hearer. In order to reconstruct the message that the speaker intends a hearer must actively contribute knowledge from both linguistic and non-linguistic sources.

"Listening involves a more sophisticated mental process than hearing. It demands energy and discipline. Listening is a learned skill. The first step is to realize that effective listening is an active, not passive process. This is a difficult concept, but it is true: A skilled listener does not just sit and allow listening to happen." (Allen; 1995, page 3)

2.2 The process of listening in L1

Pearson & Nelson (1991) describe the listening process. In general the listening process begins with stimuli that we hear with our ears, nerves transmit these sensations to our brain. We then determine if we will attend to the stimuli or ignore it, which of several meanings we may assign to it and whether we will store it in short term or long term memory. Sometimes when a person talks to you, he thinks that you have heard and realized what he said but in fact, you didn't acquire what he said.

2.3 The process of listening in L 2

According to O'malley, Chamot & Kupper (1989) *"It is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirements"*. (O'malley, Chamot & Kupper; 1989, page 434)

The task requirements are varied depending on the phase in listening comprehension and include perceptual processing or maintaining attention to the oral text. Parsing, or encoding the information to develop meaningful representation that is stored in short-term memory; and utilizing, or drawing upon existing knowledge both to enhance the meaning of the information and to store the information for later retrieval.

The Process of listening comprehension is indicated as the following:

- the listener takes in raw speech and holds an image of it in short-term memory.
- an attempt is made to organize what was heard into constituents, identifying their content and function.
- as constituents are identified, they are used to construct propositions, grouping them together to form a coherent message.
- once the listener has identified and reconstructed the propositional meanings, these are held in long-term memory, and the form in which the message was originally received is deleted. *"Permanent, or long-term memory works with the meaning not with form"*. (Richard; 1983, page 221).

Abbott, Wood, Mckeating & Wingard (1985) represent the process of comprehension as the following figure:

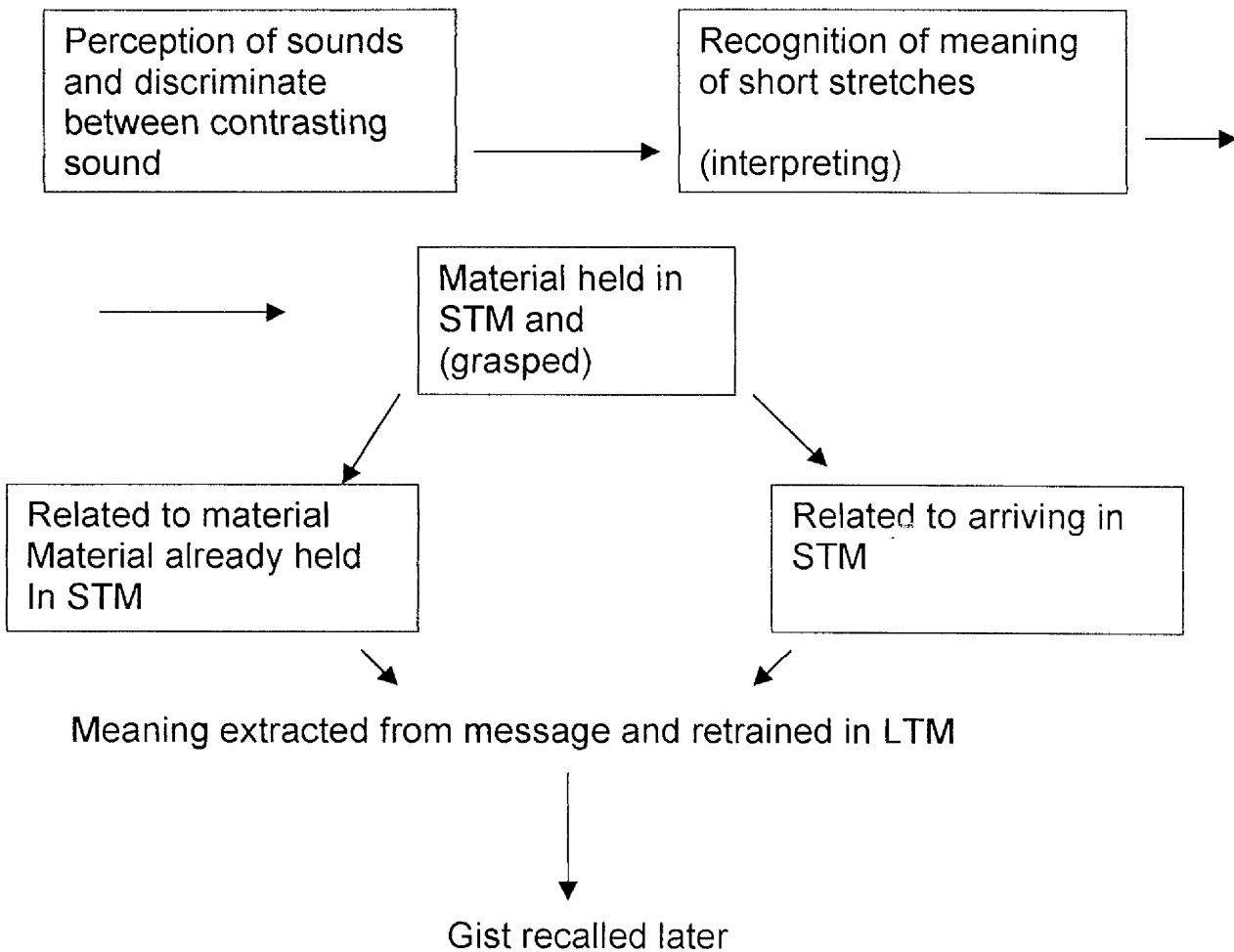


Figure No. 1
The process of comprehension

Listening in the L 2 depends on two complementary processes. According to Long & Richards (1987) Two complementary processes appear in L2 listening.

2.3.1 Top-down Processing

It involves the listener making use of previous knowledge and information, which is not transmitted in the message, and using this information as a basis for interpreting the message.

Brown (1993) focuses on top-down processing, which means that the listener actively marshals previous knowledge in interpreting what is being said. So, the prediction of the topic that the students are going to listen to and its interpretation have to be seen as a serial process which can't be separated. For example, in preparing for training on the operation of a new floor polisher, top down processing is activated as the learner engages in an activity that reviews what the learner already knows about using the old floor polisher. This might entail discussing the steps in the polishing process; reviewing vocabulary such as switch, on, off, etc.; or generating a list of questions that the learner would like answered in training.

2.3.2 Bottom-up processing

It includes decoding the incoming utterance or message and exploiting the linguistic signals actually transmitted. Bottom up processing involves such things as identifying and distinguishing words, structures, grammar, and other features of the message. Bottom up processing would be activated as the learner is signaled to verify comprehension by the teacher asking a question using the declarative form with rising intonation ("You see that switch there?"). Practice in recognizing statements and questions that differ only in intonation help the learner develop bottom processing skills.

2.4 Differences between listening in the L1 and listening in the L2

When we listen in our mother tongue, we do not spend much effort and time to understand and recognize the speaker's message. This is due to our experience of the spoken language. *"We can identify and select the elements in the message – phonological, grammatical patterns and lexical items that are significant and also we can keep these in our short - term memory while we go on listening. We predict what is coming next. We have a number of contextual clues such as*

sex, status, age, relationship, etc."

(Byre; 1986, page 13)

When native speakers listen to a text they can call upon their accumulated knowledge of the culture and background of the speaker and the situation and will know what to expect. They can put what they hear in context. As listeners they anticipate what the speaker will talk about as they follow his/her speech. A native listener does not only know the meaning of the words but he also has knowledge of the structure of the language such as syntax, phonology etc.

But as a foreign listener, he has a harder task, he can not understand the speaker's talk, and he may face a problem of the meaning of the text because of the lack of words, background knowledge and sometimes he can't recognize the utterance. *"When a native speaker listens to a message, he can understand without spending much time or effort, but as a foreign - speaker he finds difficulty because he needs to attend to what he hears, to process it, to understand it and to interpret it."* (Underwood; 1989, page 2)

2.5 Kinds of listening

Listening can be divided into two kinds

2.5.1 Face to face listening (reciprocal)

In face-to-face listening a person has a good opportunity to see the speaker and to look at his gesture, the movement of his hands, facial expression, nods of head, posture, if he is happy, sad, frowning, angry etc. In face to face listening, a listener may be passive, which means just listening without sharing or discussing. While an active listener participates and exchanges roles with the speaker. *"In active listening; the listener does not sit or stand while another speaks, active listening includes feedback, and feedback is defined as verbal and non-verbal responses to the speaker's messages. The response must be received and understood by speaker."* (Pearson & Nelson; 1991, page 75)

2.5.2 One way listening (non - reciprocal)

As for one-way listening a person receives the information but does not have opportunity to see the speaker's facial expression, gestures, etc. such as listening to the radio, instructions in an airport, railway station, etc.

2.6 Effective listening

This means listening with understanding to what is said and responding to verbal, non-verbal, aural and visual stimuli. To be an effective listener, you should be conscious of what is being said.

Allen (1995) gives many definitions of effective listening.

-taking in information from speakers, other people or ourselves, while remaining nonjudgmental and empathetic.

- acknowledging the talker in a way that invites the communication to continue.

- providing limited, but encouraging, input to the talker's response, carrying the person's idea one step forward. Effective listeners are able to concentrate and find the most valid information in whatever they hear. Effective listeners are powerful people.}}

2.6.1 What does effective listening depend on?

Effective Listening depends on three main factors;

- the situation.

- listener's motives.

- different mental interactions which help the listener being activated.

The more the listener is receptive to speaker or to his/her point of view because of positive perception, the more he/she will pay attention to what is said. *"It depends on what is going on in the head and heart of those communicating, rather than what is taking place on the outside."* (Allen; 1995, page 10)

Allen (1995) classified perception of listening into two types positive and negative.

- In negative perception, there is less attention, because of lack of relevance to ideas, values, etc. of the listener.

- But in positive perception, there is more attention because of relevance to listener's ideas and concepts.

2.6.2 What does effective listening require?

Effective listening requires the listener's participation. The effective listener wants to understand what is said and actively tries to assign meaning to the speaker's verbal and non-verbal language. The effective listener responds appropriately to what is said and fosters a productive exchange. The meaning generated depends upon the listener's desire and ability to engage thinking and listening, as well as on prior knowledge of the speaker's language use and topic.

Effective listeners are able to ;

- concentrate and not be distracted.
- value listening as a means of learning and enjoyment.
- prepare to react or respond.
- recognize the speaker's main points or ideas.
- distinguish fact from opinion.
- observe and interpret the speaker's non verbal cues (smiles, frowns, body movements) and use them to enhance their understanding of the speaker's message.
- make connection between their prior knowledge and the information presented by the speaker.

2.6.3 Differences between effective listeners and non – effective listeners

Effective listeners want to understand and respond to what is said. They are able to value listening as a means of learning and enjoyment.

Vandergrift (1997) determined that effective listeners are more open and flexible, using more strategies and a greater variety of different strategies. On the other hand, non-effective listeners concentrate too much on the text itself. They are keen to follow up what is being said word by word without focusing on the ideas being conveyed.

Moreover, non-effective listeners interpret the text according to their own world knowledge not to the speaker's. In addition, they elaborate on the text information too late in the listening process which results in losing too much of what is being spoken.

2.6.4 How does a listener check that he/she has listened effectively?

In order to check if he has listened effectively, an effective listener should summarize what has been said, (i.e. thoughts, ideas and beliefs of the speaker). When one forces himself to summarize what has been said, he/she will be aware of how well he listens.

Conversely, if he is unable to make that summary, this means that his listening is not completely effective.

"Listening practice should help you to improve your listening."

(Allen, 1995, page 10)

2.6.5 Three Points can be made about effective listeners

Harmer (1991) specified three characteristics for an effective listener. First, he should have the desire to listen to what is being said.

Second, an effective listener tries to find out what the speaker wants to say and communicate his own response to that. Finally, he has to be prepared for the process of listening by learning a great variety of grammar and vocabulary to understand exactly what is being spoken.

(Pages 46, 47 and 48).

2.7 Does listening take a great amount of time and effort to be learnt?

Surely, learning to listen takes a long time and effort. But, in the long run it saves time. We do not need to go back and correct the mistakes or clean up misunderstood communication.

"We meet our needs and those of others more quickly."

(Allen; 1995, page 12)

2.8 Empathetic Listening

This means active, skillful listening with understanding the speaker and nonjudgmentally. Allen (1995) classified empathetic listening in three levels.

2.8.1 The first level

At the first level the listener refrains from judging the speaker and puts himself in the other's position. He doesn't try to see things from his own point of view. The listener is aware, responds, and pays attention to the speaker's communication. The listener is empathetic to the talker's feeling and thoughts. Empathetic listening requires that the listener show both verbally and non verbally that he/she is truly listening to the overall focus, listening from the heart, which opens the doorway to understanding and caring for empathy.

2.8.2 The second level

At the second level the listener hears the words but does not really listen. At this level the listener stays at the surface of the communication and doesn't understand the deeper meanings of what is being said. He / She attempts to hear what the speaker is saying but makes little effort to understand the talker's message.

2.8.3 The third level

At the third level the listener tends to listen logically, be concerned about content more than feeling and remain emotionally detached from the conversation.

It is obvious that listening at level two can lead to dangerous misunderstanding because the listener concentrates only slightly on what is said. It is clear that at the first level, the listener is attentive, empathetic and matches with what the speaker is saying.

2.9 Factors that influence listening abilities

Many factors influence listening abilities, some are external and others are internal.

2.9.1 Internal factors

The following factors are concerned with the listener.

2.9.1.1 Physical factors

Physical factors affect negatively listening abilities. For instance, hearing loss, hyperactivity limited attention span, inability to sit still, being easily distracted. Physical environment (e.g., comfort of listener, location of listener in relation to the speaker).

2.9.1.2 Emotional and Psychological factors

The listener may suffer from emotional and psychological factors. For example, environment and conditions of trust that exist, listener's self-concept.

2.9.1.3 Fluency in English

The listener may have Limited personal language that makes it difficult for him/her to make sense of other's language.

2.9.1.4 Prior opinions and attitudes

He/She may have prior opinions and attitudes toward the speaker or the message which affect negatively listening abilities. He is unable to make connection between new ideas and prior knowledge and to process oral language in a meaningful way.

Dunked (1991) mentions many factors, which may affect L1 and L2 listening, some are inside the head and others outside the head of the listeners.

- personal internal distraction (e.g. hunger, headaches, emotional disturbance)

- personal disturbance in the topic of the message, the listener is unable to interpret the message because the topic is confusing to him.

- Inattentiveness (e.g. daydreaming)
- positive and/ or negative emotional responses toward the speakers, topic or occasion.
- detouring (what the speaker says makes the listener thinking of something else which is off the topic)
- Jumping to conclusions about what a person is going to say before it is said.
- over-reacting to the language of the speaker (e.g. her/ his use of slang, cursing)
- over-reacting to the message of the speaker (reacting to the political implication of the message);
- tending toward rebuttal (developing a counter argument before the speaker is finished)
- rehearsing a response (thinking about what you have to say rather than what is being said)

2.9.2 External factors that hinder effective listening

Many external factors may interfere with listening which are not related to the listener. Some of them concern the speakers and others concern the situation and location. Allen (1995) mentions some of them such as:

- a talker does not speak loudly enough, or whispers .
- the speaker's manner, or his appearance.
- loud noises, such as traffic, machines, etc.
- faulty acoustics, making it difficult to hear.
- interruptions, phone calls, a bell ringing etc.
- the interlocutor speaks in a monotone or unfamiliar accent, or talk too fast or too slowly.
- time pressure, deadlines. The listener does not have much time to listen sufficiently.
- work pressure, listener does more than one thing, too busy with more than one action at the same time.
- the rate which material is presented, and the conceptual difficulty and organization of the information presented.
- the inverse relationship between comprehension and length of the material. "*The presentation of a long series of sentences (even for native speakers) becomes some what analogous to the presentation of a long series of arbitrary associations.*" (Dunked; 1991, page 440)
- learning from orally received input is enhanced by repetition of the material heard. (repetition on the part of both the speaker and the

listener)

- environmental distractions (e.g. phones ringing, other voices); and distracting mannerisms of the speaker (e.g. stuttering, nervous or gesture).

All the internal and external factors mentioned for L1 listening comprehension serve also to confound comprehension of L2 messages, and SLA researches are beginning to theorize about and investigate many of these factors as well as a number of additional factors that either distract from or support a receiver's L2 comprehension.

Dunked (1991) mentions many other external factors which affect listening in the L 2. Some concern the speaker, such as his language ability, whether he is a native speaker, his accent, the qualities of speech signals (the degree of accent, speed, etc.), the prestige and personality of the speaker. *"Other factors are related to the listener such as his intelligence, memory, motivation and background knowledge."* (Dunked; 1991, page 441)

2.10 Listening is a neglected skill

In the past listening was not given a sufficient importance and a learner was rewarded for speaking, reading and writing but listening was neglected or got less significance. Listening is one of the four skills which was paid little attention in teaching a foreign language. *"We are rewarded when we do well at reading, speaking and writing, but listening skill wins little direct praise. Although we get a high grade when we have listened well enough in class to do well on a test, no one specifically connects this grade to listening. A person who gets an A is said to have "learned" the material but not to have "listened well."*(Allen; 1995, page 38)

Most teaching was based on the idea that if the students were taught to cope with separate 'building block' of the language (sounds, words, structures) they would put these together for themselves and become proficient in the language as a whole. The students were asked to distinguish between similar-sounding words like a difference between pat and pet, park and bark etc. Pronouncing the words in isolation sound different from the same words spoken in connected speech. In addition, the same sentence could have different meanings when it is contained in the text.

"It was, of course, realized that students should not only be exposed to words or sentences pronounced in isolation, they should also ~~be~~

exposed to continuous texts". (Brown; 1987, page 11)

Recent approaches to teaching take full account of the importance of context and tend to adopt what might be called a more *whole-to-parts* approach. *"The teaching of listening was neglected for many years, but today most educators realize that listening involves a body of knowledge and skills that can be learned and practiced in short."* (Capp; 1990, page 60)

However, listening is considered a central skill in learning language and is the first skill used in learning. *Listening is the channel most often used for learning more than reading, writing or speaking.* (Allen; 1995, page 38)

Allen (1995) pointed out that, in recent years there has been a movement within the school system in the USA and many other countries to include some listening activities as part of the basic schools curriculum. Allen states that the following figure shows the amount of training we get in each of the communication modes, compared to the percentage of time we spend on the same types of communication in real life situations.

Mode of communication	Years of formal Training	Percentage of time spent
Writing	12 years	9%
Reading	6 - 8 years	16%
Speaking	1 - 2 years	35%
Listening	0 - ½ years	40%

Table No.1

The percentage of time we spend on types of communication in real life situations compared to the amount of formal training.

(Allen; 1995, page 39)

Conclusion

In this chapter I gave many definitions of listening and pointed to the effective listening, as well as I indicated that there are two kinds of listening, face to face listening and one way listening. Furthermore, I pointed to the differences between listening in L1 and L2, as well as the factors that effect the listening abilities. Besides, I reviewed how listening was neglected in the past but nowadays it is given more interest in the school systems in particular, in the USA. In the following chapter I will discuss the importance of listening and indicate that listening should be given more interest in learning any foreign language.

Chapter Three

3.0 Why is listening important?

The Listening skill is as important as speaking. We cannot communicate face to face without developing these two skills step by step. Listening is an essential factor in communication, we spend a great deal of time engaged in the activity. *"A classic study showed that we spend more than 40 percent of our time engaged in listening. Similarly, contemporary studies demonstrate we listen to a greater extent than we are engaged in any verbal communication."*

(Person & Nelson; 1991, page 73)

Listening is the one of the main methods of acquiring knowledge. Most of us listen more than we speak, read and write. It has been realized that listening involves the body of knowledge and a skill that can be learnt and practiced. *"Listening and reading are the principal methods for acquiring knowledge, ideas, and concepts, and most of us listen more than we read"*. (Capp; 1990, page 60)

"We were given two ears but only one mouth. This is because God knew that listening was a twice as hard as talking." (Allen; 1991, page 168). People need to practice and acquire skills to be good listeners because a speaker cannot throw you information in the same manner that a dart player tosses a dart at a passive dartboard. Information is an intangible substance that must be sent by the speaker and received by an active listener.

As a result of proliferation of electronic media, the presence of orality has become an accepted fact in contemporary society. Electronic media may even have effected a shift from literacy to orality in modern life. Nowadays we have certainly shifted our means of communication from the printed word to images and sounds, from books to television, movies, radio, recordings and computer. Instead of reading today, most of us prefer to look and listen. Developing effective listening skills could well lead not only to improved listening but also to better reading, for foreign learners as well as for native speakers. *"Wolvin and Coakley (1988) maintain that the United States, like many other nations in the industrial, world has become a nation of listeners, and those coming to live, work, and study in the English-speaking industrial nations of the world will need to becoming highly proficient listeners of English"*. (Dunked; 1991, page 451)

The students spend most of their school day listening and much of what they know is acquired through listening. It is very essential that

the students have opportunities to practice the listening activity and the ability to listen effectively develops the students' language abilities.

"Sara. W. Lundsteen, a specialist in classroom listening, points out that the earliest language skill to appear is listening. She adds that reading may depend so completely upon listening as to appear to be a special extension of listening, what child does not read a selection better after listening and talking about it. The ability to listen seems to set limits on the ability to read". (Allen; 1995, page 7)

3.1 How much time do we spend on listening each day?

No doubt that we spend much of our time involved in listening. In particular, nowadays, sometimes we sit in front of TV for many hours, just listening and watching.

"Researchers have determined the relative proportion of time spent in various communication activities by college students. Each day we spend 32 percent of our time listening to mass media, 21 percent in face to face listening, 17 percent reading, 16 percent speaking and 14 percent writing. It means over half of our time is spent in listening to either the mass media or to other people."

(Person & Nelson; 1991, page 73)

3.2 Focus on listening in early stages

It is recognised that listening plays a key role in facilitating language learning, especially in the early stages of second language learning. We can realise that listening should be taught at the beginning of teaching a foreign language. Many theories of second/foreign language acquisition focus on teaching listening at the beginning level of foreign language proficiency.

"Listening is perhaps the most crucial for language learning at the beginning stages, especially for children. Listening is a highly integrative skill, and researches demonstrated its crucial role in language acquisition (for example, Asher 1969; Postovsky 1978; Nord 1978; Winitz 1981; Byrnes 1984; Dunkel 1986; 1991; Leblanc 1986; Rost 1990; Feyten 1991; Mendelson and Rubin 1995). Listening internalizes the rules of language and facilitates the emergence of other language skills." (Vandergrift; 1999, page 387)

3.3 Listener exerts more effort than reader does

Listening and reading are receptive skills and have many things in common. Both listening and reading are a form of language comprehension. In both cases we are trying to get meaning from the language and it is important to understand how comprehension works. *"Readers and listeners employ a number of specialist skills when reading or listening and their success at understanding the content of what they see or hear depends to a large extent on their expertise in these specialist skills."* (Harmer; 1991, page 183)

The specialist skills are prediction, extracting specific information, getting the general picture (i.e. general idea and the main points of the text), extracting detailed information and deducing the meaning. On the other hand, the listening skill is different from the reading skill because speech is different from writing. The Listener cannot decide how fast the speaker should talk but the reader can choose a comfortable reading speed. The listener cannot lead the speaker to stop and wonder about the language used (e.g. grammar or vocabulary), in particular; the speaker who speaks in public speaking occasions, or even ask the face to face speaker, may be because he is , in a hurry or busy. In contrast, the reader can stop and re-read what he did not understand. The reader relies on the printed page, but the listener hears what is spoken. The listener needs much intensive thinking to understand and listening is distorted by noise, chatting, etc. The listener must work harder than the reader to comprehend and remain alert at all times. He must understand immediately.

3.4 What is the relationship between listening and speaking?

There is a relationship between the receptive skill (listening) and the productive skill (speaking). Speaking comes after listening. Listening precedes speaking. We cannot speak without listening first. Speaking depends on what we have heard as a reaction to utterance we have listened to. The effective speaking relies on successful listening.

"There is a relationship between the two skills, speaking is a result of interpreting the listening input." (Anderson & Lynch; 1988, page 17).

Listening and speaking are the major skills in communication. In oral interaction, the listener responds to what he has heard verbal or nonverbal, it means he can't respond without hearing first." *Speaker and listener are constantly changing roles and consequently speaking involves responding to what has been heard. In this case, speaking*

is an integral part of listening. It is this particular kind of interaction (listen – respond – listen etc.)". (Byrne; 1986, page 11)

In learning a foreign language, it is impossible to expect a learner to produce a sound that he has never heard or which does not exist in his mother tongue. How can a student use the stress, rhythms and intonation of a native speaker without providing him with a typical form of these things?

"The logical first step, therefore, in attempting to achieve oral fluency or accuracy is to consider the learner's ability to listen".

(Anderson & Lynch; 1988, page 17)

It is noticed that the learners of foreign languages who studied and focused on reading and writing without giving a great concentration to listening to a foreign language have less ability to express or produce than those who focused on listening. *"Without actually having been taught to listen, a student may be able to express himself orally, but he will never be able to communicate with speakers of English if he is unable to understand what is said to him". (Hubbard, Jones, Thornton & Wheeler; 1993, page 80)* Listening and speaking activities are integrated with the other language processes and not taught in isolation. They are addressed to provide for the development of students' speaking and listening abilities in conjunction with one another.

The following table indicates the four language skills;

Medium Skill	Speech	Writing
Receptive	Listening and understanding	Reading and Understanding
Productive	Speaking	Writing

Table No. 2

Four language skills

(Harmer; 1991, page 17)

3.5 Successful listening to a foreign language

When you listen better, you learn better. No one can hope to be a successful listener unless he has a good ear. To be a successful listener, means focusing attention on the message and reviewing the important information. Be interested, attentive, listen patiently and concentrate on what is said. In order to become a successful listener, firstly, you should have an idea of what you will hear. When you listen without some idea of what you are going to hear, you can't understand well. For instance, when you turn on the radio or participate in a conversation, you have already an idea of the content or when you ask a question, you will expect the response. " *We should have an idea of the content of the discourse or the text we are about to hear*". (Ur; 1993, page 3)

Secondly, you have to cope with syntax and semantics of the foreign language. When you want to listen to a spoken language, you should know the construction of the sentence and the semantic structure of the sentence which specifies what the sentence means as a structure in a given language. " *Speech may contain words or phrases that the listener can hear adequately but is unable to understand because of serious problems with the syntax or semantics of the foreign language*". (Anderson & Lynch; 1989, page 6)

Thirdly, you **should** have enough and appropriate time to listen to understand. Sufficient time should be given in order to be aware of what you are going to hear. Sometimes we listen carefully and attentively for a few minutes, think about other matters for a short time, then we turn our attention to the speaker again. " *There are times when the listener is perfectly able to hear and understand the speaker, but may have 'switched off' consciously or unconsciously*". (Anderson & Lynch; 1989, page 6)

Fourthly, **you have** to interpret the phrase or the message, you have heard. To interpret what the speaker is saying, to construct an interpretation which represents as nearly as possible the speaker's point of view, to formulate what he thinks is the desired response in a maximally reassuring and co-operative way. " *We might consider this last situation to be one maximally co-operative listening, in the sense that the listener is both able and willing to play his part in the reciprocal activity of communication*". (Anderson & Lynch; 1989, page 6)

Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted the importance of listening in the communication and it is also considered an essential skill in learning a foreign language. It is better to focus on listening in teaching a foreign language in the early stages. We have realized that listeners spend more time and effort than readers. We have seen that there is a relationship between speaking and listening. We cannot speak without listening first. Finally we have understood that a good listener is a good learner. In the fourth chapter I will discuss the reasons and interests for listening in real life and we teach listening in the classroom so as to enable the learners to cope with real life listening. Furthermore, I will look for the different types of listening in real life situations.

Chapter Four

4.0 Listening to spoken a foreign language, situations and Purposes

The aim of teaching listening is to help learners of English to cope with listening in real life. Naturally in real - life listening we have reasons and interests for listening. When we turn on the radio or television at random, or enter a room where a conversation is already in progress, usually we have a previous idea of the context we are about to hear. Our expectation may often be linked to our purposes in listening. When we ask a question and want to know the answer, we expect to hear a relevant response.

In many cases this leads to our 'listening out' for certain key phrases or words. *"Many learners of English will find themselves sooner or later in a variety of situations where they will need or want to listen to English being used in real life for a range of purposes.*

(Underwood; 1989, page 4)

These situations depend on where the listeners live, work, spend their holiday etc. Furthermore, why they want to listen, the reasons for listening. They may listen for exchange information as in a conversation, enjoyment as in songs etc. The reasons are many and varied, they depend on the listener's need and wishes.

Most listening occurs in the course of conversation. As teachers of English language, our aim is to enable students to participate fully and comfortably in conversation". (Underwood; 1989, page 4)

Surely the UAE learners, for example, will find themselves that they are obliged to listen to native spoken language when they continue their academic study or travel abroad in particular, to UK or USA thus if they have not been exposed to listening to this language intensively they will face problems in understanding native speakers. Therefore, our task in the Arab World in particular, in the UAE is to provide opportunities for the students to listen to living English that is used in every day situations such as in restaurants, shops, cafes etc.

"Most learners will spend considerably more time in listening to the foreign language than in producing it. It is not only that they must understand what is said to them during face to face interaction. There is also a vast range of situations where they will be the silent receivers of messages directed at them, from radio, television, announcements and the multitude of other sources".

(Littlewood; 1983, page 65)

4.1 Different types of listening in real life

There is a large variety of different types of listening in real life, some of them are more common situations in which people living in a modern environment could need to use their listening skills.

-listening to live conversation, and this depends on the listener, he may find himself that something attracts him. So he needs to speak and listen. In this case, he needs to plan what to say next while he is listening and to adapt what he says according to what the speakers have said. In this case, the listener has an opportunity to ask for clarification.

- listening to the news, weather forecast on the radio. In this case, the listener turns on the radio to listen to know all the items, so he listens attentively to the whole bulletins or he just wants to listen to some briefs which are concerned with his interests. So he ignores the other news. In this situation, the listener has no chance to ask for clarification and also no visual clues.

- listening to announcements, instructions at railway station, airport etc., here the listener focuses on the relevant information and ignores the rest of the utterance. The listener can use visual clues to lend support to imperfect comprehension. For instance, if he does not hear announcement perfectly, he can look at the board to confirm what he has heard.

- listening to the radio for entertainment. This is not a simple listening situation; the listener needs a high level of listening skill. This is for advanced learners.

- watching TV for news, etc. it is considered a helpful support to the listener because he has a chance to see and listen, looking at the facial expressions, movements of heads etc.

- listening to records; recorded material depending on what the listener wants to hear, most people listen for pleasure rather than another purpose.

- listening on the telephone; whether the listener holds a conversation, a dialogue or listens to a message. Here there are many problems that occur in distinguishing sound because of interference, distortion etc. However, there is a possibility to ask for clarification.

listening to some advice from a doctor etc. The listener tries to concentrate on the things that are relevant to his needs and it is an opportunity to follow the speaker, looking at his facial expressions, nods of his head, and being close to him.

We have noticed that there are different situations in which the listener encounters. In some of these situations, the listener has an opportunity to see and ask the speaker for clarification. For example, participating in a conversation face to face or listening to some advice from a doctor, there is a possibility of getting clarification from the speaker and looking at the speaker's expressions, gestures etc. In holding a dialogue or a conversation on a telephone, the listener can ask for clarification but it is impossible to use visual clues and the speech is distorted.

In other situations, the listener has no opportunity to ask the speaker for clarification as in watching TV or listening to announcements, instructions at the rail way station, airport etc. However, visual backup, notice the board can help the listener for comprehension. In listening to announcements and instructions the speech is distorted but the listener may ask a member of staff for help.

In some other situations, it is not possible to ask for clarification and there are no visual clues to use for help, as in listening to the radio or recorded material.

When the teacher plans the listening lesson, he should verify which of these situations are likely to underline largely in his students' lives.

This does not mean to neglect practising other listening situations which can be more motivating and transferable to others.

We have seen how the students are not only to learn the structure of the language and the meaning of the words in order to become successful listeners but they have also to identify a range of situations in which listening skills are needed to achieve different purposes.

English as other languages has its own sound system which is different from others and the teacher should be aware of how this system works. It is also necessary to touch on the formal and informal English and how spoken English is not as the same as written. For these reasons we will review in the following chapter the features of spoken English.

Conclusion

In this chapter I reviewed the listening to a spoken language, as well as the types of listening in real life. In the next chapter I will discuss the features of spoken English.

Chapter Five

5.0 Features of spoken English

It is clear that written language is not as the same as spoken language. Written language does not vary from place to place or from person to person. However, this is not true of spoken language. In this chapter I am going to highlight the features of spoken language which must be taken into account by the teachers of English when they teach listening. *"English like other languages includes sounds, stress and intonation, the organization of speech syntax and vocabulary, pauses and fillers and formal/informal language."* (Underwood; 1989, page 10)

5.1 Sound

There are many sounds in English, which are unknown for foreign learners – and these sounds are really exotic to students from other language. So they fail to distinguish them from other similar sounds or even fail to hear them at all because they were not exposed to these unfamiliar sounds, but this does not happen to the native-learner who has rarely any difficulty in perceiving the sound. Many times foreigners cannot recognize English sounds because these sounds are not available in their own language such as the sound (v) as in “visit” that does not exist in Arabic. An Arab learner may not notice the difference between some letters such as /P/ and /B/ as in “pig” and “big”, /J/ and /G/ as in “jump” and “gum”, at first but after practice, he might be confused. . *"The problem is of the greater or less importance according to the degree of difference and the nature of the differences between the sound systems of the native and the foreign language"*. (Rivers; 1968, page 112)

5.2 Intonation and stress

"Stress is the relative degree of loudness of a syllable or a word, or of a syllable within an utterance". These are usually called word stress and sentence stress." (Al-Mutawa & Kailani; 1989, page 38)

Much of English rhythm derives from the use of stressed syllables. The aim of the stress is to highlight words that carry the important information the speaker wants to say, and changing the stress can influence the meaning of an utterance even where the words remain the same. For example, 1st what are you **DO**ing? 2nd what **ARE** you

doing? 3rd what are **YOU** doing?

The first question stresses **DO**, it is an open question, focuses on the activity the person is going to do.

The second question stresses the word **ARE**, which means it is an exclamation of surprise or irritation.

The third question stresses the word **YOU**, which means it is a question to discover what a particular person as opposed to any one else, is going to do.

"Word stress is often called accent." (Al-Mutawa & Kailani; 1989, page 38). A good example of word stress is the word "record". It is stressed on the first syllable when it comes as a noun, it is pronounced "RECORD /rekord/". When it comes as a verb, it is stressed on the second syllable. It is pronounced "reCORD /riko:rd/".

Here are the word stress systems:

- two-syllabled words are stressed on the first syllable as in " 'picture", " 'broken" etc.
- two syllabled-words that begin with the prefix are usually stressed on the second syllable as in the words "dis'miss, "re'ply etc.
- three-syllabled words are stressed on the middle syllable such as "im'portant", "con'dition" etc. Nevertheless, some other three syllabled-words are stressed on the first syllable like the words " 'wonderful, " 'ignorant" etc.
- four or more syllabled-words have two stresses, secondary and primary on the third syllable from the end. For example, " , eco'nomiC", " ,po'tential" etc.
- combined words are treated as one word and their stress on the first syllable as in " 'diningroom", " 'football" etc.

The categories of word stress are irregular so they should be learned through imitation and practice.

As to intonation which is the name given to the rising and falling of the voice as we speak or to the levels of pitch in a sentence, and any change in the intonation pattern of the sentence will add meaning or implication to the basic meaning of the sentence. Its significance derives from the great extent to which it often influences the meaning of an utterance. There are two important intonation patterns in (5) English. The first one is rising-falling pattern which is used with simple statement as in "He went to school", command as in "Open the door", request as in "Please close the window", question-word question as in "Why did he go?" attached question as in "He didn't

come, did he?" The second pattern is rising intonation which is used with yes-no questions as in "Do you like watching TV?" questions with statement word order like "It's time for lesson?"

Intonation patterns in Arabic are similar to those in English in contour and meaning. Questions, offers and suggestions are marked much more frequently by a rising tune than by any structural markers, and this is carried over in English.

We infer that the stress of the sentences is not fixed and may occur in any word depending on what the speaker wants to convey.

Ur (1993) thinks that it is not necessary to focus on stress, intonation and the rhythm of speech in the classroom, it is best to leave the students to acquire intuitively more detailed knowledge through exposure to plenty of informal speech (Page 11). The foreign learner has just to be taught that the words spoken in speech are often not given the same stress as they receive when they are said in isolation. It means that they have different stress according to their exploiting.

5.3 The organization of speech

Underwood (1989) points out that there are, a number of characteristic features which occur in normal speech and which can be used by listeners to sort out what the speaker means. It is almost certain, for example, that important words will be stressed. It is likely that when giving instructions a speaker will repeat the most important points (page 11). However, the learner needs to be aware that a native speaker's discourse is frequently not well organized, even in lectures. A disorganized speech is difficult to follow even by native speakers. For non-native speakers it can be still more difficult. And even when listening to a well-organized speech, the foreign learner has to concentrate carefully in order to recognize what is being said.

5.4 The syntax and vocabulary of speech

Normal informal spoken English is simpler than written. The speaker of English uses simple vocabulary and language. He often uses incomplete sentences. Information in spoken language is packed less densely than that in written discourse. *"Spoken language is less dense information and less highly structured information"*.

(Brown; 1993, page 7)

These findings confirm the need of using natural speech for practicing listening and reading the written language aloud does not prepare the students for listening to spontaneously produced speech. Knowing

that the speaker may not say complete sentences and use simple sentences can be helpful to the students who are learning to listen. As Brown (1993) sees, the spoken language can be quite hard to understand unless the learner has the access to information about the context and background of the utterances he hears. The listener should try to grasp the general meaning of spoken discourse not to interpret every word in the discourse. It is not very important to unravel the sentences syntactically, grammatically and semantically.

5.5 Pauses and fillers

The pauses that occur in speech give the listener time to think about what has been said. The length of pauses depends on the speaker, situation and reaction of the listener (if the speaker can see him). However, long gaps that are filled with some sounds such as 'Em.....'/'Erm....'/'and er....or expressions such as "you know" (the speaker uses it when he has started to give a reason, "I mean" (the speaker uses it when he is about to give a reason for what he has just previously asserted). These fillers can confuse the foreign learner because he thinks that they are part of the speech. *"These expressions cannot just be thrown in anywhere in the stream of speech and frequently they are not interchangeable."* (Brown & Ylue; 1993, page 97)

So it is good to explain to the foreign listener that these pauses and fillers are normal features in conversation in order to recognize them and know that they are not part of the message.

5.6 Informal language

Most spoken language is informal. It is usually broken into short chunks. Pronunciation is sometimes slurred, different from its dictionary representation such as "can't for cannot", "orright for all right". Vocabulary is often colloquial for example, "guy for man", "kid for child". Sentences and phrases are often incomplete. There is redundancy with the speaker's saying more than is necessary for conveying the message (repetition, self-correction, paraphrase etc). *"Informal language is usually both spontaneous and colloquial."* (Ur; 1993, page 7)

In informal language there are some forms of words which are reduced such as 'cause' (because), 'till' (until). In some reduced forms, the listeners may not even hear them, like "donno" for don't

know , “gotta’ for got to, “hasta” for has to, “haftta” for have to, “yer” for you’re.

Conclusion

We have noticed how spoken English is different from written. Most native English speakers produce language, which is syntactically very much simpler than written-language. Spoken language consists of sounds and processing the sound requires a whole new set of skills. Furthermore, the sounds change in fast speech. Fast pronunciation is very different from the dictionary form of the word. The English sound system varies from place to place and from speaker to speaker. Spoken language is full of fillers, pauses, hesitations, mistakes, grammatical errors and the speaker uses simple language, which is different from written language. "*Spoken texts contain features such as variations in pronunciation (i.e. pronunciation of the same phonemes by the same speaker in different linguistics context as well as dialectal variations between speakers), irregular pauses, false starts, hesitations, self-revisions, and backtracking*". (Rost; 1990, page 9).

Therefore, we should highlight and take them into account as listeners when we try to discover the real meaning of what we hear. The teachers of English should be aware of the characteristics that mark spoken English and bear into account that their students are in need of listening to authentic speech as spoken by native speakers and should speak at a normal speed to prepare them for real-life listening.

In the following chapter I will discuss the difficulties that the foreign learners encounter when they learn to listen to English concentrating on Arab learners.

Chapter Six

6.0 Potential problems that the foreign learners encounter when they learn listening (including Arab learners)

Problems are posed by the sound system; cognates in print may differ phonetically in ways that are hard to perceive aurally like the words 'enough', 'though', 'through', 'cough', 'hicough' etc thus the learner who has not heard them is likely to be confused; the listener must recognize unit boundaries phonologically which would be marked visually in a written text; she/ he must also recognize irregular pausing, false starts, hesitations, stress and intonation patterns. As Brown (1993) points out that these features present particular challenges to those non-native speakers who have learned English in an idealized, perhaps written form and have thus not been exposed to the characteristics of rapid colloquial speech.

English has its own special linguistic characteristics which affect the process of learning its different skills by different learners. Many learners whose ability in English is quite good or who think that they are good at English, are surprised when they arrive in an English speaking country or even when they talk to an English native speaker. They can understand little or nothing of what is said to them. They complain that the people swallow their words, speak too quickly and pronounce the words in exotic sounds. It seems that foreign listener encounters special difficulties in coping with spoken English. The difficulty which stems from pronunciation is one of the most salient problems for EFL learners. In the other words, the English native speaker's pronunciation can cause serious problems in recognition and then incomprehension to EFL learners.

6.1 Different accent varieties

The problem that a foreign learner may encounter is that he might listen to different accent varieties. Learners who are used to the accent of their own teacher are surprised and confused when they find they have difficulty in understanding someone else. Therefore, teachers should highlight the different accents in their language presentations so that the students could be familiar with such accents and overcome any impediment in their comprehension. Ur (1993) points out that "*Listeners who have experience in listening to and understanding a number of different accents are more likely to be able to cope successfully with further ones than those who have only*

heard one or two." (1993, page 20)

Rixon (1993) mentioned four sources of English difficulty. First, the relationship between English sounds and the way they are spelt in written language. Second, the sounds change when they occur in rapid and connected speech. Third, the rhythm pattern of English spoken. Fourth, different ways of pronouncing the 'same' sound.

6.2 The weakness of the relationship between sound and spelling

Most of English learners know English well in written form, but when it is spoken, they may be confused and feel that they know English little. This problem occurs clearly to Arab speakers because Arabic spelling within its own system is simple and virtually phonetic.

Therefore, Arab learners tend to pronounce English words phonetically.

6.3 English sounds in connected speech.

The foreign learners are accustomed to hearing the pronunciation of words clearly, and in isolation. However, when those words are used in a connected natural utterance, some of their sounds are different to those used in very careful speech, and they may become harder for the learner to recognize. Here are some examples: when the word 'you' is said in isolation it is said with stress as /ju/. However, when it is used in connected speech it is pronounced without stress as in 'Will you come?' /wil je kam/. There is also a problem of Loss of sounds that occur in rapid speech as in the word 'probably' is pronounced a /probly/.

Again, / t / might be dropped at the end of the word as in 'the next day'.

"Many words which are easy to recognize when said separately and emphatically lose their clarity when heard in connected speech".

(Rixon; 1993, page 39). In contrast, the words in Arabic language are pronounced clearly and without changing or losing any letters whether said in isolation or in connected speech. Sometimes an English native-speaker modifies his pronunciation to save effort. For instance, he pronounces the phrase 'ten bikes' /ten baiks/ in careful speech as / tem baiks/.

6.4 Rhythm pattern of English spoken

Rhythm means the pattern of timing of stress. The English system of stress and rhythm can interfere with the foreign learner's proper understanding. English is considered to be stress timed and the following examples show the nature of stress in English.

*"The / **man** / **smiled**"*

*"The/ **manager** / **smiled**"*

*"We / **bought** / a / **book**"*

*"We have / **bought** / you another / **book**"*

*"We could have / **bought** / you another / **book**"*

*"We ought to have / **bought** / you another / **book** "*

(Rixon; 1993, page 41)

Each sentence in the two groups has the same number of stresses and takes about the same amount of time to say although there is a different number of syllables between the stresses. This is achieved by 'squashing' the intervening syllables so that they take less time to say.

The problem that Arab learners encounter might be word stress pattern which in English is not the same as in Arabic, the word stress in Arabic falls on the last syllable of a word containing two long (or short and long syllables). This difficulty is clear with two syllable words that may be used as a noun and a verb with a difference in stress to indicate the difference in meaning such as 'conduct', 'project' etc.

"The idea that stress can alter meaning, as in 'a toy ' factory' and ' a toy factory,' or 'con'vict (verb) and 'convict' (noun) is completely strange". (Swan & Smith; 1993, page 145)

In spoken English it is normal to use contracted forms as in 'I would like' pronounced and written as I'd like and 'I will not' pronounced and written as I won't. This does not happen in Arabic.

6.5 Different ways of pronouncing the same sound

Sometimes, the same sound is pronounced in different ways, which causes difficulty to a foreign listener. For instance, / t / or / t / sound. / t / has several pronunciations in English, one of these includes a slight escape of air (aspiration) which causes a hissing noise as in the words ' table ' and ' till.

" Some students who come from language backgrounds which have

sounds similar to the English / t /, but without the aspirated variant, have found quite common words hard to recognize at first."

(Rixon; 1993, page 42)

Sometimes the slight hissing noise accompanying the aspirated / t / is interpreted as / st / and the learners ask the meaning of ' steecher ' instead of ' teacher '.

6.6 vowels and consonants in English and Arabic

The phonological systems in English and Arabic are not only different in the range of sounds used, but in the differing emphasis placed on vowels and consonants in expressing meaning. English has 22 vowels and diphthongs to 24 consonants while Arabic has 8 vowels and diphthongs to 32 consonants. Nearly all vowels in English may cause problems to Arab speakers when they listen to spoken English as in pronouncing ' bit and bet', 'cot and caught'. Diphthongs are usually pronounced rather short by English speakers and the foreign learners are confused as in ' raid for red' and ' hope for hop'. Some confusion arises in consonants as in ' v ' and ' f '. Arab speakers do not distinguish between them, they only know ' f ' because ' v ' does not occur in Arabic. / b / and / p / are often confused. The following vowels are the most common confusions: / i / and / e / are often confused as in; 'bit and 'bet'.

6.7 Consonant clusters

When we compare English and Arabic we find that the range of consonant-clusters that occur in English is much wider than that in Arabic. *"Initial two-segment clusters not occurring in Arabic include: 'pr, pl, gr, thr, thw, sp. Initial three-segment clusters do not occur in Arabic at all.* (Swan & Smith; 1993, page 144). For example, 'spr, skr, str, spl, '. In all the above conditions Arab speakers tend to insert short vowels to support pronunciation:

As in;

'perice' or 'pirece' for 'price'

'ispring' or 'sipiring' for 'spring'

The range of final clusters is smaller in Arabic than it is in English. So, Arabic speakers tend to insert short vowels as in;

'arrangid' for 'arranged'

'montiz' for 'months'.

'neckist' for 'next'.

6.8 Juncture

The Junctures that produce consonant clusters cause many problems. A juncture such as 'next spring' produces a number of extra vowels. Many phonetic changes in English through the juncture of certain phonemes, e.g., /t/ + /j/ as in 'what do you need?' or /d/ and /j/ as in 'Did you see him?' are resisted strongly by Arabic speakers, who see any loss or change in consonant pronunciation as a serious threat to communication. (Swan & Smith; 1993, page 146)

6.9 The difference between formal and informal language

There is a difference between formal and informal spoken language which can be sometimes a problem to a foreign language learner. The speech in formal language is well organized and more structured than would be heard in informal discourse. The problem is that many learners of English have limited experience of English in informal situations. This may happen because the teachers and the students tend to talk to each other in formal language inside the classes and so, the learners have difficulty in understanding informal discourse in every day language. *"The learners have particular difficulty when switching to informal language when it occurs within what is otherwise a formal situation."* (Underwood; 1989, page 14)

However, in English the distinction between formal and informal is less marked. In Arabic the difference between the two is so great that the students have to relearn their own language. That leads us to think that the problem is not so great in English.

6.10 Failure to recognize verbal and non-verbal signals

A foreign listener sometimes fails to recognize verbal and non-verbal signals when he listens to English as a foreign language. In verbal signals when an English native-speaker is talking and moving from one point to another, or whatever, the signals he uses may cause difficulty to a foreign listener, and he misunderstands the utterance. For example, when a speaker in a formal speech wants to begin a new point or to move from point to another, he uses expressions like 'Then' ...and..'First'. He may pause, or increase loudness. In spontaneous conversation, a speaker uses different intonations to indicate that he is introducing a new idea. For example, the sentence 'He is leaving tomorrow.' can be a question if the intonation is rising or it can be a statement if the intonation is falling. Non-verbal signals can also be misunderstood by the foreign

listeners. For instance, when a native speaker wants to emphasize a point or an idea or to move to another idea, he may move slightly or make a gesture. This can confuse the foreign learners.

" We convey farther elements of meaning by body movements, facial expressions and slight changes in breathing, length of pauses, and degrees of emphasis. These elements usually classed as kinesics and paralinguage, vary from language community to language community, no full comprehension of oral communication is complete without taking these aspects into consideration as further delimitation of the message." (Rivers; 1968, page 138)

6.11 Environmental clues

The difficulty that the learner may confront is the lack of ability to use the environmental clues . The foreign learner misunderstands the context because he analyzes the words in isolation and does not link them to the context or accompany them to the visual stimuli. *"Many foreign learners seem to lack the ability to use environmental clues to get at the meaning of imperfectly grasped phrase."*

(Ur; 1993, page 20)

For example, he may understand 'horse' for 'house' in spite of an accompanying picture or the learner sits down when he hears ' come here' in spite of a gesture of invitation. The problem is the failure to apply extra-linguistic clues when listening to the foreign language. This happens because the listener's receptive system is over-loaded. The foreign learner tries to perceive and comprehend everything he hears although they are not important, he concentrates very hard to understand the words and phrases as they come up and does not relax enough to gather the main idea of the context.

" The listener has to work much harder at decoding than the native speaker and tries to interpret every detail as it comes up instead of relaxing and taking a broader view." (Ur; 1993, page 21)

6.12 Speed

The notion of speed often enters discussions of listening 'ability'. Listeners do not have the same degree of control over the text as do readers, who can dwell on parts of the text, skip over the parts, back track, etc. When the learner listens to a foreign language, he cannot keep up with the language when it is spoken at its normal speed. He feels that if the speaker reduces the speed or says less, he can get more time to think about what he is hearing, eventually he has less

trouble understanding. I think that Intensive exposure to a foreign language spoken by native speakers may help the learners to develop their listening comprehension skills.

"Many foreign language learners report that they simply cannot think fast enough to participate in normal conversation".

(Rost; 1993, page 35)

6. 13 No possibility of getting repetition

In addition, a listener has no chance to get the speaker to repeat what he has said. If he missed something, he might be shy to ask for repetition or it might be impossible to do that. This is likely to be the case when the learner is on the edge of conversation outside the classroom, listening to a lecture, a public speech or when he listens to the news on radio and TV.

6.14 Limited Vocabulary

The listener's limited vocabulary is also considered an obstacle that prevents comprehension. Sometimes the listener does not know the meaning of the words he has heard, so he cannot follow what is being said because he begins to think of the meaning of such words. Thus, he may miss the other parts of the speech. *"For people listening to a foreign language, an unknown word can be like a suddenly dropped barrier causing them to stop and think about the meaning of the word and thus making them miss the next part of the speech."* (Underwood; 1989, page 17)

6.15 Interpretation

The problems of interpretation can occur for the foreign listener rather than native speaker. He quite fails to recognize the context because of lack of background knowledge even though he knows the vocabulary that he has heard. *"Students who are unfamiliar with the context may have considerable difficulty in interpreting the words they hear even if they can understand their 'surface' meaning".*

(Underwood; 1989, page 19)

6.16 Concentration

A foreign listener also faces the problem of concentration. It is more difficult for the foreign listener to continue to listen constantly at a high level of concentration. Furthermore, any short break in attention can seriously spoil comprehension. This may happen even though the

context is interesting and relevant to the listener's culture, idea, and concepts. He gets tired after listening for some time. *"A learner's grasp of content is much better at the beginning and gets progressively worse as he goes on"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 19).

6.17 Predicting

If the listener can guess the sort of the thing that is going to be said, he will likely perceive and understand it well and be able to anticipate the next information and ignore the previous thing that is not significant.

Many reasons make prediction so difficult. The first ones are intonation and stress patterns. Other predictions may depend on idioms and proverbs. If the foreign listener has not experienced dealing with these things, he cannot expect to know what is going to be said next. However, predictions do not only depend on obscurity but many are based on obvious choices of vocabulary or grammar. For instance, the use of 'but' or 'however' makes us expect that something that contrasts with what went before; the use of a conditional verb such as 'would have' often precedes or follows an 'if' clause. *"A learner who has a reasonable grasp of the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of foreign language may often be expected to make the same prediction of what is to follow as a native speaker, aided only by skills he carries over from the use of his own language."*

(Underwood; 1989, page, 16)

Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed some of the major problems and pointed out how they affect understanding spoken foreign language. I have believed that hearing the sound of a foreign language is considered the most serious obstacle that the foreign learner encounters when he listens to spoken language. . " *The problem for a foreign learner of a language still lies at the phonetic level. Even if you do manage to develop a rich set of predictions you still need to be able to monitor the incoming acoustic signal so that you know which of your predictions is being confirmed and which is not*". (Brown; 1993, page 12)

Furthermore, I have discussed the pace of the stream of the spoken words in connected speech, concentration, listener's limited vocabulary, problems of interpretation and environmental clues. In addition, I have tackled other problems of spoken English language that the foreign listeners confront, particularly Arab speakers, because of its special linguistic characteristics. I have seen how the foreign listener faces difficulties in understanding spoken English language even if he has the experience of knowledge of vocabulary and language structure in written form. Therefore, most foreign learners will not acquire a comfortable ability to listen and understand the foreign language as spoken by native speakers if they only listen to their teacher and class – mates and feedback from their own spoken production. In particular, those English teaching is based mainly on reading and writing. *As Underwood points out, students whose culture and education include a strong storytelling and oral communication tradition are generally 'better' at listening than those from a reading and book- based culture and educational background*". (Underwood; 1989, page 16)

Byrne (1988) thinks that if we want to cope with the problems of listening comprehension we should replicate the mother tongue situation as closely as possible in the early stages of the language program, and this happens by exposing the learners to language as much as possible and listening should be taught in integration with other skills at all times. Therefore, the teacher should introduce effective classroom techniques to help his / her students to overcome difficulties and create a suitable atmosphere to make the listening lesson motivating and enjoyable. In the next chapter I am going to discuss some of these techniques and methods as well as teaching aids.

Chapter Seven

7.0 Teaching listening

In the past, it was assumed that foreign learners would simply acquire the ability to understand spoken language if they occasionally heard their teacher speak it or listened to a tape of it being spoken. *It seemed reasonable to assume that he would learn to understand spoken language as he learnt to speak it and, anyway, he would of course understand the language addressed to him by his teacher.*

(Brown; 1993, page 54)

Later this was not acceptable. It was quickly demonstrated that this approach of teaching listening was not working. It was impossible to understand the spoken language when the students eventually encountered it as it was used in real-life situations. *"Understanding, or listening, simply cannot be left to take care by itself".* (Byrne; 1988, page 9)

In Brown's (1993) view this natural process does not seem to produce the desired result because of several reasons. One is that the student is taught to speak slowly and clearly and his teacher addresses the class in a public style that is also clear and slow. However, native speakers do not speak clearly and slowly. Moreover, the student is often exposed to one accent that is spoken by his teacher. Students consequently get used to a model of speech where every segment is clearly articulated. *"Most foreign learners will not acquire a comfortable ability to listen and understand the foreign language as spoken by native speakers if they only listen to their teacher and classmates and feedback from their own spoken production."* (Brown; 1993, page 55)

We infer that if the ability to understand the spoken language is not acquired naturally, therefore, this ability should be taught and structured and systematic courses must be introduced into curricula. The first principle of successful teaching is that the approach to the teaching of listening comprehension cannot produce the satisfactory outcome if the words and sentences are presented out of context because of two reasons. First, the child learns his own language in a context. For example, he learns a word 'play' which is associated with a set of words or expressions like 'playing with the ball', 'or 'playing with the soap in the water'. Second, words do not have 'fixed' meanings. It follows that sentences do not have fixed semantic meanings. That means

the context is important to understand the language which offers the cues that narrow down the possible meanings of the language. *"The student, then has not only to learn to understand the forms of the foreign language, the sound segments, the word forms, the sentence structures, but, crucially, how they interact with context to constrain the possible meaning."*

(Brown; 1987, page 15)

Syntax also plays an important role in rendering input comprehensible. Call (1985) believes that teaching listening comprehension does not depend mainly on knowledge of vocabulary. It is not enough to make students good listeners; they must also be able to use syntax to help them retain utterances in memory long enough to understand them. Formal exercises focusing on recognition of syntactical structures are essential to the development of this skill. *"They should not only know the meaning of the words but they should also have knowledge of structure of language (Syntax, phonology, etc)."* (Underwood; 1989, page 4)

When the students have become familiar with vocabulary and structure of the target language, they are ready to acquire the utterance more quickly.

One thing should be assured (confirmed) in listening comprehension courses, that is what the speaker might mean by a particular utterance and what sort of contextual opinions the speaker might hold that would be coherent with expressing that meaning.

7.1 What is the teacher's role?

The role of the teacher is to facilitate and simplify learning. His role is to support and guide the learners to understand spoken language and assist the learners in whatever ways he can. His/her task is to teach students how to listen by using techniques that will lead to better comprehension, rather than merely give the students an opportunity to listen. *"The role of the teacher is to facilitate the listening process of attending and interpreting by helping learners use their knowledge of the world and language, in processing information through listening"*.

(Thompson & Rubin; 1996, page 331)

At the beginning as a teacher of a foreign language I should ask myself these questions;

- am I testing or teaching?
- what amuses/excites learners?
- what aids are suitable for effective listening?
- what is better, to listen in the laboratory or in the class?
- what steps of presenting listening skills are there ?
- what sources of materials should I use?
- what main things do L 2 learners want to know before beginning to listen ?
- do I use authentic materials?
- what authentic materials are possible to use with listening?
- what techniques should I follow to give a successful listening lesson?
- what texts are more easy (announcement, dialogues, descriptions, etc.) ?
- how can I encourage the students to listen to English out of the class?
- how can I activate oral interaction in the classroom?
- is it helpful for the teacher to explain to the learners in their own language what is not clear for them?
- what sounds cause difficulties for the listeners?
- how can I make listening materials in the classroom more close to real-life situations?
- how can I create motivation?
- how can I prepare the learners in the class for listening?
- how much time should I devote to teaching listening?

7.2 The teacher's objective.

The teacher's objective is to teach English in such a way as to enable the learners to cope with difficulties that they encounter when they are exposed to English in real life situations. The teacher wants his students to attend to what they hear, to process it, to understand it, to interpret it, to evaluate it, to respond it, he wants them to become involved and active listeners.

"They should not only know the meaning of the words but they should also have knowledge of structure of language (Syntax, phonology, etc)." (Underwood; 1989, page 4)

The teacher must help his / her students to acquire the language. Besides, If they are exposed to language enough, they will almost certainly be able to use some (or all) of it themselves. *"Teachers*

should focus on using listening exercises as a framework for assisting learners to understand spoken language."

(Anderson & Lynch; 1988, page 76)

The teacher should;

- expose his / her students sufficiently to recordings of a variety of native speakers so as to make them use the listening skill. This can be done by using a lot of different listening texts such as stories, conversations, descriptive talks, etc which embody formal and informal language.

- make listening purposeful; this, can be achieved by providing his students with tasks, which are as realistic as possible, so the students can relate what they are doing in the class to things that happen outside the classroom.

- remove testing from listening activities. *"It is important that the exercises should not be treated as test items."*

(Anderson & Lynch; 1989, page 67)

- help his/ her students to listen to the foreign language with the feeling of confidence that they are able to ask questions when they have failed to understand something.

- get the students to realize that we do not often need to understand every word, because we are either skimming, to get the main idea, or scanning, wanting some specific information. *"We should not train our students to expect that they ought to be achieving 100 percent correct comprehension and that they are failures if they fail to achieve 100 percent correct comprehension."*(Brown & Yule; 1993, page 59)

- get the students to arrive successfully at a reasonable interpretation and not to try to work out all that is involved in the literal meaning of the utterance.

- learners need to recognize the features of spoken language, such as weak sound forms and word contractions. This can be done by asking the class to listen to a text, with contractions, and to ask them to mark a list of full word forms, as they hear them, not to write words but to recognize sounds.

- read along as they listen. At the first the students want to listen and read the transcript of what they hear. It seems a rather unenterprising activity but it has its own value.

- listen to news on BBC, follow the programs on CNN Channels, etc.

- listen to a short dialogue spoken by native speakers.

- focus on the main points not on each word.
- try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases from the context before giving up in despair.
- make prediction about what they will hear and use the expectations to help them with their listening. *"To predict what is coming next in an utterance or a conversation, using both their general knowledge and the clues from what they have heard."*

(Underwood; 1989, page 22)

- listen between the words. In other words to know what the speakers mean who do not always say what they mean.
- distinguish between facts and opinions. It means they can be critical listeners, not easily persuaded by other people's clever use of language.

Some suggested points should be demonstrated to our learners.

- read along as they listen. At the first the students want to listen and read the transcript of what they hear. It seems a rather unenterprising activity but it has its own value.

PSS repeated

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(Underwood; 1989, page 22)

- listen between the words. In other words to know what the speakers mean who do not always say what they mean.
- distinguish between facts and opinions. It means they can be critical listeners, not easily persuaded by other people's clever use of language.

7.3 How do we make our learners active listeners?

In other words how to make the listeners participate, not to sit silently and not understand what they hear. It means first, to select the task which is relevant to the culture, views, concepts and ideas of the listeners. To make sure that the sound of the speaker in the tape is

more clear and not distorted. To indicate to the students not to listen word by word. *"Teachers who make it clear that they believe in the value of listening work and who plan and conduct listening sessions in a purposeful way will find that their students grow in confidence and soon begin to experience the pleasure that listening successfully can bring."* (Underwood; 1989, page 28)

7.4 Methods and Techniques

Most teachers think that testing of listening is a tool for teaching listening comprehension. Underwood (1989) stresses that teachers should stop thinking of comprehension questions as a means of assessing how much students have understood the spoken language. *"It is a truism to point out that the technique of asking questions after listening or reading task is a testing technique and not a teaching technique."* (Anderson & Lynch; 1988, page 66)

Anderson & Lynch (1988) give two exercises to show the difference between testing exercise and teaching exercise by giving two examples:

Exercise A

'Now that you have listened to the whole conversation, look at the questions below. Listen carefully again and answer the questions by choosing the right answer from A B C or D'.

With general tickets borrowers can take ... from the library.

- A. fiction only
- B. non-fiction only

- C. both fiction and non-fiction
- D. non of these

Exercise B

'Liz is a librarian in an academic library. She does a number of different tasks every day. List five things she might be expected to do. Then, while you are listening to Extract H, tick any jobs she mentions which are in your list'.

The difference between the two above exercises is that A leads the students only to answer the question. However B encourages the students to adopt an appropriate strategy.

7.5 Integrating the teaching of listening

How do we give listening skill, in isolation or integrating with the other skill? This question occurs to every teacher of English as a foreign language. According to Anderson and Lynch (1988) there are three contexts for teaching listening for learners;

- listening combined with speaking.
- listening, speaking, reading and writing in parallel.
- listening in isolation; a course of this kind concentrates solely on listening.

- **In the first context** the learners start with spoken medium skills (listening and speaking) and then move to written skills (reading and writing).

- **In the second context** the four skills are introduced simultaneously, so the practice in one can support and reinforce practice in the others.

- **In the third context** the listening skill is introduced in isolation. The supporters of this view think that listening is the key of successful learning. They see that the first lessons of any L2 course should concentrate solely on listening particularly for the beginners. *"The first lessons of any course should concentrate solely on listening."*

(Anderson & Lynch; 1988, page 63)

The teacher should choose one of these three contexts. Which one is suitable for teaching listening? I see that the second context is the best way for teaching this important skill. *"There is a growing support for the view that listening should play a central role in language teaching and that it should be integrated with other skills work".*

(Underwood; 1989, page 23) However, this does not mean the teacher cannot plan parts of lessons to focus on listening.

7.6 Lesson Planning

Many considerations should be determined before giving a listening lesson such as where to give the listening lesson in the classroom or in the language lab. Does the teacher have an experience in using the laboratory? The teacher also needs to know what equipment is available to him, and to make sure that he can handle it efficiently.

"You should never use equipment in a lesson until you are sure you

can operate it efficiently." (Underwood; 1989, page 24)

A specific amount of time should be allocated to listening work. The teacher has to decide which period of the week's total language learning time should be devoted to listening work.

Underwood (1989) recognizes three stages for teaching listening: Pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening, but before coming to the details of giving a listening lesson, there are a number of steps to consider when planning the listening work for the class.

7.6.1 Before giving the lesson

The teacher should consider these steps;

- choose the listening text. To evaluate any recorded texts that can be obtained, in order to decide which particular part is suitable for the students. *"Before using a listening text in class, you will want to know something about its language, its length, its content, the style and speed of the delivery, how close to 'real' speech it is and the quality of the recording."* (Underwood; 1989, page 102)
- listen to the text, write down some notes. It is important to listen to the text in order to check it and determine if the students will be able to do the activities.
- adjust the level of the difficulty of the activities, by adding some answers or writing notes of any extra information you feel should be introduced.
- some visual aids can help the students to understand.
- decide if the students will need rulers, scissors, colored pencils or any other objects in advance in order to let the students bring them.
- decide the time you will need to cover the listening lesson.
- make up your mind what procedures you are going to adopt for the listening lesson;

Will you use a recorded text or present it yourself?

Will you go through the whole text without stopping? Or

Will you want to use pauses?

Will you replay the recording or re-speak the text?

How will you organize each stage? (pre-listening, while-listening, post-listening)

Will you let your students work in groups / pairs or individually?

Will you want your students to answer the questions, write down notes or summarize?

Will you plan to let the students read aloud the text because this may

motivate them?

Will you correct the mistakes in the class?

7.6.2 During the lesson

The teacher should be a helper not a corrector, so it is better to stand back and let the students think and feel they can get help at any time. However, as an experienced teacher I notice that most teachers prefer to help and correct their students too soon. *"The crucial thing is for the students to know that they can seek help from the teacher at any time and that help will be given in a supportive manner, rather than as a correction"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 26)

The teacher should bear in mind the following points in order to create a suitable atmosphere in the class during the lesson:

- give help when it is needed.
- encourage pupils to help each other.
- do not treat the activities as a test.
- encourage the students to alter their answers, which this can be done more easily by using pencils.
- urge the students to jot down odd words, ideas and thoughts as they are doing their listening work.
- suggest to your students using dictionaries when it can be helpful.
- make the listening work enjoyable. The students need to be calm and relaxed and they should feel that they have a reason for listening. *"It is very difficult to concentrate if one has no reason for listening (unless, of course the content or the presentation is exceptionally interesting or exciting)"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 27)
- It is better to omit some parts of the work rather than to rush. *"It is better to err on the side of giving too much time rather than speeding along"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 28)
- give the students an immediate feedback. 'The students want to know how they have performed the task, while the listening text is still fresh in their mind, so it is useful to refer back to the passage and replay parts of the recording or repeat the text, to clarify points which emerge during feedback.
- give the students a chance to discuss the answers in pairs or in groups. It can be more enjoyable and useful. *"The teacher should ensure that the lesson proceeds in an orderly and productive way so that the students feel secure and relaxed and unthreatened by the listening tasks"*.

(Underwood; 1989, page, 28)

- make use of every opportunity to give the students a sense of purpose, followed by a sense of achievements in their listening work.

7.7 Stages of giving a listening lesson in the classroom

As I mentioned in 'lesson planning (7.6)', the listening lesson is often divided into three stages. The first one is the **pre-listening** stage, where the students activate their vocabulary and their background knowledge.

"Things to do before the students hear the passage, to help them get the most out of what they are going to hear". (Rixon; 1993, page 63)

The second stage is **while listening**, where the learners develop the skill of eliciting messages. *"Activities and exercises to be carried out as the students listen to the passage, to guide them as they try to grasp the main information in it". (Rixon; 1993, page 64)*

The third stage is **post-listening**, which consists of extensions and developments of the listening task. *"Things to do once the class has come to grips with the meaning and content of the passage, and is ready to look back, to reflect on some of the language points in it, or to do some extension work based on the content of the passage". (Rixon; 1993, page 64)*

7.7.1 Pre-listening stage

It can be helpful to focus first on what the pupils are going to hear in order to achieve a high level of success and the pupils become confident that they can listen effectively.

"It is important to note that in the very act of setting up the while listening activity, the students should be being helped to focus on what they are about to hear, and in this sense this is a pre-listening activity". (Underwood; 1989, page 31)

In this stage the teacher is to tell his / her students something about the passage, but without details and ask them to form their expectations about what they will hear. This seems to help students to recognize and understand much more than if they had come to the text without any preparation. Rixon (1993) illustrates two techniques that can be followed in the pre-listening stage;

The students are told the topic of the listening text and are asked

to guess some of the words or phrases they think they might hear. They are given a list of words which might possibly occur in the text, and are asked to listen for which ones occur and which do not.

7.7.1.1 Pre-listening activities

- the teacher gives back-ground information.
- get the students to look at relevant pictures before listening to the text. For example, photographs of the people, the place in which they are talking, etc. that they can assist them to name the items which will feature in the listening text. This can be done by question and answer or by general or group discussion.
- the teacher ensures that the text is made as realistic as possible. *"It is important not only for students to hear language which sounds natural, but also for them to have listening experiences which are as authentic as possible."* (Underwood; 1989, page 31)
This can be done by providing the students with information about when, where and who is speaking.
- it is necessary, that the students have an idea about what they are going to do, so it can be more purposeful. The students should understand what they are going to do before they start to listen. This helps the students to concentrate on the task and give them a comforting sense of achieving the objective.
- give a list of unknown words and explain them briefly. It is useful to tackle the words which ^{may} cause blockage before let the students listen to the text.
- check the teacher's book before preparing the lesson. May be there is some work done for you by the writer.
- choosing the activities depends on many factors such as the time, material, interests of the students, their ability, the place in which the work is carried out as well as nature and content of the listening text. The activities should be appropriate to the text itself.
- students look at a list of thoughts, items, etc. in particular before listening. The list should not include difficult words or phrases. It could be a list of certain items / thoughts that will be ticked or circled at the while-listening stage. *"Presenting the list in the order in which the words /phrases /statements occur in the text makes while-listening exercises easier"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 36)
- the students can make a list of their own suggestions and ideas which they can use at a while-listening stage. The advantage of this list is the students use the expressions they know. This enables the

students to deal with the task more successfully " *It is often a good idea to use list-making as the pre-listening activity and then the students can use their own lists as the basis for a while listening activity*". (Underwood; 1989, page 37)

- students are asked to fill the gaps in the text as they read it before listening and then to check their answers as they listen to the recorded version. The students feel more secure when they see the printed text in advance but those who have learned English by printed words face difficulty when they are listening, they may be unable to connect the sounds which they hear with the printed words they have seen. To cope with this problem the teacher can speak out the words during the pre-listening stage that are printed in the text and will occur in the listening text.

- get the students to go through the questions. " *It is very helpful indeed for the students to see the questions before they begin listening to the text*". (Underwood; 1989, page 39)

- speculate in a general way what they (students) are going to hear in the text. This can be enjoyable and useful. They are told about the topic and the speakers and then asked to guess what they will expect to hear.

- the students label a picture or a diagram. This is another activity that can be done at a pre-listening stage then they can complete the labels at the while-listening stage or even check whether they were right.

- pre-listening should be part of other stages of the listening work. Most pre-listening activities are followed by while-listening ones, so it is much better to complete the pre-listening stage and then the while-listening stage in the same lesson. " *Separating the two activities is like somebody warming up for a race and then running the race itself some days later*". (Underwood; 1989, page 44)

- pre-listening can be presented in integrated skills work. It can consist of reading, writing, speaking or all the three skills. The teacher can ask the students to read a short extract from a newspaper and then ask them to listen to the same extract as it is reported on radio. Or after carrying out the pre-listening and while-listening exercises, the teacher asks his / her students to write down a summary of what they have heard. The pupils can complete the task individually or in pairs. This activity provides an opportunity to practice speaking and writing. " *This kind of integrated skills approach enables the students*

to associate written and spoken language with language read and heard". (Underwood; 1989, page 44)

7.7.2 While-listening stage

While listening means what the students should do during listening. Its aim is to develop the skill of eliciting messages from spoken language, recognize the sounds of the words, stress and the intonation. *"While listening is the activities and exercises that are carried out as the students listen to the text".* (Rixon; 1993, page 64)

While listening enables the students to speak what they hear as a model for their own speech, and recognize the difference between the sounds of the words when they are spoken in isolation and within utterances. It is essential to make the students aware of a relationship between the written words and their spoken forms or if there is any difference between them.

- While-listening activities should be chosen carefully. *"Good while-listening activities help learners find their way through the listening text and build upon the expectation raised by pre-listening activities".* (Underwood; 1989, page 46)

- While listening should be interesting in order to encourage the students to listen and carry out the activities. Most students enjoy local topics that are motivating and enjoyable. They like puzzles or solving problems and this fact can be exploited in the design of the activities but this kind of activities should not be too long and repeated.

- While-listening activities should not be difficult. It means most of the students can do them. Failure leads to demotivation and frustration. The activities which include difficulties should be used very sparingly in the early stages.

- there are a number of things which can make while-listening work frustrating and demotivating. Therefore, the teacher should avoid them. The most difficult one is to write and listen at the same time. The students with limited listening experiences or knowledge cannot write many responding words during the while-listening activity. Successful listening exercises include ticking, checking, drawing, circling, etc. *"At the while-listening stage, the students should not worry about interpreting long questions and producing full answers, but about demonstrating whether they have understood the important information in the passage."* (Rixon; 1993, page 70).

This means that the students concentrate on listening rather than

worrying about writing and spelling. Another type of while-listening activity which can be frustrating is that which requires the students to put a large number of sentences in the correct order according to what is heard. *"The exercises should contain a limited number of items"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 48)

The following example that I have extracted from the textbook may be suitable for the students to put the sentences in a right order.

The following version is given to the students before listening:

'Stationer: Six note books and ten exercises books, anything else?

Peter: I want six note books and ten exercises books, please?

Stationer: Would you like to have a slide rule?

Peter: Yes, please. One ink eraser, one pencil eraser, a plastic triangle and a punch.

Stationer: 50 dirhams.

Peter: No, thanks. I use a calculator. Now, how much do I owe you?

Stationer: You're welcome.

Peter: Here you are. Thank you'.

The students are to put the sentences in the right order while listening to the tape.

The following version is ~~a~~ correct one.

'Peter: I want six note books and ten exercises books, please?

Stationer: Six note books and ten exercises books, anything else?

Peter: Yes, please. One ink eraser, one pencil eraser, a plastic triangle and a punch.

Stationer: Would you like to have a slide rule?

Peter: No, thanks. I use a calculator. Now, how much do I owe you?

Stationer: 50 dirhams.

Peter: Here you are. Thank you.

Stationer: You're welcome'. (English for UAE 8, Page 12)

Some while-listening activities require individuals to give their responses orally. This kind of work cannot be done in the classroom.

It is better to be done in the language laboratory because classroom while listening activities are limited and to be done without the need for each one to respond by speaking.

The following points should be considered at the while listening stage.

- tell your students that you are going to play the cassette.
- play the cassette.
- replay the cassette, in this case, the students have a greater chance of success.
- play the cassette for a third time, most of the students will get the answers.
- questions should be simple at the while-listening stage. Simple questions fall into these activities: marking errors, identifying people, multiple choice questions, etc. which focus on listening itself and do not need to write down many words. However, the questions which require to write long answers are distracting and it is unreasonable to expect the students with limited listening experience to write more than two or three words during the while listening activity.

7.7.2.1 Ideas for while-listening activities

Here is a selection of ideas with which can be considered as while-listening activities in the classroom.

- check or mark items in pictures. The teacher introduces the words and expressions which the students are not familiar with at pre-listening stage and the students are asked to identify people and things, mark choices, errors, items or check details during the while listening. This kind of while-listening activity is good because it helps the students to focus on listening itself and they are not confused by writing words.
- recognize a picture. The students listen to a description or a conversation and have to decide from the selection offered the right picture. Drawings or photos of people and scenes are the most common pictures that are used in this case.
- decide which set of pictures represent the story. Two or three sets of three or four pictures are presented to the students and then, let the students listen to the tape or their teacher in order to decide which set of the pictures represent the heard story. Each student should have the sets of the pictures in order to be easy for him to see. The differences between the pictures sets should occur at the end of the sequence, as the students may stop listening as soon as

they have made up their minds to decide which set is correct.

- put the pictures in the right order. A number of pictures are displayed to the students and they are to arrange the pictures in the correct order according to the listening text.

- complete a picture. The students are given an incomplete picture and asked to follow the instructions to draw just the outlines of the items while they are listening and then, they complete the rest later.

"This activity is popular with younger students and is particularly useful at the very early stages of learning when the level of difficulty can be kept very low". (Underwood; 1989, page 54)

- draw a picture. This activity can be done by the beginners and advanced. The beginners can draw simple pictures like a chair, a tree, etc. according to what they have heard. The advanced students can reproduce complicated designs.

- carry out actions. This activity is usually carried out by young learners at the beginning of the course. For example, the teacher says 'stand up, or sit down'; the students in this case should carry out what they have heard.

- arrange items on patterns or make models. The students are given items such as pencils or different shaped pieces of paper and asked to listen to instructions on a tape or the teacher speaks the instructions, then they try to build a model or make a pattern. For advanced learners, the models or patterns can be more sophisticated.

- follow a route on a road plan or a map. In this case, each student has his / her own marked map that is provided with names of the roads and places and the students follow the route plan to reach from place to another.

- complete a grid. The teacher provides his / her students or asks them to draw a grid. Each column and row are labeled with places, names, hobbies, etc. The students put the correct answers in the suitable boxes while listening depending on what they hear. If there is a lot of information or the students might have difficulty in writing down the answers, the teacher provides them with a selection of possible answers in advance at the pre-listening stage.

"A popular use of grids is recording information about train or plane times". (Underwood; 1989, 58)

- complete a form or a chart. This kind of activity is motivating for the learners because it does not need more writing. In this activity, the students are required to mark their choices with a cross or write short

answers while they are listening.

- label a diagram or a picture. The students listen to the text and label the diagram or picture that is displayed to them. This kind of activity enables the students to learn various parts of the engine, leaf or whatever and also to remember familiar words.

- make a list. This activity often consists of making a list of shopping, places of interest to visit, etc. It should not be too much writing and the information should not be given rapidly. The problem that arises from this activity is that the students may not be able to write down the words or recognize them when they hear them, so it is better to provide the students with a list and ask them to mark the items. If the words are not known by the students, they should be introduced at the pre-listening stage or the students make their own lists of what they expect to hear and depend on these lists as basis of the while-listening stage.

- true and false answers. This activity can be used for listening and reading comprehension. It is important that the teacher has to check through true/false activities before using them in the class.

- multiple-choice questions. This kind of activity can be given at the while-listening stage but with using pauses to give the students time to make their choices. It is important that the students read the questions before listening because it is difficult to read and listen at the same time. The teacher should avoid difficult questions.

- fill a gap (complete a text). This activity is harder than completing a grid because the students cannot read the text as fast as the speaker speaks. Therefore, a lot of time should be given to go through the gapped text before beginning to listen.

- spot mistakes. This activity can be based on a picture, a printed text or simply facts established orally at the pre-listening stage. The teacher gets the students to go through a text with some deliberate mistakes and then they listen to spot the mistakes in the written text.

"It is generally necessary to replay or re-speak the listening text in order to refer to the salient points. Frequently pair or group checking can follow while listening activities and can lead to interesting post-listening consideration of the text and the tasks".

(Underwood; 1989, page 73)

- predict what will come next. This kind of activity is done at the pre-listening stage but at the while-listening stage, the students predict the exact words to be spoken or the kind of response which might be expected. In this case, the teacher stops the tape after each question,

considering possible answers given by students, and then plays the tape for the correct answers.

- seek specific items of information. In this activity, the students are to seek the bits of information but it is concerned with extensive listening text. *"This kind of activity is concerned with listening to a fairly extensive listening text (a weather forecast, a news bulletin, a discussion, etc) with the objective of finding some previously specified information"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 72)

For example, the students might be asked to listen to BBC World Service News and find the latest news about Middle East Peace Process, and then write down as they listen. The important thing of this activity is to seek out specific items and let other parts of the text pass. Finally the teacher should bear in his / her mind that immediate feedback should be given at the while-listening stage and not be postponed to the later lesson in order to be useful and the information is still not missed. *"It is important to provide immediate feedback on whether, and to what extent to what extent, the students have succeeded in the task(s) and why or why not"*.

(Underwood; 1989, page 73)

Checking the work in-groups or in pairs can lead to interesting post-listening tasks.

7.7.3 Post-listening stage

According to Underwood (1989) post listening activities include all the work related to a particular listening text which are done after the listening is completed. There are many purposes of the post-listening stage. One of these purposes is to prepare the students for exam, if the objective of the students is to pass the exam.

Another purpose is to check whether the students have understood what they needed to understand and whether the while listening task has been set successfully. This can be done by the teacher giving the answers orally, by the students checking their answers in pairs, in groups or by the teacher showing the answers on the board/overhead projector and so on.

Another purpose of post-listening work is to reflect on why some pupils have failed to understand or missed some parts of the message.

There is also another purpose of this stage which is to give the

(mood)

students the opportunity to consider the attitude and manner of the speakers of the listening text.

Another purpose of post-listening stage is to expand on the topic or language of the listening text, and perhaps transfer things learned to another context. Post-listening is usually longer than the while listening, because the students have time to think, discuss, and to write, so post-listening activities should be interesting and motivating.

7.7.3.1 Post-listening activities

- solve the problems. Solving the problems is a popular post-listening activity. It usually follows from many while listening activities. It is important that the problems are easy to solve and not to be so long. One of the most motivating activities is to solve problems which one of the students has in real life. Here is an example:

'I have got a problem. Three years ago I visited my uncle who lives a long way from our town and he gave his piano. When I got back home I decided to sell it because I felt that I did not need it. He always asks me about it and I did not tell him that I sold his piano. Now he is coming to visit us. What should I do now? What am I to tell him?'

- role-play. The students take the roles of the speakers that they have listened to. They focus on imitating the situation, and then try the role-play. Before the role-play, attention is focused on the functions and forms that were used by the speakers. This encourages the students to try new language rather than using the language they have already mastered.

- written work. It can take many forms. The students may write some main points or summarize a story. They may try to shape their notes into a written description or if they have been filling in a map or a chart with information during the while-listening phase, they might find it is useful to try to summarize the information in a piece of writing at the post listening stage.

- complete a chart; this can be done as a completion of an activity of while listening. The following example is a kind of this activity. Part A can be carried out at the while listening, as part B is to be completed at the post listening stage.

Example

Part A

June is a female	Yes	No
Her husband came with her.	Yes	No
She does not learn Arabic.	Yes	No

Part B

June Ryan is from _____ Now she is _____

June learns Arabic to _____ June's husband's name is _____

She came to the _____ He works as _____

She works as a _____ Laila thinks that _____

Transcript

June Ryan is Australia. She came to the Gulf two years ago with her husband, Mike. He is an engineer. June used to be secretary. Now she is Laila Rashid's personal assistant. It is her job to plan Laila's working week and help her any way she can. Laila says that she would be lost without her. June thinks she could do a lot more to help. That is why she is learning Arabic three evenings a week. (Crescent English Course, Pupils Book, page 7)

- extend the lists; complete what has been done at the while listening stage, and check the lists.
- extend the notes; the brief notes that were made at the while listening can be more specific at the post listening activity. Writing notes at the while listening can be extended into written texts such as remarks, ideas, etc.
- identify the relationship between speakers; discuss the relationship between the speakers and the features of the listening text.
- establish the mood / attitude / behavior of the speaker; to recognize between the lines and the deeper meanings of the words. To recognize the words spoken sincerely, sarcastically, fawningly, etc. The quietness, loudness may indicate, anger, sorrow,

excitement or boredom. Sometimes the words which are said do not convey the meaning intended by the speaker. For example, 'Yes' spoken in a very doubtful, hesitant manner may mean 'No'. The students are asked to decide, for example, what is going on and where the speakers are. Authentic material is useful for this kind of task.

- summarizing; this activity can be done to extend the notes that the students made during listening or depend on memory as in re-telling a story or if they filled in a map or a chart with information during the while-listening phase, they might find it useful to summarize the information orally.

- written work; it can take many forms. For instance, listing specific points, writing summaries of stories, essays, etc. It is better to discuss the topic that is going to be written about.

Underwood (1989) stresses that motivation at the post listening stage is consolidated if the activity has purposes of its own and is of itself motivating, rather than depending on the essential interest of the text. (Page 93)

7.8 Types of listening exercises

Ur (1993) classified teaching listening comprehension into four types of listening exercise;

7.8.1 Listening and making no response.

It is a good opportunity to expose the students to spoken English. The texts should be attractive and easy. It is usually, listening to songs, stories or plays. Here are five suggested examples for this type of exercise.

7.8.1.1 Following a written text. The students listen to a text and read it at the same time. The teacher reads out the text, and the students follow him in their textbook. *"This is certainly a valid technique for presenting new materials and aiding reading; and It does get students used to how the language sounds and to the correspondence between orthography and pronunciation, but it does not let the students depend on their ears and the spoken words are sometimes different from written".* (Ur; 1993, page 52)

7.8.1.2 Listening to a familiar text

This means that the students have an idea of what they are going to listen. One thing may mislead students, that they think they are listening and understanding effectively when in fact they are only recognizing what they knew already. They may be shocked when they discover that.

7.8.1.3 Listening aided by visuals

In this type of exercise, the learners look at visual material and follow a spoken description of it at the same time. Picture, drawings or diagrams (maps, grid, family trees, plans) can be displayed on a board or projected on an overhead projector or a number of small pictures can be distributed to the students.

In pictures, the students match spoken texts with relevant pictures. In diagrams, the students link spoken description with what they see.

7.8.1.4 Informal teacher talk

In this case, the students listen to their teacher because he / she is the person who possess the information. Therefore, the students have plenty of opportunity to listen to spoken English. The teacher can talk about his / her family, friends, hobbies, childhood, plans for the future and so on. Informal teacher chat is excellent listening material.

7.8.1.5 Entertainment

When the students listen to something entertaining, they can get full benefit from the listening experience. Enjoyable songs and stories can motivate and encourage the students. *"Stories and songs in English lessons can improve student motivation and general morale, and show the language in a new light, not just as a subject of study, but as a source of enjoyment and recreation."* (Ur; 1993, page 63)

The teacher can alter or add and omit to make the story more enjoyable and suit the level of the students.

Songs are taught for two reasons: for the vocabulary or structures they contain and for the sake of pleasure. There are two sorts of songs.

1. composed English teaching songs.
2. authentic songs. Ur (1993) considers that the second are better because of their pleasure giving and cultural value. (Pages 65-66)

Films and television or video programs are an excellent medium which provide some enjoyable listening if they are based on good stories or interesting topics. Although some problems arise from using TV and videos, they still give students some entertaining and useful listening practice. (Page 67)

The teacher should choose her / his material carefully, taking into account its length, level, and intrinsic interest value for the students. The teacher is to watch films before presenting them in the class in order to check if they are suitable and be aware of the technical preparation that they may be necessary.

7.8.2 Listening and making short responses

The second type of listening exercises is listening with short responses. These exercises do not need long responses because the listening materials consist of colloquial dialogues or monologues which are broken into bits which require immediate response by the learner.

7.8.2.1 Physical movement

In this type of exercise, the commands are simple. The students respond by doing some simple actions like 'stand up', 'sit down', 'shut the door', 'come here', 'go back', etc'. For more advanced instructions, the teacher may use: 'fold your arms', 'put your finger on your nose' and so on.

7.8.2.2 Constructing models

In this exercise, suitable materials should be used so as to shape things as a response to the instructions. The learners may use building –blocks, some solid shapes which can be neat and simply built. For example, the teacher can ask the students to make a house. "The house consists of five rooms. Three bedrooms, one livingroom, one diningroom, one kitchen, two bathrooms and a garden. **"In the diningroom you can find a big table and six small chairs as well as a lamb shade. In each bedroom you can see one bed, a table lamb, a small table and a little chair, etc."**

7.8.2.3 Picture dictation

Drawing a picture can be more enjoyable for younger learners. For advanced ones, the teacher may take a real picture which he /

she can take from a book or a magazine and the students reproduce his / her description. It is fun when they compare their drawings with the original one.

7.8.2.4 Ticking off items

This exercise basically depends on a list of words that the learners tick off or categorize as they hear them.

The most well known form of this is 'Bingo '(or Lotto)'. Here, each student has a board with some pictures, words or numbers on it which he covers as he hears them called out. The first to cover all his items wins. This is good for younger learners; the problem is buying or making the boards. It can be solved by using the wallboard in the class or using an overhead projector. These items may be words, numbers or very simple sketches. Each student is asked to select any chosen of the items to copy onto a piece of paper. The teacher then calls out the names of the item in random order and the students tick them off as they hear them. Or the students classify the words called out by the teacher in suitable boxes.

For example.

Food	Drinks
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

For more advanced students, the items can be embedded in a coherent passage of discourse and the students are to respond the same way as above. For example, 'Hello, would you bring me a cup of tea, a piece of cake, Please? My son would like to have orange juice with a sandwich of cheese. Can you give me a glass of water, please?'

If students make mistakes, the teacher goes through the exercise again slowly.

7.8.2.5 False and true exercises

The students listen to the spoken statements and are asked to say true or false or they can note down in a form of words 'Yes' or 'No', Or by ticking 'T' or 'F'. The statements should be related to general facts

such as 'We eat water', 'Elephants are green', etc .

True and false exercises can be exploited to revise other subjects like history, geography, science, etc.

7.8.2.6 Detecting mistakes

In this exercise the students shout out when they come across something wrong or make a mark on a piece of paper for every mistake, in grammar, meaning, contradiction, inconsistencies. The teacher may make mistakes deliberately when he describes a picture that is displayed on the board or on an overhead projector and the students shout out or mark down the mistakes in a piece of paper when they hear anything wrong.

7.8.2.7 Aural cloze

This exercise can be done with a written text or without. In a written text, the students are given the version with deleted words, and then listen to the tape or their teacher with the full version; in this case, the learners fill the gaps according to what they hear. In the case of without written text, the students listen to the text with some words that are deliberately drowned. The gaps should be far away from one another. The students call out the answers (not necessarily the actual words). Here is an example for a text with missing words.

'Have you ever visited -----?'

Yes, I went there last year.

Where did you go?

I visited many -----.'

Did you enjoy there?

-----, I did'.

"Cloze is more often used as a test of reading comprehension".

(Ur; 1993, pages 83)

7.8.2.8 Numbering the correct picture

In this exercise the students listen to the description of the pictures that they have already received and they are asked to check or number the picture they have heard about.

7.8.2.9 Guessing definition

The students listen to a definition of something such as the description of an animal, people, events, places and they simply guess what it is by raising their hands to volunteer the answer or jotting it down on a piece of paper. It is better to tell the students in advance what nature of a thing it is.

7.8.2.10 Noting specific information

The students are asked to listen to a passage and note down some specific information from it. It means that they concentrate on some information and ignore other parts of the passage. They are told in advance what items that they are to pick out.

- specific items

In this exercise the students listen for a few minutes in order to pick out an item lasting two or three seconds. It is better to have an idea to what they are going to listen. The key word or phrase helps them to link it with the information they need. The following example may illustrate this exercise. 'The teacher may tell the students that they are going to listen to "Landing at London" and they are to know the temperature in London.'

The version

'We are about to land at London Heathrow where the time is 15:30 exactly. It is raining in London and there is quite a strong wind, but the temperature is fifteen degrees Celsius. Will you please fasten your seat belts and put out your cigarettes? Thank you'. (Crescent English Course; Pupils' Book 6, page 11)

- areas of information

In this exercise the students are asked to note down or remember all the items that are related to a particular area of inquiry. It may be a difficult task but it is useful because it triggers the students to distinguish between essential and non-essential information.

For instance, the students are to construct a list of what a tourist can do and visit in each city in the UAE after listening to the passage about 'A tourist is visiting the UAE'.

The version

'If you visit Abu Dhabi you will enjoy the green parks, the modern hotels, beautiful restaurants and sunny beaches. After this, you can go to Dubai. The shopping Festival' has started so

the streets and shops are full of people. When you have finished your shopping, you can go to Fujairah. Here you can go fishing, diving, swimming and sailing. You can also visit the old forts and stay in one of the modern hotels by the sea. After that you can go to Sharjah. Visit the Expo Center, the five museums and the Central market.'

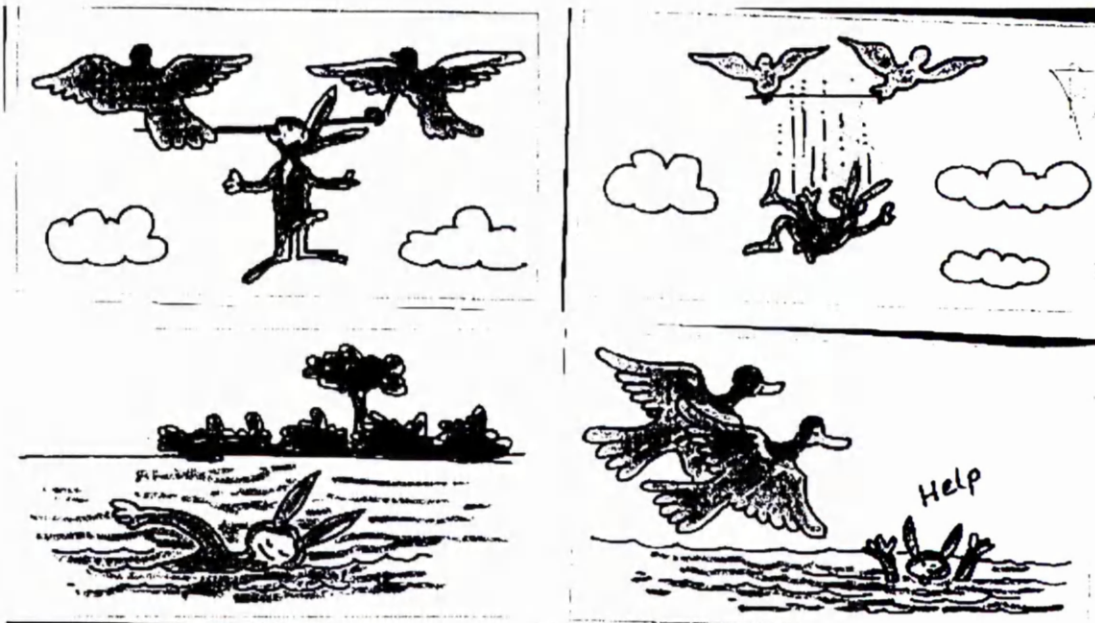
7.8.2.11 Pictures

Ordering and identifying. In this exercise the students are given a series of pictures, and then listen to the description of the pictures. The students are to number the pictures according to what they have listened. Or the students listen to a description of a component in a picture that they have already received and to identify the component according to the description that was mentioned such as a description of a person or an animal in the picture.

The following example may indicate numbering the pictures.

The version

'A little rabbit lived on a farm. He liked to talk and talk to the other animals. One day the rabbit went to the river. He was swimming and talking all the time. The water got into his mouth and nose. "Help! Help "shouted the rabbit. Two ducks were flying. They saw the rabbit and went to help him. The two ducks said, "Hold this stick between your teeth but don't talk." The two ducks were holding the stick. The rabbit was between the two ducks. The rabbit was looking down. "There are many carrots down there, "he said. The rabbit fell into the water. It never talked again'.



(English for the Emirates; Pupil's Book 5, page 47)

The students are to number the pictures above to what they have heard.

7.8.2.12 Grids

"A grid is simply a rectangle marked off into squares and used to display data", (Ur; 1993, page 116)

Students listen to the text and fill in the squares with the information they listen. Here is a text about two people who are talking about themselves and the students are going to complete the grid according to the spoken text.

The Version

'My name is Falah. I am twenty-nine years old. I am from Dubai. I have got married and I have two children. I am thin and tall and have got a short black hair. I work at the airport as an immigration officer. My job is to check people entering and leaving the country. I check their passports and help them when they have problems.

I am Noura. I am from Abu Dhabi. I am twenty years old. I am still single. I am quite tall and of a medium built. I have got a long

brown hair. I work at Abu Dhabi Airport as a policewoman in the security department. My job is to search the passengers' hand-luggage to make sure that there is nothing dangerous in their bags'.

The following grid is to be completed;

Name	Age	Occupation	Appearance	City	Family
Mr. Falah					
Miss. Noura					

7.8.2.13 Family tree

This type of diagram may be difficult but it can be interesting. Therefore, it should be given with frequent pauses and repetitions. *"This has become a favorite type of diagram in communicative English teaching, for both listening and speaking exercises".*

(Ur; 1993, page 121)

The students listen to the text about family relation and are to insert the names in the correct boxes. Here is an example of the family tree.

The Version

'A: Hi, you're new here, aren't you? What's your name?

B: Stella.

A: Want to come and play?

B: I'd like to, but I can't. My Mum says I've got to stay and help her. It's my brother's birthday and we're having a party.

A: Oh, you've got a brother, have you?

B: I've got two brothers. Kit, the one with the birthday, he's only little, he's four. I've got a big brother who's married, his name's Don.

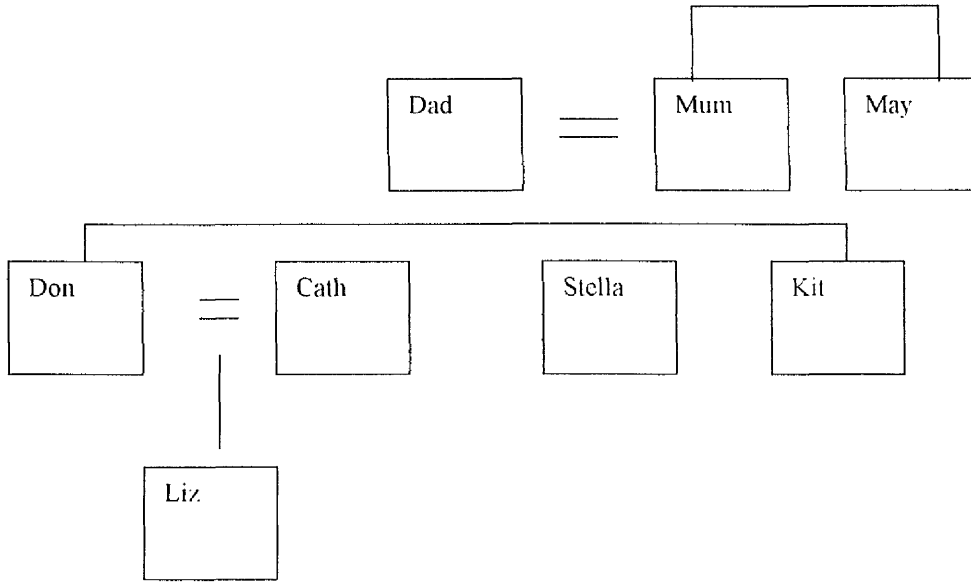
A: Does your brother Don live near here?

B: Yes, not very far away. Cath - that's his wife - she works in the sweetshop over there. They've got a new baby called Liz, I mean Elisabeth really, but we call her Liz.

A: Is that your Mum over there calling you?

B: No, that's my Aunt May, my Mum's sister. I'd better go. Bye.

A: Bye'.



Dad, Kit, Mum, Don, Cath, Liz (Ur; 1993, page 122)

The names can be kept short to facilitate writing and are written as a list under the blank diagram as it is indicated in the above figure.

7.8.3 Listening and making longer responses

In these listening exercises the students not only to respond in brief, and simple verbal or non-verbal responses but have to use relatively long units of language (written, read or spoken) in their responses, not only to show understanding of what the learner hears but also to reproduce, answer, expand or summarize it as required. These types of exercise include the following.

7.8.3.1 Repetition and dictation

Ur (1993) thinks that it is unreasonable to say that repetition has no value as a comprehension exercise. When you listen to a coherent discourse in a language you do not know, you will find it is difficult to repeat it, even though many of the individual sounds are familiar. In contrast, when you listen to a speech in a language you speak fluently, you will find that you can repeat it without difficulty.

"Longer coherent passages of discourse can be accurately repeated only if there is high level of comprehension on the part of the repeater". (Ur; 1993, page 128)

Therefore, the learners should listen not only for the sound but also for the meaning. *"It is more comprehensible if the students can repeat the sentences and know that these sentence are listened not only for sound but for meanings, too".* (Ur; 1993, page 128)

The disadvantage of repetition that it is time - consuming if the teacher wants to check the performance of each student. One way to overcome this problem, is to ask the students to write down what they have heard instead of speaking it aloud and the written version can be checked later by the teacher or by the students themselves using the correct version. This is called dictation, which can be used to check the accurate perception, comprehension and spelling.

Ur (1993) sees that the relationship between the repetition and comprehension is two-way; we repeat things better if we understand them and we understand things if we repeat them.

7.8.3.2 Paraphrase

Paraphrase is a reproduction of the spoken text, using different words and expressions but giving the same idea. *"Repetition is reproduction of spoken material in its original form. Paraphrase is reproduction of such material in a different form".* (Ur; 1993, 129)

Students can be asked to tell the teacher what they have (heard)

found out about the subject, at random, until they have reconstructed most of the information. Their memory can be aided by cues from the teacher, not question but one word reminders, round which they can build their paraphrases of the original relevant part of the passage. Oral paraphrase exercises are best done as a free exchange full class activity; that is to say, the teacher gives the cue, either general 'what was all that about?' or specific 'like the one word reminders', then lets students put up their hands to volunteer responses, additions and corrections. The teacher may then give her / his own summary of the students' suggestions in order to finish up. The entire exercise will probably not take longer than five minutes. If we ask students to write down their paraphrases instead of saying them out loud, we may get more exact and careful results, and be able to check them later. But the exercise becomes much more long drawn out and tedious, and students can not benefit from each other's suggestions. Another consideration is that the kind of language students are able to comprehend aurally is of a far higher level than that which they can write themselves. For this reason, the writing exercise of this kind may be disproportionately difficult. The criticism of these exercises that emerges (to mind) is that paraphrase can be defective. In some cases the original phrases or parts of them are repeated, not paraphrased. Sometimes the reproduction of paraphrase can be inaccurate. However, the aim of paraphrase is that the student to grasp the sense of what was said and (can) express it in his own words. Paraphrase can be done successfully if the teacher helps his students by giving them some acceptable modification for using other words. For example, if the text is presented in the formal way, the teacher can ask his students to paraphrase it in the simple informal way and less advanced language.

Here is an example:

'Original: The performance was attended by a large audience.

Paraphrase: Lots of people came to see the show.

Original: And there was loud applause at it conclusion.

Paraphrase: And clapped loudly at the end.

Original: However, the opinion of the critics did not accord with

that of the public.

Paraphrase: But the critics did not think it was as good as the public did'. (Ur; 1993, page 131)

Long passages can be broken down into short 'bits' and each 'bit' paraphrased as it is heard.

7.8.3.3 Translation

Translation is a kind of paraphrase that, is expressing in other words the sense of an original text but the difference between translation and paraphrase is, the new words are in another language. Many of the exercises that are used for paraphrasing are suitable for translation. For example, the exercise that given in (7.8.3.2) can be translated instead of paraphrased. These days translation is not a popular technique in the foreign language classroom because it gives little practice in communication skill and can waste the lesson time. The students use their own language, whereas they need to practice the new one. However, the use of translation techniques can be of great value in teaching foreign language.

"The proper, controlled use of certain types of translation techniques can be of great value in foreign language teaching".

(Ur; 1993, page 133)

We should not aim for accurate and elegant translation because it can be difficult and time-consuming.

7.8.3.4 Answering questions

Answering questions is the most popular procedure used in teaching any subject in the classroom. *"Questions are commonly used in the teaching of any subject to get students' minds working along the right lines, to stimulate curiosity, to elicit information, to test knowledge and so on". (Ur; 1993, page 134)*

Some think that the questions in classroom are not genuine because the teacher knows the answers. In contrast, in the real life situation the asker does not know the answer. This is not right because there are real – life situations, where the asker knows the answer to questions, or does not care for it, or asks for another reason, such as in the trial, interviewing TV, etc. Any teacher- questions that are followed by explicit verbal or non-verbal answers like, a nod are good

communication practice and they are likely to be responded correctly if they have been understood. 'Wh' questions and 'Yes/no' questions are commonly used in the classroom. The quizzes that are their answers short can be responded orally or jotted down such as 'What is the capital of the UAE? 'Where does the UAE lie?' etc. Pictures can be used as a basis for questions. For example, 'What can you see in this picture?' 'What are the boys doing?' etc. *"Visuals can be used as a basis for questioning"*. (Ur; 1993, page 135)

7.8.3.5 Answering comprehension questions on texts

This activity is commonly used for intermediate and advanced learners. In this type of exercise, the students listen to a passage recorded on a tape or spoken by their teacher that is extracted from a book or an article. *"A typical procedure is for the students listen to the passage once without looking at the questions, then to look over the questions, then to hear the passage again with the questions before them, and finally fill in the answers"*. (Ur; 1993, page 137)

Multiple-choice questions are usually used nowadays. Ur (1993) considers that this exercise demands more effort and concentration because the passages are very long and there is a lot of information to be stored in the students' memory. Moreover, the questions are written and there is the extra load of reading and writing. However, it is useful to let the students go through the questions before listening to the text as it is mentioned in (7.7.1.1).

7.8.3.6 Prediction

The students in this exercise are to form expectation of what is coming next. The simple way of this listening practice is to let the students listen to the first part of the extract, stop and ask them to state their expectations. After that they listen to the next part of the extract to compare their prediction with what was said.

Here is an example:

'The dogs cause annoyance on the streets'. 'I suggest -----',
'What do you think the speaker is going to suggest'?

7.8.3.7 Filling gaps

In these exercises, the students are asked to complete the missing parts of a dialogue, conversation or whatever. They listen to the cassette and being given a break to fill gaps. One-sided conversation is a suitable exercise. The students hear only one of the two

speakers and are to reconstruct the speech of the other speaker as the following example.

'Falah: Excuse me, Sir. May I have your passport? Thank you. I'm afraid I can't read your name.

Tony: -----.

Falah: Can you spell that?

Tony: -----.

Falah: Thank you. What is the reason for your visit?

Tony: -----.

Falah: Oh! I can't read your occupation.

Tony: -----.

Falah: Thank you. Here's your passport. I wish you a happy stay in the UAE'.

If the students are good at reading, the exercise can be based on multiple-choices questions. The students listen to one side of a telephone conversation and at the same time read the various possible responses. In this case, they mark the most suitable response. In order to help the students, the teacher may let them read the choices at the pre-listening stage.

Here is a conversation on a telephone.

'A: Hallo. This is 23680

B: (Gap One)

A: Oh hallo, I thought it might be you. How are you?

B: (Gap Two)

A: Oh yes ,the ones from the front room I bought at the sale.

B: (Gap Three)

A: They really were a bargain. I've never seen such good quality at such a price....

Gap One a) Are you there? Is this Jane?

b) Hello, Jane. Celia speaking.

c) Good morning. May I help you?

Gap Two a) I'm fine. Listen, I'm phoning about those curtains you bought last week.

b) I'm fine. I'm phoning about that new table of yours.

- c) How are you? Have you seen my new curtains?
Gap Three a) Yes, that's right, but I can't possibly come now.
b) Yes, the ones you said were so expensive.
c) Yes, that's right, the ones you said were so cheap'.
(Ur; 1993, page 143)

Filling gaps exercises are different from aural cloze that was discussed in (7.8.2.7). In these exercises the students are not only to predict but are also to reconstruct in retrospect.

7.8.3.8 Summarizing

Summarizing is another listening exercise in which the students are asked to summarize the main points of a given text, either orally or in a written form. The teacher can ask the students to give one sentence or phrase which sums up a passage. Here is an example. **'Ali gets up early in the morning. He comes to school on time. He does his homework regularly and interacts with his teacher.'** The students may sum up this passage in one sentence. **'Ali is a hardworking pupil.'**

In another kind of summarizing, the students are given many summary sentences and asked to choose the suitable one.

7.8.4 Listening as a basis for study and discussion

The students are not only to understand the spoken text but They are also to compare, interpret, analyze and evaluate. These activities are carried out through group discussion.

7.8.4.1 Problem – solving

Students hear the information that are related to the particular problem and set themselves to solve it. They discuss the solution, individually or through group discussion. They may need to hear the information many times in order to master the details. For example, the speaker is talking about the traffic problems in town and cities, saying; **'Something must be done about the traffic problems in towns and cities. The situation seems to get worse and it is difficult to get through any city or town during the rush hours.'** In this case, the students should look for the suitable solution for this problem orally or in writing.

7.8.4.2 Jigsaw listening

In this exercise, different groups of the students listen to different information, no one of the groups hear the complete information, then they start discussing and exchanging information with each other to arrive at the full picture. *"In jigsaw listening different groups of students listen to different but connected passages, each of which supplies some part of what they need to know. They then come together to exchange and pool their information and are thereby enabled to reconstruct a complete picture of a situation, or perform a task.*

(Ur; 1993, page 152)

The procedure of this type of exercise is as follows: The students sit in three or four groups. Each group listens to a different tape and each tape refers to the same subject but gives different information. Members of each group discuss the information that they heard to make sure that each member has the complete information. After that this initial grouping is split up and students meet each other in new groups. Every new group contains representatives from the original groups. The new groups then have to share the different information to arrive at the full picture. The following grid is an example of the jigsaw listening exercise;

Name	Mr. A	Mr. B	Mr. C	Mr. D
Profession				
Address				
Age				
Appearance				

Each group listens to a different extract to complete the grid.

"To complete a grid after hearing the recording texts, hearing different descriptions about different people and each group to fill in the grid, with what they have heard". (Ur; 1993, page 155)

7.8.4.3 Listening for interpreting

Students listen to a discourse and have to identify who and where the speakers are, what they are talking about and the relationship to each other, their moods, their attitudes, etc. The students may be exposed to the discourse with no preparation. Looking at pictures of the

speakers can help them. When the students look at the pictures which are related to the subject, they can link the text with the pictures, of the the speakers, their sex, old or young, the features of their faces, if they seem angry, happy, sad and so on.

7.8.4.4 Listening for evaluation and stylistic analysis

This kind of listening exercise can be more suitable for advanced learners. The learners should be able to understand the information of the heard text and may go on a step and analyze the style of the discourse. They can also assess its effect. Thus, they do not only discuss what a speaker is trying to do but also how he is going about it, what the characteristics of his speech are, so they will have to be highly proficient in spoken English; and they will have to engage in stylistic analysis. We therefore need a collection of sound or video recordings of all imaginable types of spoken or sung English, using a variety of voice – types, accents and background visual and aural effects.

- interviews: Radio or TV interviews with well-known personalities on typical subjects are likely to be listened to with interest.
 - comedy: To listen to funny items, jokes.
 - drama: listen to Radio or TV plays. Students discuss and criticize the characters, themes, etc.
 - advertising: Radio or TV commercials can be recorded and played to a class. Students discuss if they are convincing or not. Are they good?
 - rhetoric: There are many kinds of rhetorical speech that can be heard and discussed such as sermons, a part of an inauguration speech by a president of UK or USA, a part of the speech by the general secretary of UN. The students are to analyze the speaker's hopes, how he goes about it, and to what extent he is successful.
 - poetry: Listen to old ballads, children's rhymes.
- There are many other kinds of discourse to be played, such as lectures, news reporting, songs and so on.

7.9 Materials and Teaching Aids

Language teaching depends on many components which consist of methods and techniques, teacher, materials and teaching aids. In the previous section I discussed the two components (methods and techniques and the teacher) and in this section I will tackle materials and teaching aids.

7.9.1 Materials

Materials play a crucial role in language learning, they help leaning and teaching. They influence the content and the procedures of learning. Though the students should be the center of instruction, in many cases, the teachers and the students rely on materials, and the materials have become the center of instruction. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to know how to choose the best material for learning, how to make supplementary materials for the class, and how to adapt materials. Textbook is one of the sources of listening exercises, as well as a range of specially designed listening material is available from publishers. *"Publications usually consist of audio recordings on cassette, accompanied by books containing activities for students, and, often a teacher's book"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 94)

7.9.1.1 Recorded Materials

Using recorded materials has become standard for listening comprehension. It allows the non-native teacher to bring the voices of native speakers in the classroom, and allows him to present a variety of voices and accents to his students. Recorded materials can be used by students to work on their own, either in or outside the classroom and they can be used at any time. It is also an opportunity to hear many people talking at the same time in a conversation or discussion. *"The students can hear different speakers, with different accents, speaking at different speeds"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 95)

7.9.1.2 Live listening

Although using materials has many advantages, it is important to bear in mind that the student can benefit from listening to his teacher and his classmates in a live listening practice. *"Whilst there are advantages to using recorded material, there are also good reasons for the teacher fulfilling the role of speaker on some occasions, and even for students, and perhaps visitors, to take a turn at being the speaker"*. (Underwood; 1989, page 94)

In live listening, the listeners have visual clues to help them. The speaker's gestures can be helpful and many listeners find it useful to watch the speaker when he talks. *"The listeners have all non-verbal*

clues available to help them decipher the message."
(Underwood; 1989, page 95)

7.9.2 Authentic listening material

This is real life listening (Language that involves real life situation). It involves more than exposure to certain features of language. "*It is real language produced by a real speaker or writer for the real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort*".
(Porter & Roberts; 1981, page 37)

Taylor (1994) discussed many conflicting views about authenticity and non-authenticity of the language in the classroom. An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort. However, a non-authentic text is designed for language learners. "*Authentic texts are said to be those which are designed for native speakers: they are 'real' texts designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language in question*".
(Harmer; 1991, page 185)

There are many kinds of authentic listening materials such as the radio programs, face to face conversation, TV programs, recording of songs, etc. Authentic materials should be selected carefully and be suitable for the listeners in order to be understood. They should also be attractive enough to arouse interest.

7.9.2.1 Differences between authentic and non-authentic listening materials

Porter and Roberts (1981) give many differences between authentic materials and materials for ELT which point to the necessity of using authentic materials;

- pace of speaker; the speaker in ELT listening speaks slowly and clearly, but in authentic listening this does not happen. Normal native speakers talk faster and often less clearly.
- vocabulary is limited in ELT, yet, in authentic listening more different words are used.
- authentic material allows the students to listen to many different voices with varying accents. However, in non-authentic material, only one accent is used.
- non authentic material lacks of naturalness and spontaneity of

normal speech but authentic material gives the students a true representation of real spontaneous speech with its hesitation, false starts and mistakes which enable them to cope with real life speech outside the classroom.

- speech in non-authentic material has densely packed information but in authentic, less densely packed information is used.

- in ELT material, speech tends to be formal which means that the language is standard thus syntax and lexis tend to be rather formal. Swear-words never occur, for example, while slang language and other colloquial forms are rare.

- texts in non-authentic material are rarely distorted by disturbing noise such as passing cars, other people talking, etc.

It is clear that there is a mismatch between the characteristics of the discourse we listen in the real world and those of the language which the students hear in ELT classroom. *"Students working with non-authentic materials are led into false expectations about what will occur in the ordinary spoken language which they will wish to understand."* (Underwood; 1989, page 99)

In order to help the students cope with this problem, they should listen to ordinary speech, spoken by ordinary people in ordinary way.

"We must at least expose the learners to authentic language and, if possible, lead them to work out strategies for coming to terms with it". (Long & Richards; 1987, page 179)

I want to point out that I will discuss the possibility of using authentic texts for all learners in all classroom situations or only for the well prepared students in section (7.9.2.5) later in the chapter.

7.9.2.2 Using authentic materials in teaching language

After I discussed the features of authentic materials and non-authentic materials and found that the students are in need to listen to authentic materials in order to match between the discourse we hear in the real world and the language the students listen in the classroom, I will discuss the possibility and the usefulness of using authentic materials in teaching listening in the classroom.

Harmer (1991) thinks that using authentic materials sometime^s in teaching language is not useful, he thinks that students probably do not understand text and they will become very demoralized. Harmer (1991) believes that when the students listen to something being

understood, they become confident when they listen English in general. *"Successful listening classes make students better able to cope with listening to English"*. (Harmer; 1991, page 186)

Geddes (1978) points out the difficulties that the students face when they are exposed to authentic listening. He says when a learner is confronted with unfamiliar text or discourse etc, he tends to panic because of course, he cannot concentrate his attention on every constituent in an utterance with the same intensity, and either he attempts to attend to everything with equal intensity, or he abandons the task altogether. The result is usually a failure to apprehend and the student feels frustrated. However, this could also happen with non-authentic text, if it is too difficult or unfamiliar. Underwood (1989) believes that a listening text should not be judged to be too difficult merely because the students will not be able to understand every word and follow every bit of what it is said. Underwood (1989) adds that the teacher should not wait until his students have become advanced learners to begin using authentic materials, although at first texts will have to be selected carefully and tasks kept simple, so that ✓ the students are not demotivated by being confronted with texts and activities which they cannot handle.

7.9.2.3 Authentic listening materials and activities

The need for authentic materials has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years. *"The closer the learner comes to normal language use, the greater is his enthusiasm"*. (Porter & Roberts; 1981, page 38)

Authentic listening is the best kind of listening material to be given as sample of listening to a foreign language. Therefore, the students should be trained to listen to authentic materials that enable them to recognize the language in real life situations.

7.9.2.4 Authentic listening activities in the classroom

Using authentic materials in the classroom has become necessary Porter and Roberts (1981) noted that multiple choice questions and WH questions are still widely used in the exploiting of listening materials even if they include authentic texts. They add multiple-choice exercises and many forms of questioning may lead the teachers to fear of 'incomplete comprehension' that is, the learners not being able to understand and recall large chunks of the text. *"The use of multiple choice questions and WH questions does not allow*

the range of listening experiences encountered in the real world. The learner should experience this range in the classroom".

(Porter & Roberts; 1981, page 43)

Long & Richards (1987) argue that we listen for many reasons and the complete comprehension represents only one of these reasons. Even native speakers do not impose a standard of total comprehension on themselves. For example, on the BBC weather forecast for shipping, millions of listeners may hear that a wind is 'backing southeasterly.' To a layman, "backing" will mean "moving" and he is quite content with that, though aware that there is probably a finer distinction contained in the term. His comprehension is partial, but sufficient for his needs and in proportion to his knowledge. Long & Richards (1987) gave many examples to illustrate the activities of the authentic listening in the classroom. (Pages 183, 184)

Example One

Weather Forecasts

The following example may illustrate the activities of the authentic listening in the classroom. It is about weather forecasts.

It is preferable to be recent. The aim of the exercise is to practice focused listening for specific information without visual support.

At the pre-listening phase, the teacher elicits the students' knowledge of forecast structure and content. The students adopt location on a map, either from free choice or according to a role card. Then they listen and jot down the relevant weather details. After listening they may:

1. Exchange the information with each other in groups.
2. Select suitable clothes.

Example Two

Tape recording of a song.

The aim of the exercise is to listen for precise words and phrases.

The students hear the song in the background. They read an incomplete text, representing an intermediate stage in a learner's attempt to write down the words, they then predict the content and form of the incomplete sections. They guess the meaning of the unknown words, and listen to the song repeatedly until the text is complete, checking their predictions. Finally they can play the recording and "sing along".

It is better in these activities not to use long texts and have a clear predictable and repetitive inner structure such as news broad casts, announcements, etc. as a step towards longer texts.

7.9.2.5 Are authentic listening materials useful for all levels?

Can listening to authentic materials be used to all levels?

Morrison (1989) thinks that authentic materials can be used with all levels from beginners to advanced. If the learner is exposed to authentic materials from the beginning, he can fully integrate the individual listening micro-skills that may be isolated and presented by the teacher. Moreover, the provision of authentic materials allows learners to supplement the inevitably limited amount of listening material their teachers and classmates can provide. (Pages 14-18)

Others like Nakic (1981) believes that authentic materials, and particularly sound materials, are not suited for beginning levels of foreign language study. The reason is the difficulty of such material. It differs from carefully and slowly pronounced text in tempo, phonetic variability, register etc, and however carefully one searches it is hard to find authentic samples which fit into a grammatical and lexical grading of beginning levels. (Page 7)

Hubbard, Jones, Thornton & Wheeler (1993) argue if authentic text is chosen with care, authentic material can be used even at the beginner stages but the activity must be graded. For example, the teacher can play extracts from different types of radio programs (news, sports commentary etc.) they are listening to. Listening to the news, students can be asked to identify the main news items. If real conversations are used, they can try to identify where the conversation took place and what is happening, or they try to gauge the attitudes of the speakers, are they angry, friendly, happy, sad etc. (Page 89)

7.9.2.6 How does the teacher avoid failure?

The teacher is to control and guide his students to listen to authentic materials from the beginning and at the early stages in order to accustom them to this kind of listening. If the teacher can show his students how easy it is to understand something from authentic material rather than how difficult it is to understand everything, then the students are more likely to want to understand more and feel that the texts are not so difficult as they think. If the teacher trains his students to understand normal spoken language, the use of authentic

material can be more successful. *"If teachers show students how easy it is to understand something from authentic material rather than how difficult it is to understand everything, then students are more likely to want to understand"*.

(Hubbard, Jones, Thornton & Wheeler; 1993, page 90)

Porter and Roberts (1981) give advice on how to deal with authentic materials so as to be more useful and avoid frustration. They say that listening to authentic materials should never happen in isolation. The listening should be integrated, for example by topic, or through its inclusion in a series of related experiences.

7.10 Teaching aids

Aids are used for demonstration and reinforcement. They can be categorized into four types. Visual, audio, audio-visual, as well as language games. Visual aids involve chalkboard, pictures, posters, drawings, charts, and maps. Audio aids include radio programs, recording materials, and language laboratory. Audio-visual aids comprise (of) films, video-tapes, TV programs and microcomputers. The fourth type, is the language games such as card games, board games, paper and pencil games. In this section I am going to discuss the role of the media in learning foreign language, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of some audio-visual aids.

7.10.1 What role do the media play and how they are used to best advantage?

El-Araby (1974) argues that media play an important role in teaching foreign language and should be used in teaching English which are considered the best way to make teaching foreign language more enjoyable, quicker and simpler. Listening with understanding is one of the best skills in learning a foreign language. In order to reach a satisfactory standard in this skill, the learner should first be able to recognize the sounds of the taught language. He should be able to differentiate between these sounds in the same way as a native speaker does. Listening precedes speaking ability. A learner has to hear sounds of the foreign language before he can reproduce them. The ability of reproducing the language fluently accurately depends on how much the learner has listened to the language with perception and understanding. The common aids which can be used in teaching listening are recording and playing devices, such as audio-cassette

recorders and video cassette recorders, and the language laboratory, as well as the computer which can be used as an aid to reinforce teaching oral skills. But we cannot deny that many problems arise such as equipment selection and maintenance in addition to the funding of these devices which many countries cannot provide all their schools with. Smith (1987) says It is foolish to assume that the more frequent use of audio tapes and video tapes will solve all pedagogical problems; They solve some (provide motivation and opportunities for listening to real language), and do nothing for other aspects of teaching (will not address speaking skills specifically, nor provide for individual attention, for example). *"All media must be assumed to form as an integral part of a curriculum and to carry a primary instructional load according to their potential to explain, illustrate, and teach. Media should not be used in a "reinforcing" "additional" "adjunct", or "remedial" way, but as mainstream teaching tools".* (Smith; 1978, page 45)

7.10.2 Using audio- visual equipment in teaching listening to a foreign language

Using recorded materials enables the students to listen to native speakers if their teacher is a non-native speaker. It is also a good opportunity to listen to real-world listening. The students can listen to different accents in different situations.

Using video enables the teacher to point out the many visual clues which listeners use to help them understand what they hear. The students can see features of the speakers, old, young, sad, happy, angry, complainant, requester, facial expressions, gesture, all of these factors important for the listener to understand the speakers. The teacher should be careful to choose the most appropriate aid that best serves his teaching purposes. The aid should simplify the teaching process, evoke interest in the foreign language and should be suitable for the teaching objectives. *"Using audio-visual materials should be skillfully employed by the teacher. Their effective use calls for the energetic, imaginative approach by the teacher. He should be constantly on the alert for new ideas and new techniques. He should know his own capabilities, know what materials he can justifiably make for himself and know when he should turn to the library service".* (Cable; 1968, page 1)

He should always make his teaching more effective and use audio-visual aids to achieve his aim.

7.10.3 Advantages and disadvantages of some audio - visual aids

As I mentioned in the previous section (7.10.2) that using audio-visual aids play an important role in learning English as a foreign language. In this section I am going to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of some these aids.

7.10.3.1 TV

TV is a broadcast medium, it brings the outside world in the classroom. It offers visual and audio clues to the meaning. The learner can hear the language and at the same time see the context in which it is used. It gives the class and the teacher to talk about, beyond the confines of the classroom. It also introduces the culture of the target language in the classroom. Although it makes learning more attractive, it can only teach a limited amount on its own. It stimulates the desire but cannot satisfy it. The following table clarifies the advantages and disadvantages of TV.

TV: Advantages	Disadvantages
Language in context.	Ephemeral - only seen once or twice.
Sound plus moving pictures.	Low language density.
The outside world in the classroom.	Unsuitable for intensive study.
Cross - cultural education.	

Table No. 3

Some advantages and disadvantages of using television in the teaching foreign languages.

7.10.3.2 Video

"Video is sound and vision recorded on onto video tape and played through a video recorder onto a TV screen".

(Tomalin; 1986, page 3)

The programs in video can be played many times and a short sequence from the program can be selected for intensive study and worked on by the teacher in the classroom. This sequence can be

repeated again and again. It can also be run at a high speed or low speed. The teacher can stop it at a particular point in the program and explain the point to his learners. *"Video is an immensely flexible tool in the hands of the teacher"*.

(Tomalin; 1986, page 7)

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of using video in the teaching foreign languages are illustrated in the below table.

Video: Advantages	Disadvantages
All the advantages of TV and few of disadvantages.	Possibly low language density (but high density visual clues to meaning which can be used to elicit language)
Intensive study.	Sometimes too long for easy classroom use.
Short sequences can be selected, scenes can be run at slow speed or frozen.	
Register: focus on attitude, expression, exposure, gesture, and environment.	
Close-up on detail.	

Table No. 4

Some advantages and disadvantages of using video in the teaching foreign languages in the classroom.

7.10.3.3 Radio

Radio is a broadcast medium, it is a way of developing listening ability. It enables the learner to train his ears listening to a foreign language and improve fluency. It also offers a native speaker model to the learner who lives far away from English speaking countries. The foreign learner can listen to the BBC World Service news wherever he is (in the car, at home, etc). Tomalin (1986) thinks that radio listening is greatly encouraged by teachers as an aid to the results they want to achieve with the learner in the classroom.

(Page 10)

Some advantages and disadvantages of using radio in learning a foreign language are classified in the following table.

Radio: Advantages	Disadvantages
Ear training.	Ephemeral.
Intensive listening practice.	Reception may be bad.
Native speaker model.	
Accessible where TV/ video is not.	
Graded programs allow a listening success.	

Table No. 5

Some advantages and disadvantages of using radio in the teaching foreign languages.

(Tomalin; 1986, pages 11-12)

7.10.4 Language Laboratory

As Al-Mutawa & Kailani (1989) pointed out, the language laboratory as a teaching aid is not used on a large scale in Arab World Schools. It is too expensive to buy and run effectively, and partly because the time allotted for teaching English is limited.

7.10.4.1 What is the language laboratory?

It is equipment with tape recorders for listening and recording. There is a control-desk for the teacher, from where he can send programs to individual students and listen to their performance. *"It is a mechanical and electronic device that makes it possible for spoken language to be presented in such a way that learners can react to it individually, all at the same time".* (Davies & Hussy; 1992, page 112)

7.10.4.2 The value of the language laboratory as a listening device

The language laboratory enables the students to participate in interactive information activity that requires groups to listen to different information and then share. The students can listen at their own pace , which results in less anxiety. They can record and listen to their own responses. They also listen to superior sound quality. Dakin (1973) mentioned the value of the laboratory. However, he

pointed to the materials to be used in the language laboratory. He indicated that the materials which are used in the laboratory should suit the level of the students, their interests, and should be enjoyable and effective. However, the question is how to make materials interesting and enjoyable. Dakin (1973) added *the dialogues, conversations, texts should suit the level of the students, suit their culture, traditions and also, their interests. In order to be encouraged to listen again and again*". (Dakin; 1973, pages 35)

7.10.4.3 Why do we use the laboratory in teaching oral skills in the Arab World?

The students in the Arab world may have no chance to use English in their real life, the only time they are in contact with English is during the lesson. The students can practice listening to native speakers rather than to their teacher and they can also listen to different voices. Many students are too shy to speak out in the class for fear of making mistakes. So, in the laboratory only the teacher hears them. The master voice on the tape can be repeated many times with clear voice and without boredom. Every student in the laboratory can hear the voice, better than a tape recorder in the classroom, as sometimes the classroom is crowded and the students who sit in the back cannot hear the voice as well as in the laboratory.

7.10.4.4 Some recommendations on using the language laboratory

The following recommendations should be followed by the teacher when using the language laboratory;

- the teaching objective should be attainable with the help of the medium and the contents of the learning materials should be suited for the medium. They should fully exploit the specific characteristics of the language laboratory. Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989) suggested some pieces of advice on how to use the language laboratory.
- the teacher is advised not to use the laboratory for new presentation so as to avoid wasting the facilities;
- prepare the class for the kind of work they will be practicing in the laboratory;
- follow this with work in the classroom to reinforce the experiences the students have in the laboratory.
- choose appropriate material including a variety of activities to make language laboratory work motivating.

7.10.4.5 Can listening comprehension be successfully taught in the language laboratory?

According to Davis & Hussey (1992), exercises in listening comprehension, in pronunciation, in syntax and in morphology can all be done very well in a language laboratory. In listening comprehension, apart from having students listen to texts, basic exercises can be done in recognition of isolated words and of the multiple forms these same words can take in connected speech. (Page 119)

7.10.5 Using the computer in learning listening

The computer has become a part of our life and most people have this device either in their houses or offices and we can exploit it in developing teaching foreign language, especially listening and viewing comprehension. It gives the learners freedom to work at their pace and level, and to receive immediate and personalized feedback. It promotes co-operative, develops learners' sense of responsibility and changes the role of the teacher.

Summary

Listening is an important part of oral communication. Teachers of foreign language should focus on listening especially at early stages. Through reviewing the importance of listening in learning English as a foreign/second language, teachers of English should show this skill a great deal of importance. Furthermore, the students learn to value listening when it is given a prominent role in the English classroom and when it is meaningfully integrated with speaking, writing and reading experience. Exposure to oral English is very important for ESL or EFL students. Listening precedes speaking, so students need to spend much time listening before developing other skills. The teacher of English has to expose his students to a range of listening experience which may make listening purposeful, help students to understand, build up students' confidence. The teacher should choose the suitable time, place, and materials for listening. He has to prepare the lesson before presenting it, give background information, use some suitable aids which make the lesson more easy and useful, prompt the students to help each other through pair work, group work. Furthermore, the teacher should give immediate feedback, provide opportunities for the students to participate in evaluating the perception of the lesson.

Finally, teachers who bear in mind the value of listening work and plan lessons in a purposeful way, will find that their students begin to be concerned with listening and become more confident of themselves. Language learners often think that all their difficulties in listening are due to their lack of knowledge of foreign language. But sometimes native - speakers also face difficulties in listening.

Successful listening depends on motivation and concentration. A person may listen badly if he is not interested in the subject, or he is busy with some other external factors. Listening is integrated with speaking. Being a good speaker should mean being a good listener.

END OF PART TWO

Part Three

Chapter Eight

8.0 Field work

As I pointed out in Part Two, Chapter Three (3.0), recently listening has become very important as most studies reveal that this skill should be given equal emphasis as other skills (speaking, reading and writing). We notice how the new methods focus on listening as a main skill in teaching a foreign language. In White's view (1998) there is now a certain uniformity of approach to listening in many published materials, which offers relatively comfortable routine procedures (for teachers at least) for dealing with the listening text. Therefore, I would like to review the steps which have generally been followed in teaching listening in the classroom in the UAE secondary schools as indicated in the teacher's guide (page 14). The teacher may follow these points;

- warm up the topic of the listening text.
- write two or three questions on the chalk board before letting the students listen to the class cassette.
- play the cassette once and ask the same questions.
- play the cassette again if necessary and then ask different questions .
- the students are answer the questions that have been written on the board.
- the text usually takes three to five minutes. Most of the texts are dialogues.

As was underlined in Part Two, Chapter Seven (7.0), listening to a foreign language should be allotted more time and not only listening to the teacher or using a cassette, but many audio-visual aids should be employed in order to enhance teaching and make the listening more effective and motivating to the students. I suppose that using only a tape in presenting listening text makes the students more bored, and it does not create any motivation. So, I tried to activate using the language laboratory which El-Araby (1975) regarded as a very essential device in teaching foreign language in the Arab World, particularly, oral skills. Besides, as was indicated in Part Two, Chapter Two (2.10), in recent years the USA and many other countries began to include some listening activities as part of the basic schools curriculum. According to these studies I believe that focusing on listening in teaching English as a foreign language can

improve the student's performance in English and using audio-visual aids enables the learners to understand and communicate with English language more effectively.

- My experiments were conducted under the following conditions

- I have already taught two secondary classes, and I have chosen them as two groups, the experimental and the control group in order to use these two groups throughout all my experiments. I administered a pretest to the two groups before starting the experiments in order to find out their relative abilities
- the experimental group consisted of 20 students and control group of the same number.
- the listening texts which I used were taken from the students' books (Second Secondary Stage).
- the time assigned for the listening activities was 15 minutes out of the period's time (45 minutes). The students learn English for six periods per week.
- each experiment continued for 4 weeks.
- the whole experimental program lasted for five months.

Pre-test

Before starting the experiments I administered a pretest to the two groups and the text was taken from the pupil's book for second secondary (see appendix 1). It was a dialogue between people who were talking about their test.

I followed the usual procedures used in all government schools in the UAE when giving a listening text. The students were familiarized with the subject. I gave an idea about the topic that the students is going to listen to it. For instance, **"The dialogue is about students who are talking about a test that they had, and one of them was not happy because he did not do well in the exam."** The learners received a comprehension check to look at. Then they listened to the cassette three times and the last one included many pauses.

At post-listening the learners had seven minutes to deal with the comprehension check. Here are the questions, which were given to the students in the comprehension check.

Comprehension questions

12.5 / pass mark

1. What is the dialogue about?
-----.
2. How many speakers are there?
-----.
4. Are they young or old?
-----.
5. Are they girls or boys?
-----.
6. What are their names?
-----.
7. Who had a test?
-----.
8. What kind of the test did he/she have?
-----.
9. How many poets did he/she mention?
-----.
10. What were some of the teacher's questions?
-----.

According to the grading system of the Ministry of Education the full mark is 25 for listening skills in secondary stage and half of it is a pass mark. (12.5)

The table below shows the scores of both groups A and B.

Group A (20 students)		Group B (20 students)	
1.	15	21.	14
2.	10	22.	11
3.	9	23.	17
4.	16	24.	12
5.	18	25.	16
6.	17	26.	15
7.	7	27.	9
8.	15	28.	13
9.	5	29.	6
10.	7	30.	8
11.	4	31.	3
12.	2	32.	1
13.	6	33.	4
14.	3	34.	5
15.	1	35.	2
16.	13	36.	12
17.	18	37.	19
18.	19	38.	20
19.	8	39.	7
20.	7	40.	8

Table No. 6
Pretest Experimental and Control Groups Scores

	Group A	Group B
Pass	8	7
Fail	12	13
Percentage	40%	35%
Mean	9.95	10.05
St. Dev.	5.93	5.68

Table No. 7
Statistical Analysis Results

The statistical analysis of the scores above indicates that the two groups are nearly equal in ability.

Task One

I used the same groups in all the experiments I administered and made Group A the experimental group and Group B the control group.

The purpose of the experiment was to find out the difference in performance of the students in the language laboratory with that in classroom. I wanted to explore the claim that the language laboratory is an important device in improving to learn listening to a foreign language. Refer to Part Two, Chapter Seven (7,10,4,2) and (7.10.4.3)



Experimental group (Group A)

The hypothesis for Task One was : "Students listening to a text in a language laboratory will be more successful than similar students listening to the same text on a single tape recorder in a classroom."

Resources

Tape-recorder, laboratory, chalkboard and comprehension check.

Procedures

I directed the students in the experimental group (Group A) to the language laboratory after giving the students an idea about what to do in the laboratory. They sat individually in the laboratory.

Pre-listening

Before letting the students listen to the dialogue (appendix 2), I gave them a background about the dialogue but without any details. Refer to Part Two, Chapter Seven (7.7.1) **This dialogue is about people who are talking about something which happened to one of them who was depressed because he failed his exams** ".Then, I showed them the picture that was related to the subject. The learners looked at the picture and discussed what they saw. Then the comprehension checks were distributed, including questions for gist, specific and detailed information. The students listened to the cassette one time to answer the questions for gist. They were given three minutes to deal with the comprehension check.

Section One

2.5/ pass mark

Questions for gist

1. What are the people talking about?

2. Are the speakers, boys or girls?

The second section was listening for specific information. I played the cassette for the second time.

At the post-listening they began to answer the questions and were given four minutes.

Questions for specific information: 5/ pass mark

1. How many speakers are talking?

2. What are their names?

3. Who was sad?

4. Did he blame himself/herself?

The third section was listening for details. The learners listened to the tape for the third time with two pauses.

At the post-listening they dealt with questions for details for five minutes.

Questions for details: 5/ pass mark

1. Why was he/she sad?

2. What expressions did he/she use?

3. Who comforted him?

4. What expressions are suitable for comfort?

Control Group (Group B)

The same procedures were followed with the control group except they remained in their classroom. I administered a posttest to the two groups. The following tables show the scores of the students on the two groups.

Experimental Group (A)	Gist 2.5 pass mark	Specific 5 5 pass mark	Details 5 5 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
1.	3	6	5	14
2.	1	2	1	4
3.	3	4	5	12
4.	0	3	2	5
5.	4	6	5	15
6.	3	5	4	12
7.	4	7	6	17
8.	3	7	6	16
9.	1	3	4	8
10.	4	8	7	19
11.	4	9	8	21
12.	3	7	6	16
13.	1	4	4	9
14.	4	7	6	17
15.	2	1	3	6
16.	5	9	8	22
17.	2	4	3	9
18.	4	6	6	16
19.	3	5	5	13
20.	4	7	6	17

Table. No. 8
Task One: Group A scores

Experimental Group (A)		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Gist		14	6	70%
Specific		13	7	65%
Details		13	7	65%
Total		12	8	60%
Mean	13.3			
St. Dev.	5.29			

Table. No. 9
Statistical Analysis Results. Group A

The table below shows the scores of of the students on the control group:

Control Group (B)	Gist 2.5 pass mark	Specific 5 pass mark	Details 5 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
21.	1	2	3	6
22.	2	0	2	4
23.	4	7	5	16
24.	3	6	5	14
25.	1	2	3	6
26.	3	4	5	12
27.	2	3	4	9
28.	2	2	3	7
29.	3	4	4	11
30.	4	6	7	17
31.	3	4	3	10
32.	2	5	5	12
33.	3	6	5	14
34.	4	7	8	19
35.	3	7	6	16
36.	1	3	2	6
37.	1	2	2	5
38.	4	8	8	20
39.	2	5	4	11
40.	3	8	7	18

Table. No. 10
Task One: Group B scores

Control Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Gist		11	9	55%
Specific		10	10	50%
Details		10	10	50%
Total		8	12	40%
Mean	11.65			
St. Dev.	4.77			

Table. No. 11
Statistical Analysis Result

The outcome of the two groups manifests that there is a difference between the control group and the experimental group. This means that the performance of the students in the language laboratory is clearly better than that in the classroom.

Task Two

The hypothesis for task three might be: "Students' performance will be better when working in pairs than when working alone. The students can complete the task in pairs and this activity enables them to practice speaking as was pointed out in Part Two, Chapter Seven (7.6.2) and (7.7.1.1). In this experiment I let the students sit in pairs to complete the task at the pre-listening and then asked them to deal with the questions in pairs.

Resources

Tape-recorder, chalkboard and comprehension check including questions and completing a dialogue.

Experimental Group

Procedures

Pre-listening

The procedure I followed was getting the students to deal with the comprehension check in-pairs at post-listening. I asked the pupils to sit in pairs at the pre-listening. At the beginning I gave them an idea like, we "should not pick the flowers, we must keep the garden clean and tidy."

I wrote the words which were related to the topic (picking the flowers) such as, forbidden, allowed, flowers, pick up, etc on the chalkboard and instructed the students to discuss their meanings in English and sometimes in their own language under my monitoring. That lasted for four minutes. Next they received the comprehension checks which had comprehension questions (Part Two, Chapter Seven 7.7.1.1) and (7.8.3.5) to let the students go through them before listening. Then, I played the cassette a couple of times on a dialogue between Andy and Frank (appendix 3). Furthermore, they discussed the topic and the main points with me. At the post-listening they began to embark on the comprehension check. Six minutes were allowed to finish the assignment. (Time limit rouses the learners to do the activity competitively).

Section one

Comprehension questions

7.5/ pass mark

1. Where are the speakers sitting?

.....

2. What is the theme of the dialogue?

.....

3. Are they students?

.....

4. Are they boys or girls?

.....

5. Who wanted to take some flowers?

.....

6. Why are they not allowed to pick flowers?

.....

7. What can they do?

.....

7. Why are they happy?

.....

9. What kind of expressions did the speakers use?

.....

.....

Section Two

In the second section the students were asked to listen to the class-cassette while they were jotting down some notes so as to help them to complete the dialogue. I distributed the comprehension check which included the dialogue with some gaps Part Two, Chapter Seven (7.8.2.7) and (7.8.3.7). The students remained sitting in-pairs and listened to the dialogue for the third and fourth time with three pauses. 6 minutes the students had to complete the task. Here is the dialogue with some gaps:

Complete the following dialogue 5/ pass mark

Frank: Look at those flowers, Andy. Lovely, aren't they?

Andy: -----.

Frank: Andy, are we allowed to take some?

Andy: No, -----.

Frank: What's wrong with that, Andy?

Andy: Look at the board over there. It says: -----

-----.

Frank: -----, as agreed.

Andy: Hey, you! ----- You're not allowed to play ball in the school garden.

Frank: Come on, Andy! -----.

Andy: Playing ball here is ----- It's not permitted at all.

Frank: -----?

Andy: The only thing we can do is to go to the biology class. The bell is -----.

(English for the UAE 8. Pupil's book. Page 33)

Control Group

The same procedures were followed for the control group but the students sat and dealt with the comprehension check individually. The scores of the control and experimental groups are given in the following tables.

Ex. Group (A)	Comprehension questions 7.5 pass mark	Completing the dialogue 5 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
1.	8	6	14
2.	7	6	13
3.	6	4	10
4.	5	4	9
5.	12	8	20
6.	11	9	20
7.	7	5	12
8.	6	5	11
9.	11	7	18
10.	10	9	19
11.	5	3	8
12.	6	3	9
13.	10	7	17
14.	9	7	16
15.	7	2	9
16.	6	2	8
17.	12	8	20
18.	12	7	19
19.	11	7	18
20.	12	6	18

Table No. 12
Task Two: Group A scores

Experimental Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Comprehension questions		11	9	55%
Completing the dialogue		14	6	70%
Total		12	8	60%
Mean	14.4			
St. Dev.	4.55			

Table No. 13
Statistical Analysis Results

Co. Group (B)	Comprehension questions 7.5 pass mark	Completing the dialogue 5 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
21.	8	4	12
22.	13	8	21
23.	1	2	3
24.	5	4	9
25.	13	7	20
26.	5	2	7
27.	7	5	12
28.	6	5	11
29.	11	7	18
30.	0	3	3
31.	4	7	11
32.	6	3	9
33.	10	7	17
34.	9	7	16
35.	7	2	9
36.	6	2	8
37.	12	7	19
38.	3	2	5
39.	5	4	9
40.	12	6	18

Table No. 14
Task Two: Group B scores

Control Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Comprehension questions		8	12	40%
Completing the dialogue		10	10	50%
Total		7	13	35%
Mean	11.3			
St. Dev.	5.24			

Table No. 15
Statistical Analysis Results

The scores of the students in the experimental group show that the students who worked in pairs did clearly better than those in the control group who worked individually. That suggests the students in co-operative learning can do the task better than those who work individually.

Task Three

The hypothesis is that "Students who have access to visual support material will understand a related listening text better than similar students who do not have access to the visual material. This area was mentioned in Part two, Chapter Seven (7.8.1.3) In this task I got the students to look at the relevant pictures which can assist them to understand the listening text.

Resources

Tape-recorder, chalkboard, pictures pertaining to the text and comprehension checks.

Procedures

Experimental group

Pre-listening

In this case I adopted the hypothesis which confirms the importance of visual support in learning foreign language (Pearson & Nelson, 1991). Therefore, many posters and pictures were prepared for the experiment to be displayed for the target text.

First of all, I talked about energy and the source of energy such as oil, gas and how the scientists search to find alternative sources of energy. The students looked at the posters and the pictures that were fixed on the board and talked about the relevant subject. The discussion took 6 minutes. Then the learners were handed the comprehension check that included three sections (true and false, comprehension questions, filling in a table).

Section One

The students listened to the dialogue (appendix 4) about energy once so as to tick fact or opinion opposite the relevant sentences (Part Two, Chapter Seven, (7.8.2.5). At post-listening they were given three minutes to deal with section one.

Tick (fact) or (opinion) opposite the following sentences

3.5/ pass mark

	Fact	Opinion
1.Oil may run out in the thirty years.		
2.Petrol is an oil by-product.		
3.The sun is the best source of energy.		
4.The world's energy resources are limited.		
5.Oil and gas are cheap fuels.		
6.We are in an energy crisis.		
7.The nuclear energy is expensive.		

Section two

I played the cassette for the second and third time without pauses. The students were given 5 minutes to deal with the questions at post-listening.

Answering the questions

5 / pass mark

1. What's the name of the program?

-----.

2. Where does Mrs. Baker work?

-----.

3. Where does Dr. Al-Arabi work?

-----.

4. Does he agree with Mrs. Baker?

-----.

5. What do some scientists expect?

-----.

The last section was to fill a grid (Part Two, Chapter Seven, 7.8.2.12). I played the cassette for the fourth and fifth time with two pauses. They had 5 minutes to complete the task.

Complete the grid

4 / pass mark

People	Energy	Views
Mrs. Baker		
Dr. Al-Arabi		
Scientists		

Control Group

The same procedures were followed as usual for the control group. However, no posters or pictures related to the topic were displayed. The following tables indicate the scores of the students in experimental and control groups and the statistical analysis results of the two groups.

Ex. Group (A)	Opinion / Fact 3.5 pass mark	Answering questions 5 pass mark	Completing the grid 4 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
1.	4	6	5	15
2.	5	7	5	17
3.	4	3	2	9
4.	3	4	2	9
5.	1	3	3	7
6.	6	6	5	17
7.	5	4	4	13
8.	4	3	3	10
9.	6	8	6	20
10.	3	2	2	7
11.	6	5	3	14
12.	5	3	3	11
13.	1	1	2	4
14.	6	5	6	17
15.	5	7	5	17
16.	3	2	1	6
17.	7	7	7	21
18.	2	1	2	5
19.	6	6	7	19
20.	5	6	4	15

Table No. 16
Task three: Group A scores

Experimental Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Opinion and fact		14	7	70%
Answering Questions		10	10	50%
Completing the table		10	10	50%
Total		11	9	55%
Mean	12.65			
St. Dev.	5.28			

Table No. 17
Statistical Analysis Results

Co. Group (B)	Opinion / Fact	Answering questions	Completing the table	Total
	3.5 pass mark	5 pass mark	4 pass mark	12.5 pass mark
21.	4	5	2	11
22.	5	7	4	16
23.	2	1	2	5
24.	3	3	2	8
25.	1	3	3	7
26.	6	5	4	15
27.	5	4	4	13
28.	4	2	2	8
29.	6	7	5	18
30.	3	2	2	7
31.	5	5	3	13
32.	5	3	3	11
33.	1	1	2	4
34.	3	3	2	8
35.	5	5	5	15
36.	3	2	1	6
37.	7	6	7	20
38.	2	1	2	5
39.	6	5	6	17
40.	5	6	4	15

Table No. 18
Task Three: Group B scores

Control Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Opinion and Fact		12	8	60%
Answering Questions		9	11	45%
Competing the table		7	13	35%
Total		9	11	45%
Mean	11.1			
St. Dev.	4.88			

Table No. 19
Statistical Analysis Results

Through reviewing the scores of both groups shows that there is a difference between the two groups which means that the students with visual support suggest doing better than those without visual support.

Task Four

The hypothesis is that "Students who hear a text spoken by their teacher will understand it better than similar students who hear the same text on a tape recorder." In this experiment I read the text instead of using the tape-recorder. Refer to Part Two, Chapter Seven, (7.8.3.5)

Resources

Textbook, chalkboard, tape-recorder.

Procedures

Experimental Group

The change I made was to get the students to listen to me without playing the tape-recorder in order to find out how big the difference between listening to a text spoken by native speakers on a tape and spoken by the students' teacher. Here I would like to point out that this hypothesis is less problematic if the teacher is a native speaker. However, in this case, the teacher was not a native speaker and according to Brown's view (1993, page 55) such a teacher usually tries to speak slowly and clearly. Surely, this contradicts the importance of using authentic materials in learning foreign language. In any case, I introduced the subject to the students, saying that "there are many sources of energy but the greatest one is nuclear energy which is considered the latest and the most powerful energy. Nevertheless, it is not used for general purposes." I showed them a picture that was available in their textbook about a nuclear power station. Then I asked them to give more information about nuclear energy if they could. That activity took about seven minutes. The students received the comprehension check including section one (comprehension questions) at the pre-listening. After that I read out the text in their textbook (appendix 5) two times while they were listening to me with their books closed. At the post-listening the learners began to deal with the questions for comprehension. Seven minutes were allocated to answer the questions, as I mentioned in task four in order to rouse the students to complete the task competitively.

Section one

Comprehension questions:

7.5/ pass mark

1. Who is Dr. Albert Taylor?

-----.

2. What advantage does nuclear power have over other fuels?

-----.

3. What are the main sources of generating electricity?

-----.

4. What are the dangers of nuclear energy?

-----.

5. Why is nuclear energy not used for general purposes?

-----.

The second section was given to the students after they finished answering the questions, then I read the text for the third and fourth times. The learners filled in the missing words (Part, Two, Chapter Seven, (7.8.2.7) within five minutes at the post-listening.

Fill In the missing words 5/ pass mark

Dr. Taylor:

Nuclear energy is the ----- and the ----- fuel man has ever known. It has many ----- over all other sources of energy. It is fairly ----- to generate electricity from nuclear power. However, nuclear energy is rather ----- . If an accident takes place in a nuclear power station, it will be ----- . There is also the risk of serious ----- .

Student:

Excuse me, sir. Why don't scientists use this great energy for peace?

Dr. Taylor:

Good question. In fact, scientists are doing their best to use it for peace and ----- of mankind. Today it is used in medicine, industry and research. However, it's not easy to use it for general purpose because nuclear power station are rather ----- to build and difficult to ----- .

(English for the UAE 8. Pupil's book. Page 66)

Control Group

The same procedures were followed for the control group except that they heard the text only on tape and the students were given the same time to deal with sections one and two at post listening.

The following tables show the scores of the students in the Experimental Group and Control Group and the statistical analysis of the two groups.

Ex. Group (A)	Comprehension questions 7.5 pass mark	Filling in the missing words 5 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
1.	9	6	15
2.	6	5	11
3.	10	7	17
4.	3	4	7
5.	5	3	8
6.	11	8	19
7.	7	6	13
8.	2	3	5
9.	6	4	10
10.	12	8	20
11.	5	2	7
12.	1	3	4
13.	10	8	18
14.	11	6	17
15.	9	7	16
16.	11	8	19
17.	7	4	11
18.	13	9	21
19.	5	3	8
20.	13	10	23

Table No. 20
Task Four: Group A scores

Experimental Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Comprehension questions		10	10	50%
Fill in the missing words		12	8	60%
Total		11	9	55%
Mean	13.45			
St. Dev.	5.78			

Table No. 21
Statistical Analysis Results

Co. Group (B)	Comprehension questions 7.5 pass mark	Filling in the missing words 5 pass mark	Total 12.5 pass mark
21.	6	6	12
B22.	6	5	11
23.	9	7	16
24.	2	3	5
25.	5	3	8
26.	11	8	19
27.	3	4	7
28.	2	3	5
29.	6	4	10
30.	9	6	15
31.	5	2	7
32.	1	3	4
33.	6	4	10
34.	7	7	14
35.	1	2	3
36.	11	8	19
37.	8	4	12
38.	13	9	21
39.	5	3	8
40.	11	9	20

Table No. 22
Task Four: Group B scores

Control Group		Pass	Fail	Percentage
Comprehension Questions		7	13	35%
Filling in the missing words		9	11	45%
Total		7	13	35%
Mean	11.3			
St. Dev.	5.6			

Table No. 23
Statistical Analysis Results

The scores of the two groups indicate that the students in Group A did better than those in Group B. This means that the students suggest understanding the text better when it is spoken by their teacher.

The following statistical Analysis shows Mean and Standard deviation of posttests that I had done for both groups (experimental and control groups) in all the tasks.

Ex. Group	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
1.	14	14	15	15
2.	4	13	17	11
3.	12	10	9	17
4.	5	9	9	7
5.	15	20	7	8
6.	12	20	17	19
7.	17	12	13	13
8.	16	11	10	5
9.	8	18	20	10
10.	19	19	7	20
11.	21	8	14	7
12.	16	9	11	4
13.	9	17	4	18
14.	17	16	17	17
15.	6	9	17	16
16.	22	8	6	19
17.	7	20	21	11
18.	16	19	5	21
19.	13	18	19	8
20.	17	18	15	23
Mean	13.3	14.4	12.65	13.45
St. Dev.	5.29	4.55	5.28	5.78

Table 24
Posttest Mean and Standard Deviation of Experimental Group

Co. Group	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
21.	6	12	11	12
22.	4	21	16	11
23.	16	4	5	16
24.	14	9	8	5
25.	6	20	7	8
26.	12	7	15	19
27.	9	12	13	7
28.	7	11	8	5
29.	11	8	18	10
30.	17	3	7	15
31.	10	13	13	7
32.	12	9	11	4
33.	14	14	4	10
34.	19	15	8	14
35.	16	9	15	3
36.	6	8	6	19
37.	5	19	20	12
38.	20	5	5	21
39.	11	9	17	8
40.	18	18	15	20
Mean	11.65	11.3	11.1	11.3
St. Dev.	4.99	5.24	4.88	5.6

Table 25
Posttest Mean and Standard Deviation of Control Group

When we review the scores of the students in the two groups we notice that Experimental Group is better than Control Group in all the tasks. This would appear to support the hypotheses underlying each method.

END OF PART THREE

Part four Chapter Nine

9.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

After I presented the experiments I carried out and the scores of the students in both two groups (experimental and control groups), I will end my study with conclusions and suggest some recommendations and advice to the students, teachers and the Ministry of Education in the UAE.

Conclusions

It has been shown that listening is an important process in learning both the native and the foreign language. The first sense, which the human being needs, is hearing and our God gave us two ears but one mouth. It means that we hear rather than talk.

Our creator indicated this in Holy Quern. "It is He WHO created the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding, (yet) how seldom are grateful.

Sura 23/78:

قال تعالى : "وهو الذي انشأ لكم السمع والأبصار والأفئدة قليلا ما تشكرون."

(المؤمنون ٧٨)

And God has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs knowing nothing—but He has endowed you with hearing, sight and minds so that you may be grateful to God"

Sura 16/78

قال تعالى : "و الله أخرجكم من بطون أمهاتكم لا تعلمون شيئا وجعل لكم السمع والأبصار والأفئدة لعلكم تشكرون . " (النحل ٧٨)

"Verily it is We who have created man from a drop of mingled liquids, in order to try him; so We gave him (the gifts) of hearing and sight".

Sura 76/2

قال تعالى : " انا خلقنا الإنسان من نطفة أمشاج فجعلناه سمياً بصيراً. "

(الإنسان ٢)

Many verses in Quern mention the faculties of hearing and sight as gifts from our greatest God. It also stresses that we acquire our knowledge via these channels to the mind.

Hearing is always mentioned first, which means that hearing is more important than seeing and other senses for the human being. The language and the hearing capabilities are dependent on the presence of normal hearing, more than anything else. A child born deaf is unable to learn language and other things except with marked difficulties. A child born blind is handicapped, but it is much easier to teach him language and other capabilities. Listening is not hearing, it is more sophisticated than hearing. Person may hear many sounds but he may not understand. In the past it was thought that listening is a passive skill, but the recent studies proved the opposite. Listening to mother tongue language is surely not like listening to a foreign language. The foreign learner will face many difficulties in listening to a foreign language because he is not familiar with the sound of the foreign language and suffer from the lack of vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, some items he cannot understand even though in written language he can cope with them.

To be an active listener you should understand what is said and interpret what you have heard. Successful listening depends on many factors, such as attitude, interest, motivation, emotional state and interest. There are two types of listening, face to face listening (reciprocal) and one way listening (non-reciprocal). There is a good chance for listener in type one to see the speaker and look at his face, nods of his head, movements of his hands, etc. However, in the second type the listener can not see the speaker, such as in public advertisements, speech on a radio, instructions in (the airport, railway stations, etc). There is a relationship between speaking and listening. Successful speaking depends on effective listening. Listening and speaking usually happen simultaneously. Effective listening requires listener's concentration and interest of what is said. A listener, who wants to improve his listening, should expose himself to English

continuously and bear in his mind that he does not have to understand each word he hears. The job of the teacher is to train his students to listen as well as they can. *"He (teacher) is also to help them to disregard hesitation, reformulation, and topic change and to concentrate instead on the main message of what is being said"*. (Harmer: 1993, page 212).

- media in learning the foreign language

In this research I have discussed the importance of media in improving the teaching of a foreign language in particular, oral skills. Media should be exploited in improving the learning of English. The study that was done by Jazzar in 1991 proved that the most fluent student participated in all media activities, either alone or with others. Media in which the fluent student participated included TV, radio, video tape, etc. In addition, nowadays most of the people in the UAE have a satellite that enables them to watch many channels which transmit the programs in English language. For instance, CNN, BBC, Nile Sat, etc. Thus, as much as the students are exposed to authentic materials, their oral skills will get better. Pictures, wallcharts, maps, grids, diagrams, tape recorder, videocassettes enable the learner to attend the foreign language. The language laboratory is the best device to present authentic listening and get the pupil to participate in oral interaction without fear or shyness. Using computers in learning foreign language has become valuable. Most learners in the UAE are already familiar with computers and they are keen on using them. Therefore, this enthusiasm should be exploited in the classroom.

- the problems that the learners encounter when learning English

In This study I discussed the problems that the foreign learners encounter in learning English in particular, Arab speakers. Clearly the investigation indicated that the students are weak at English in general and in particular, at listening even though English language is taught at the early stages. The experiments that I conducted were intended to test the usefulness of certain techniques/procedures (using the language laboratory, getting students to work collectively, etc). This means that the Ministry of Education should make a review for the policy of teaching English. Thus, new methodological approach has to focus on four skills in an integrated way. In particular, listening skills.

- methods and techniques

The study pointed out that the variable methods should be used to check the student's acquisition of listening comprehension. Not only giving questions for gist or details but the students may be asked to complete a dialogue, fill in the missing words, complete a table, follow instruction etc. in order to vary the activities.

- audio-visual aids

I pointed to using audio - visual in teaching listening and discussed that listening can not be achieved perfectly without supporting audio-visual aids. New technology should be exploited in improving oral skills, as well. Through reviewing the outcomes of the experiments that were conducted, it was noticed that the experimental group that was taken to the language laboratory, its result was better.

- using the language laboratory

When I asked my students to give their opinions about using the language laboratory, most of the students answered positively. They gave many reasons. Some of them declared that it was better to make some change and they got bored from the class. Others gave more thoughtful reasons. For instance, they could concentrate, listen better, the sound was clearer for them. In addition, they got the opportunity to listen and respond directly.

Did ss
have
control ?
How
many
factor?

- co-operative learning

Finally the study emphasizes that co-operative learning can be useful and involves students in-groups collaboration so as to reach a goal or to complete a project. Co-operative learning experiences have the advantage of helping students work together and support each other. Co-operative learning extends oral interaction, encourages students to take some responsibility for their learning and provides opportunities for the students to clarify and refine understanding through group inquiry and problem solving. ✓

Recommendations

Based on the findings which are consistent with the hypothesis I discussed in the literature and the experiments I administered, I present the following recommendations and advice to the student, teacher and the Ministry of Education that I think will have a great effect on improving the teaching of listening comprehension in the UAE.

- to the student

Learning a foreign language has become necessary nowadays and when we talk about foreign Language here, we mean English Language in particular, in the Arab World. It is not only a means of getting a job or being acceptable at the university. However, there are many other reasons for which lead us to give this language a great deal of interest. We can mention such reasons, for example it is the language of computing, business, science, etc. It is also a good opportunity to expand our knowledge and introduce other people in many different countries and study their culture, traditions, etc. Besides, English language enables us to communicate with different people from all walks of life. Furthermore, we feel happy when we watch TV or read the newspaper in the foreign language. So I propose many recommendations to the students in order to be an active listener and to improve his effective listening.

- the first thing to do as a foreign learner is to expose yourself to this language, accustom yourself to listen to authentic materials which can be available in TV channels, and so on.
- put a reason for your listening, why do you listen? For enjoyment? For general interest? Or what?
- bear in mind that listening to a foreign language is not a simple action, so you will face many problems and you should be patient.
- try to understand the general idea of the text you are going to hear and jot down notes, words, phrases you have not recognized or understood.
- familiarize yourself by listening to English Language regularly.
- summarize what you have heard and make paraphrasing to the text.
- select suitable materials which can be useful, being simple, understood, as well.
- in face to face listening, participate and monitor what is being said, prepare yourself to respond to what the speaker says, ask the speaker questions and discuss what you have listened to with others

in your group.

- find the facts and opinions, then acquire, analyze them and evaluate the facts and opinions you have listened to. What do they mean? Are they worth? Do you agree with the speaker or not?

"The listener passes judgment, weighs assertion, and evaluates facts and opinions." (Copp; 1990, page 61)

- listen with concentration, you have to prepare yourself to listen, adopt a cooperative and objective attitude; think through the topic and try to anticipate how the subject may be developed.

"Listening is not a passive thing; it requires a great deal of effort." (Copp; 1990, page 61)

- there are many kinds of listening materials which improve your listening skills such as listening to TV news, movies, radio, TV programs or video, etc. It is important to expose yourself to these various kinds of listening so as to familiarize yourself with different vocabulary, speed, accents, pronunciation and even grammar structures in different contexts.

- make prediction before beginning to listen. In other words try to anticipate what will you hear.

- re-phrase what have been said to catch the meaning in a second time. Finally the efficient listener has to listen with concentration, he should listen purposefully and jot down notes effectively. The listener should distinguish between facts and opinions and analyze, as well as predict what he is listening, summarize the text he has heard and review his notes periodically, discuss with others, participate, he should always be active not passive.

- to the teacher

The role of the teacher is to facilitate and help the student understand the foreign language. The teacher's task is to train the learner to listen, not only to expose his students to a great deal of foreign language. Exposure to oral English is very important for students.

The students need to spend time listening before they develop their speaking skills. Teaching listening should be integrated with speaking, reading, and writing. *"Without actually having been taught to listen, a student may be able to express himself orally, but he will never be able to communicate with speakers of English if he is unable to understand what is said to him."* (Hubbard; 1993, page 80)

Here are some suggested recommendations to the teacher.

- consider listening skill as a main skill in teaching foreign language.

- integrate listening into daily speaking, reading, writing, representing, and viewing experiences, plan opportunities for the students to practice active listening for a variety of purposes in a variety of context (e.g. face to face, social situations, formal situations)
- regard what the student has to say.
- adjust the length of listening time to fit the students' level.
- have an understanding of the place of authentic materials. Using authentic materials in teaching listening affords a good opportunity to expose the students to real language inside the class. This can be done by extracting text, discourse, dialogue, forecast leaflet, or news from TV, radio, etc.
- give more materials in listening to encourage the students to be better listener. *"It's clear that the more reading and listening we give the learners, the better they will become at reading and listening in English."* (Harmer; 1993, page 186)
- choose the right kind of material, will make your students more confident when they listen to English and use modern technology which can lead to successful listening. Furthermore, audio-visual aids make teaching listening more useful and enjoyable, as it is said a picture may be better than one thousand words.
- the student should be prepared for what he is about to hear. When the student has an idea about what he is going to listen to, he will have a desire for listening.
- construct a wide range of exercises, to test the listening skill. *"The aim of listening comprehension exercises should be to help the student to arrive successfully at a reasonable interpretation, and not process every word, and not to try to work out all that is involved in the literal meaning of the utterance, since that is, in principle, an impossible task."* (Brown; 1993, page 57)

- some advice on how to use materials that can help the teacher giving a successful listening task

These are some pieces of advice on how to use materials, which may help the teacher to give a successful listening task.

- ^{give} - getting the students to understand that there is always a reason for listening.
- encourage the students to discuss what they are listening to, and co-operate while doing activity.
- get the students to ask you whenever they come across something, they cannot work out for themselves.

- get the students to achieve general comprehension, not to spend time on detailed questioning about vocabulary items and grammatical structures. *"Learners should be encouraged to listen in order to understand enough to do the activities required. Comprehension of every word is seldom required for that."*

(Scarborough; 1990, page 144)

- post listening activities offer students opportunities to think, assimilate what they have heard to their own ideas and provide opportunities for teachers to assess students' comprehension and check their understanding.

- running assessment for oral skills as a method for measuring the perception, to check up that the students have understood the spoken text.

Finally, one of our most fundamental pedagogical philosophies is not to underestimate students' abilities or make fun of them. We should always encourage them to get rid of shyness when they get mistakes while participation and get them to feel relaxed. We often learn from our mistakes. Outside the classroom, we should always urge our students to listen to English language radio, watch English language TV channels of their interest to help them overcome some of their pronunciation and structural difficulties, accustom themselves to many different accents in real life English.

- to the Ministry of Education

Through studying the conditions of teaching English language, and depending on the report that was published on 15-Feb 1999 (see the introduction), it was found that the students were weak at English in general. This is related to many reasons; some of them are connected with the student himself who does not care for learning English especially listening although there is a good chance for him/her to listen and speak English in the UAE. First, through the media which afford to the people a great opportunity to listen to this language. Second, a study that had been done in 1991 by Jazzar proved that the expatriate workers who work in the UAE speak English whether, they are native speaker or non-native speakers, so this give an impression that the students in the UAE have many opportunities to practice this language in their real life situations. In this case;

- the Ministry of Education can exploit this situation and present many programs in English on TV channels.

- audio-visual aids should play a vital role in teaching listening, video is a good device, which affords to the student an opportunity to listen and see the speaker simultaneously. Aids help the teacher to present the lesson, as it is said a picture is better than thousand words.

Therefore, using audio-visual aids is very necessary in teaching foreign language.

- the study found out that there is a lack of audio-visual aids in particular, secondary schools. For example, in Al Ain Educational Zone there are 42 secondary schools (boys and girls) but there are only 52 TVs and 45 videos devoted for all subjects. (see appendices 5 and 6)

This means that the English teacher has a very little chance to use video or TV.

"The most important aids to aural comprehension are recording and playing devices, such as tapes, video tape, and the language laboratory. Visual materials can also be used to make the material heard more meaningful". (El-Araby; 1974, page 10)

- laboratory adds a new feature to the use of the tape recorder. The student can listen to different exercises that emphasize the important point in the lesson.

- the investigation that was done found that there are only 23 laboratories in Al Ain Educational Zone which includes 118 schools. (refer to appendices 5 and 6)

Therefore, the Ministry of Education should provide the schools with all required aids such as posters, pictures, diagrams, maps, laboratories, suitable video tapes and so on in order to enable the teachers to improve teaching oral skills.

- classes should be less crowded to make the activities more suitable for working in groups or pairs, the table which is attached at the end of research indicates that the average is not less than 25 students in each class. (appendix 7)

- focusing on oral skills has become important and Criteria should be set for evaluating the listening skills in isolation.

- training course for teaching oral skills should be established and the teachers to be encouraged to attend the course. Furthermore, the course should be longer and held in suitable times.

- teachers have to be provided with sufficient resources that enable them to refer these sources such as reference books, films, etc which include the newest methodological techniques in teaching foreign language.

- the Ministry of Education is to co-operate with Universities and English centers in the UAE to improve teaching oral skills and benefit from their experiences in developing the approach of teaching English language.
- there is a need for teachers to refresh their command of English by attending courses run by native speakers.
- the Ministry might consider making a plan to send some teachers to UK to attend the courses which have been given to the foreign learners of English and take courses teaching.
- a study that had been conducted in 1990 by AL Banna proved that most teachers were in need of training course for teaching English language.
- all training courses are always conducted in the afternoon and most of them lasted less than two days, in addition, supervisors conduct most sessions although they are too busy. Why not make a plan to hold the sessions in other times and bring specialized persons to present these courses. A study conducted in 1993 by English Language Developed project found out the most of teachers complained that the courses were not enough, the timing of the courses were inappropriate. The teachers wanted to know the best way of teaching English, special training was required on the production of audio-visual materials to help the teaching of English.
- courses can be more successful if they include new practical techniques, not only following the usual routine.
- teachers should be encouraged by awarding them a certificate indicating the teachers have completed the course successfully. (Pamphlet issued by department of curriculum and textbooks in 1993).
- the teacher's guide will be more useful if it contains clear aims, typical procedures and model exams.
- all the tests should cover the four skills with concentrating on listening skills. It is also better to evaluate listening skills regularly.
- the computer has become a part of our life in many fields, and it is a very good chance to exploit it in teaching foreign language.
- using authentic materials can be the benefit in improving oral skills and it is better to be emphasized in teaching English language.
- before leaving preparatory stage and shifting to secondary stage, students should take formal exams for four skills.
- department of curriculum can plan to set mock TOFEL exams in secondary school to accustom the students to this international test

and qualify them for academic studies. Finally the task of the Ministry of Education is to prepare the learner for higher education, broaden the learner's knowledge. The learner is to understand English as spoken by native speakers on a variety of everyday subjects. The students can speak English that is comprehensible to native speakers and read many different books out of textbooks, as well as write intelligible English for simple purposes.

MAYASSER

Thursday, 19 April, 2001

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Appendix 1

Jane: Was the exam easy or difficult?

Andy: Well, it was quite hard.

Jane: What questions did the teacher ask?

Andy: First, he asked me about my favorite novelist, my favorite poet and my favorite playwright.

Jane: ...and what else did he ask you?

Andy: Oh, Jane! I'm trying to remember ... oh, yes. He asked me if I spoke any other languages.

Jane: Is that all?

Andy: He asked me what my hobbies were. He gave me a book and asked me to read aloud. I had to read a long passage.

Jane: That was easy, Andy, wasn't it?

Andy: Well, it was quite hard. I had to talk about William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens and Ernest Hemingway.

Jane: What did the teacher say at the end?

Andy: Nothing, but he advised me not to waste my time chatting after exams.

(English for the UAE. Pupil's book 8. Page 15)

Appendix 2

Andy: Hello, Jack.

Jack: Hello. How are you, Andy?

Andy: What a surprise! It's been ages!

Jack: I have been keeping to myself lately.

Andy: Why? What's wrong?

Jack: You know those exams I took last month? Well, I failed some of them.

Andy: Oh, I'm terribly sorry. What a bad luck!

Jack: It wasn't bad luck. It was my own fault. I used to go to the club every day. I spent a lot of time playing and training.

Andy: Oh, never mind. It's not the end of the world.

Jack: I must take the blame.

Andy: Forget it, Jack. Don't get upset. You're going to re-sit them, aren't you?

Jack: yes, I am.

Andy: can I be of any help?

Jack: yes, thank you. Could I borrow your physics and chemistry notes?

Andy: Of course.

Jack: Thanks, Andy. See you soon.

Andy: Bye.

(English for the UAE. Pupil's book 8. Page 17)

Appendix 3

Two students are sitting in their school garden. They both are happy about the flowers in the garden.

Frank: Look at those flowers, Andy. Lovely, aren't they?

Andy: Yes.

Frank: Andy, are we allowed to take some?

Andy: No, you mustn't pick the school flowers.

Frank: What's wrong with that, Andy?

Andy: Look at the board over there. It says: Picking flowers and plants is forbidden.

Frank: Let's play, as agreed.

Andy: Hey, you! Not with that ball. You're not allowed to play ball in the school garden.

Frank: Come on, Andy! We won't do any harm.

Andy: Playing ball here is prohibited. It's not permitted at all.

Frank: What shall we do then?

Andy: The only thing we can do is to go to the biology class. The bell is ringing.

(English for the UAE. Pupil's book 8. Page 33)

Appendix 4

Announcer: Good evening and welcome again to your weekly program. "View point". In tonight's program, we're looking at the crisis of energy. I'd like to welcome our first guest, Mrs. M. Baker of Cambridge University. Mrs. Baker.

Mrs. Baker: The world's energy resources are limited. Some scientists think that there is only enough coal for 450 years and enough natural gas for 50 years. Oil might run out in thirty years. I think something has to be done.

Announcer: Thank you, Dr. Baker. Our next guest is Dr. Ali Al-Arabi of OAPEC. Dr. Al-Arabi.

Dr. Al-Arabi: In fact I don't agree with some of the estimates of world energy reserves. More oil and gas is being discovered all the time. We'll continue to rely on oil, coal and gas. But we must also look to the future. Scientists must do research into new forms of power.

Announcer: Thank you Dr. Al-Arabi. Now I'm very pleased to welcome Miss..... (fade).

(English for the UAE. Pupil's book 8. Page 65)

Appendix 5

Al Ameer Secondary School in Um-AlQuwain invited the famous professor of physics Dr. Albert Taylor to talk to the students about nuclear energy.

Dr. Taylor: Nuclear energy is the latest and greatest fuel man has ever known. It has many advantages over all other sources of energy. It is fairly cheap to generate electricity from nuclear power. However, nuclear energy is rather dangerous. If an accident takes place in a nuclear power station, it will be disastrous. There is also the risk of serious pollution.

Student: Excuse me, Sir. Why don't scientists use this great energy for peace?

Dr. Taylor: Good question. In fact, scientists are doing their best to use it for peace and the well-being of mankind. Today it is used in medicine, industry and research. However, it's not easy to use it for general purposes because nuclear power stations are rather expensive to build and difficult to maintain.

(English for the UAE. Pupil's book 8. Page 66)

Appendix 6

Number of items Items	Boys'		Boys'		Girls'		Girls'		Total
	Primary schools	Prep schools	Secondary school	Primary School	Prep School	Secondary school	Total		
T.V sets	150	25	22	98	22	30	347		
Video	140	20	20	90	20	25	315		
Recorders	350	400	120	360	125	80	1435		
Language Labs	3	4	5	1	2	8	23		
Computers									
Data show	6	2	5	5	2	5	25		
OHP							600		
Total									

Table No. 1

Statistics of the audio-visual aids in Al Ain Educational Zone Schools

(Source: Al Ain Educational Zone. year 2000 / 2001)

Appendix 7

Boys' schools		Girls' schools	Total
Primary schools	28	Primary schools 22	50
prep schools	12	prep schools 12	26
Secondary schools	21	Secondary schools 21	42
			118

Table No. 2

Statistics of the schools in Al Ain Educational Zone

(Source: Al Ain Educational Zone. Year 2000 / 2001)

Appendix 8

Years Item	1996/1997	1995/1996	1994/1995	1993/1994	1992/1993	1991/1992	1990/1991	1989/1990
Schools/ boys and girls	639	615	582	560	534	512	499	475
classrooms	11567	11260	10909	10542	10255	9861	9441	8973
Teachers and Administrative Staff	25984	25287	24335	23421	22514	21337	20064	18717
Students / boys and girls	300338	295322	289066	278836	270560	261692	257773	242538

Table No. 3

Ministry of Education Schools, Classrooms, Teachers, Administrative Staff and Students, 1989/ 1990 - 1996/1997

(Source: Ministry of Education)