Challenges Experienced by EFL University Instructors in Teaching Listening Skill: A Case study of College of Science and Arts- Tanumah- King Khalid University

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Abstract: The central aim of this research paper is to shed light on the challenges encountered by EFL university instructors in teaching listening skill. The study targets all EFL teaching staff in the College of Science and Arts in Tanumah , King Khalid University during the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017. To collect data, the study depends on a structured interview. The findings of study show that EFL university instructors have faced a considerable number of challenges in teaching listening skill which have negative impacts on developing listening ability of the students .It is hoped that the study will suggest practical solutions that can be adopted by instructors and students to overcome these challenges . Also, it is hoped that the study will help bring change in EFL teaching methods by introducing new strategies to help students develop listening skill.

Key Words: Challenges; EFL Instructors; Listening Skill

1-Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a lifelong process and it is often a challenging experience for students. However, learning English as a foreign language is not an easy task. According to Brown (2000), in order to master English language, learners have to be adequately exposed to all of the four basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. English Language teaching is currently focusing on the teaching and learning of the four language skills.

According to Bulletin (1952) , cited in Saricoban , A .(1999), listening is one of the fundamental language skills. It's a medium through which children, young people and adults gain a large portion of their education--their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation. Listening to and understanding speech involves a number of basic processes, some depending upon linguistic competence, some depending upon previous knowledge that is not necessarily of a purely linguistic nature, and some depending upon psychological variables that affect the mobilization of these competence and knowledge in the particular task situation.

Mendelsohn (1994: 9) , cited in Gilakjani, A. (2011) , thinks that listening plays an important role in communication as it is said that, of the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, about 9%

Although the teaching of listening comprehension has long been —somewhat neglected and poorly taught aspect of English in many EFL programs , listening is now regarded as much more important in both EFL classrooms and SLA research. According to Feyten (1991) ,in the early 70's, work by Asher, Postovsky, Winitz and, later, Krashen, brought attention to the role of listening as a tool for understanding and emphasized it as a key factor in facilitating language learning. Thus, listening has emerged as an important component in the process of second language acquisition

Although language learning depends on listening since it provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication, listening has long been the neglected skill in second language acquisition, research, teaching, and assessment as Mandelson (1994) cited. However, in recent years there has been an increased focus on L2 listening ability because of its perceived importance in language learning and teaching and it is now regarded as much more important in both EFL classrooms and SLA research.

The central aim of this research, therefore, is to shed light on the challenges of listening skill encountered by EFL university instructors in teaching listening.
1-1 Statement of the Problem
It has been observed by the researcher that EFL university instructors encounter some challenges in teaching listening skill. Thus, it is the main thrust of this paper to investigate these challenges and to shed light on their impact on learning and teaching process.

1-2 Questions of the Study
The study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What listening challenges do EFL university instructors face when teaching listening skill?
2. To what extent, do these challenges impact developing listening skill of EFL Saudi university students?
3. To what extent, do these challenges impact teaching of listening skill?
4. What are the listening strategies that help student to enhance their Proficiency in listening skill?
5. How can EFL university instructors help their students overcome these listening challenges?

1-3 Hypotheses of the Study
To answer research questions, the following hypotheses have been put forth:

1. There are some challenges facing EFL university instructors in teaching listening skill.
2. These challenges have negative impacts on the developing and improvement of listening skill of EFL university students.
3. These challenges have negative impacts on the teaching performance of EFL university instructors.

1-4 Objectives of the Study:-
The study aims at achieving the following objectives:
1- To investigate and determine the challenges facing EFL university instructors in teaching listening skill.
2- To shed light on these challenges and their impacts on developing listening skill.
3- To suggest practical solutions that can be adopted by instructors and students to overcome these difficulties.

1-5. Limits of the study:-
The study is mainly devoted to investigate and identify the challenges of teaching and developing listening skill facing EFL university instructors in the College of Science & Arts, Tanumah, King Khalid University, in the academic year 2016/2017 during the second semester. A structured interview is used as a tool for collecting data.

1-6. Significance of the Study
The significance of this study lies in its attempt to shed light on the challenges facing EFL university instructors in teaching and developing listening skill. The present study contributes to the body of educational knowledge by increasing the understanding of English language teaching problems faced by EFL university instructors. Substantively, the study provides useful information for university staff and other concerned personnel who work in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. Hopefully, the results of the study will increase the awareness of the involved personnel and help with policy and decision making on what should be done to help students overcome their difficulties, improve their language skills, and finally achieve their academic success. It is hoped that the findings of this study in a classroom context will broaden the insight of language teachers into the issues of language teaching in general and teaching listening skill in particular.

2- Literature Review

2-1 Definition of Listening
Saricoban, A. (1999) defines listening as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously. Mendelsohn (1994) cited in Abbas, P, G & Mohammad, R.A (2011), points out that, in listening to spoken language, the ability to decipher the speaker's intention is required of a competent listener, in addition to other abilities such as processing the linguistic forms like speech speed and fillers, coping with listening in an interaction, understanding the whole message contained in the discourse, comprehending the message without understanding every word, and recognizing different genres. Listeners must also know how to process and how to judge what the illocutionary force of an utterance is- that is, what this string of sounds is intended to mean in a particular setting, under a particular set of circumstances – as an act of real communication (Mendelsohn, 1994).

Listening for Brownell, cited in Benglia, H (2013), is "a process involving six skill areas, or components: hearing messages, understanding messages, remembering messages, interpreting
messages, evaluating messages, responding to messages.” Hyslop and Tone (1989) define listening as the first language mode that children acquire. It provides a foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long role in the process of learning and communication essential to productive participation in life.

Purdy (1997), in Abbas , P. G & Mohammad ,R.A (2011:8) , defines listening as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal), needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings".

Rost (2002) , cited in Benglia . H (2013) , defines listening, in its broadest sense, as a process of receiving what the speaker actually says (receptive orientation); constructing and representing meaning (constructive orientation); negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding (collaborative orientation); and, creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy (transformative orientation). Listening, then, is a complex, active processes of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know.

2-3 Significance of listening

Listening skill is considered as an important skill for the process of acquiring a second language. "Listening skills are essential for learning since they enable students to acquire insights and information and to achieve success in communicating with others"(Wallace, Stariha and Walberg, (2004) , cited in Sabah , B (2012) . According to Bulletin (1952), listening is the fundamental language skill. It is the medium through which people gain a large portion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation. In this day of mass communication, much of it oral, it is of vital importance that students are taught to listen effectively and critically.

Listening is central to the lives of students throughout all levels of educational development (Coakley & Wolvin, 1997; Feyten, 1991; Wing, 1986 in Abbas , P. G & Mohammad ,R.A( 2011) . Listening is the most frequently used language skill in the classroom (Ferris, 1998; Murphy, 1991; Vogely, 1998). Listening plays a significant role in daily communication and educational process. Most students want to be able to understand what other people are saying to them in English, either face to face, on TV or on the radio, on tapes or other recorded media (Harmer: 2007 , cited in in Benglia , H (2013) . Both instructors (Ferris & Tagg, 1996) and students (Ferris, 1998) acknowledge the importance of listening comprehension for success in academic settings. According to Abbas , P. G & Mohammad ,R.A( 2011) , listening is even more important for the lives of students since listening is used as a primary medium of learning at all stages of education . Harmer (2007 ) cited in Benglia . H (2013) suggests that listening is good for the
pronunciation of the learners, i.e. the more they hear and understand English being spoken, the more they absorb appropriate pitch and intonation, stress and the sounds of individual words and those that are blend together in connected speech. As an example: listening to the news reader on TV reading the news in highly voice could be more beneficial to the learners of second language. Moreover, he also suggested that: "listening texts are good pronunciation models, in other words, and the more students listen, the better they get, not only at understanding speech, but also at speaking themselves. Indeed, it is worth remembering that successful spoken communication depends not just on our ability to speak, but also on the effectiveness of the way we listen." Krashen (1984) argues that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information they hear. Thus, as Benglia. H (2013) believes, language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input.

2-4 Types of Listening

Burns and Lowe (1966). cited in Mac, Y. M (1999), categorized listening into three types:

i. simple listening - hearing sounds without any particular meaning to the sounds
ii. discriminative listening - listening to hear and identify the likenesses and differences in sounds
iii. listening for information,
iv. listening to organize ideas,
v. listening for main points,
vi. listening for varied points of view,
vii. critical listening
viii. creative listening.

For Sabah, B (2012), there are two types of listening skill:
1. Intensive listening: is when teachers use taped materials or materials on disk to make students practice their listening skill (Harmer :1998). In intensive listening, teachers have to concentrate on making students achieve and recognize the phonological and morphological elements of the language (Brown: 2004). This type of intensive listening helps teachers to assess phonological and morphological aspects of students' language.
2. Extensive listening will usually take place outside the classroom, in the students home, car, or on personal stereos as they travel from place to another. The motivational power of such an activity increase dramatically when students make their own choices about what they are going to listen to (Harmer, 1998:228). In that case, students are free in their selection of what they are listening to. This type of listening gives teachers to play their role even if they are so far from the students by advising students to listen, for example, to especial English accent more than other one. Douglas Brown considered dictation as one of extensive listening tasks (132). For EFL teachers, dictation considers as a means for assessing listening comprehension because dictation 'nature shows that students need a verity of lexical grammatical competences.

2-5 The stages of listening process

Saricoban, A. (1999) divides the listening process into three stages:

1. Pre-listening (purpose must be given at this stage),
2. During (in-while) listening,
3. Post-listening (speaking).

According to Nunan, (2001: 23) Listening is a six-staged process, consisting of Hearing, Attending, Understanding, Remembering, Evaluating and Responding. These stages occur in sequence and rapid succession.

1-Hearing:
It is the perception of sound, not necessarily paying attention, you must hear to listen, but you need not listen to hear.

2-Attention:
- It refers to a selection that our brain focuses on.

3-Understanding
- It consists of analyzing the meaning of what we have heard and understanding symbols we have seen and heard.

4- Remembering
- It is an important Listening process because it means that an individual, in addition to receiving and interpreting the message, has also added it to the mind’s storage bank, which means that the information will be remembered in our mind.

5- Evaluating
- The listener evaluates the message that has been received. It is at this point when active listeners weigh evidence, sort fact from opinion and determine the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message. The effective listener makes sure that he or she does not begin this activity too soon, as beginning this stage of the process before a message is completed results in no longer hearing and attending to the incoming message and, as a result, the Listening process ceases.

6- Responding:
- A stage in which, according to the response, the speaker checks if the message has been received correctly. This stage requires that the receiver complete the process through verbal or non-verbal feedback, because the speaker has no other way to determine if a message has been received. Therefore, it is sometimes complicated as we do not have the opportunity to go back and check comprehension (Nunan; 2001, 23).

2-6 The Features of Listening

Brubridge (1986:7), cited in Mac, Y. M (1999), listed six characteristics of listening and their implications for teaching listening.

i. Spoken language is different from written language. Spoken language is not organized, does not consist of complete sentences and is full of interruptions, hesitations and repetition and does not necessarily contain a lot of information. Hence students should be exposed to authentic speech instead of artificial dialogue or written speech which is read.

ii. The listener is usually helped by visual information which facilitates understanding. We can see the speaker and his expressions. Therefore, a lot of visuals (slides, maps, photographs etc) should be used or native speakers could be invited to class.

iii. Listeners would have "expectations" about how a conversation might go, what they are going to hear and what their interlocutor is going to say. The implication is that there should be pre-listening activities to prepare students for what they will hear.

iv. Listeners have contextual knowledge about the speaker and the situation. Thus, pre-listening activities should ensure that students are privy to contextual knowledge.

v. People listen for a purpose and they have a specific reason for listening. Hence it is vital that students are asked to listen for something during their While-listening exercises.

vi. Often spoken language is simply for social interaction and not for exchange of ideas or information. Therefore students should not be asked to listen for facts all the time. Students should be encouraged to listen for gestures, attitudes and feelings too.

According Saricoban, A. (1999) the most important features in listening to English as a foreign language can be defined as:

1. Coping with the sounds,
2. Understanding intonation and stress,
3. Coping with redundancy and noise,
4. Predicting,
5. Understanding colloquial vocabulary,
6. Fatigue,
7. Understanding different accents,
8. Using visual and environmental clues.

2-7 The purposes of listening:

According Saricoban, A. (1999), the purposes that should be in a listening activity are giving/providing:

1. General information (understanding of the main points)
2. Specific information (understanding of the particular items)
3. Cultural interest (generally informing about the target language culture)
4. Information about people's attitudes and opinions
5. The organization of ideas
6. Sequence of events
7. Lexical items (words expressing noise / movement)
8. Structural items (their use and meaning)
9. Functional items (their form and use)

2-8 Teaching listening skill

Sabah, B. (2012) believes that the most important teaching listening
strategies are summarized in the following three stages:
(i) Preparing students for receiving the content  
(ii) Conveying the content of the lesson  
(iii) Checking if students understanding.

Sheerin (1987) cited in Mac, Y. M (1999) stated that important considerations in actually teaching effective listening are adequate preparation, adequate support and provision of appropriate tasks. However diagnosis of error patterns, together with positive feedback and remedial action are also vital in teaching listening.

Study 10 proposes the following techniques for good listening lessons

(i) Pre-listening Stage: Some activities before listening may serve as preparation or warm-up for listening in several ways. These function as 'reference' and 'framework' by giving prior knowledge of listening activities. Some recommended pre-listening activities include:

a. Introducing the topic and assessing their background knowledge of the topic or content of the material through commenting on a picture or photograph.

b. Activating their existing knowledge through discussion. Reading through comprehension questions in advance, working out own opinion on a topic, predicting content from the title etc. can be done.

c. Clarifying any necessary contextual information and vocabulary to comprehend the text. In this regard showing pictures maps or graphs may be helpful.

d. Informing them of the type of text, their role, purposes of the listening etc. A short reading passage on a similar topic may help them.

(ii) While-listening Stage: activities in this stage must follow the learners’ specific needs, instructional goal, listening purposes and learners' proficiency level. While listening activities directly relate to the text and listeners are asked to do these during or immediately after listening. Some specific cares are required in designing while-listening activities. These are:

a. If the students are asked to give written information after listening, they should have chance to listen the text more than once which makes it easier for them to keep concentration while listening with specific purposes.

b. Writing activities should be to a minimum. As comprehension is the prime target, writing would make the listening more demanding. are samples of this.

c. Global activities like getting the main idea, topic, setting, summary that focus on the content and forms of the text should be given more so that listeners are guided through the text. Listening for the gist is such an activity.

d. More questions should be set up in order to focus student's attention on the crucial elements that might help to comprehend the text. Following the rout on a map or searching for specific clues to meaning, or identify description of the given pictures might be appropriate here.

e. Attaching predicting activities before listening so that students can monitor their comprehension as they listen. Listening with visuals may serve here.

f. Giving immediate feedback to make the students examine their responses and how it was. Checking off items in a list, distinguishing between formal and informal registers conducted by teacher are examples here.

c. After-listening Stage: post listening activities can be used to check comprehension, valuate listening skill, use of listening strategies and use the knowledge gained to other contexts. So, these are called listening exercises at all and defined as 'follow-up works.' The features of these activities are:

a. Related to pre-listening activities, such as predicting.

b. May create a real life situation where students might be asked to use knowledge gained through listening.

c. May extend the topic and help the students remember new vocabulary.

Using notes made while listening in order to write a summary, reading a related text, doing a role play, writing on the same theme, studying new grammatical structures, practicing pronunciation, discussion group, craft project etc. are some post-listening activities.

2-9 Variables affecting successful listening:

Mili, S. & Rezwan, M. Talukdar (2015: 17) believe that the following variables affect successful listening:
(i) Noise: Distractions and noise during the listening segment should be reduced and sound-proof language lab is perfect for this purpose.

(ii) Equipment: If the cassette player or CD player being used does not produce acceptable sound quality, it may harm developing skill or motivation.

(iii) Repetition: playing the text 2-3 times might be required in respect of the types of texts. In case of no chance of repetition, learners may become anxious about catching it all the first time and that will impede their actual performance.

(iv) Content: It is a strong variable to be able to make difference in developing skill. The material should be interesting and appropriate for the class level in topic, speed and vocabulary. Some guidelines for judging the relative ease or difficulty of a listening text for a particular purpose or particular group of students might be:

a. The selected material must be relevant to student's real life; language of the text should be authentic and would vary in terms of learners' interest and age group.

b. The storyline, narrative, or instruction should confirm common expectation in organization. It may contain main idea, details, and examples. An informative title might also be helpful.

c. Learners have to be familiar with the topic. They might feel major comprehension difficulties because of misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences.

d. At the beginner level of proficiency, the language of listening text should discard redundancy while in the higher proficiency level students may benefit from redundant language.

e. If the text involves more than one individual, the differences between them should be marked conspicuously which can make the comprehension easy.

f. Most texts should have visual supports like clippings, maps, diagrams, pictures or images in video that contextualize the listening input and provide clues to meaning in order to aid their interpretation.

1-Recording own tape: Any way, recording must be of an English speaker. Copying recording two to three times is preferred in order to avoid rewind which may disrupt attention of the listeners.

2-Using video: Using video clippings with sound off and then asking students what dialogue is taking place is a good practice. Next, the teacher may play sound and check their understanding and interpret them about the discrepancy between their predictions and reality. It may also be done with the video first and giving only sound to guess what the context is can obviously effect comprehending.

3-Homework: In teaching listening, homework is a must. A listening task between two classes prevent them forgetting. Encouraging public listening and having notes on them is a free pave to walk in teaching listening which leads to success. Providing tape recording with questions, dictation, or a worksheet to complete may bring the expected results.

4-Using internet: If learners have opportunity to use a computer with internet access and headphones or speakers, teacher may direct them toward some listening practice sites and home works can also be assigned from these accesses.

2-10 Improving Students' Listening Comprehension Skill

Abbas, P. G & Mohammad, R.A(2011) propose the following methods to be adopted for teaching and improving students' listening comprehension skill:

(A) Cultivating Students’ Listening Skills
Cultivating students’ listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for any ESL teacher. In the teaching process teachers should cultivate students’ ability to select main information and instruct students to control the general meaning of listening materials on the whole. In class, for example, teachers can ask students to listen to the general meaning of the passage, and to sum up key points and main information.

(B) Textbook-based Learning and Other Listening Contexts
Listening lessons require listeners to concentrate on the content and make fast responses to what is heard. If students are passive and apprehensive during listening training, they will probably feel nervous and wary of taking chances. Teachers need to take a non-punitive approach and structure lessons that are varied, vivid and interesting. Teachers need to select a wide range of materials to increase listening content besides using textbooks. Students need to listen to different levels of English in order to be exposed to natural, lively, rich language, such as listening to English songs, seeing films with English text. In these ways it is possible to raise students'
enthusiasm, cultivate their listening interests, and achieve the goals of learning English.

(C) Passing on Cultural Knowledge in Language Teaching

Understanding that language is controlled by particular cultural experiences is a necessity for the language learner. If the cultural differences between the students’ own culture and that of the language they are to learn is excessive, learners will usually keep some distance from the target language in their efforts to maintain their psychological comfort level. As a consequence the operating processes of memory and input will certainly be limited (Cheng Huaiyuan, 1999 cited in Abbas, P. G & Mohammad, R. A, 2011). Thus teachers need to be aware that breaking down the barriers is a significant part of cultural teaching and forms an important aspect of the whole process of language teaching. The aspect of cultural knowledge transmission is an equal part of language improvement and development of work in listening development has the potential for achieving a powerful influence on the formulation of students’ thinking habits and the application of foreign language expressions. Cultural teaching, then, has direct and concrete influences on intercultural communication. When students gain an intimate knowledge of the culture of the target language they begin to understand how the language is used to reflect the thoughts, behaviors and customs of that society. In teaching English listening, teachers need to develop students’ consciousness about intercultural communication and they need to energize students’ capacity for wanting to engage with a different culture. Great care needs to be taken when selecting listening material and auxiliary texts, since these are a crucial aspect of the cultural factors in listening teaching. The selection of material related to British and American cultural background knowledge is of particular importance, since these tend to be the focus of much of the classroom time when students’ thinking ability and intercultural awareness is being cultivated.

(D) Combining “Intensive Listening” with “Extensive Listening”; Focusing on Listening

Intensive listening requires students to understand the meaning of each discourse and, ultimately, to understand every sentence and word. Generally, intensive listening requires students to listen to a text several times, or divide the text into paragraphs and sentences to understand each one; or by doing dictation word by word. The goal is for students to understand every sentence. Alternatively, extensive listening does not require students to understand every sentence, and every word, instead, students are encouraged to grasp the general meaning of the passage. The key point of listening is to understand the content. The purpose of intensive listening is to build basic listening skills, while extensive listening is to strengthen and enlarge effectiveness of intensive listening in order to improve overall listening ability. In listening teaching, both intensive and extensive listening should be combined with cultivating students’ basic skills, the development of the productive listening habits of active thinking and the ability to understand the text. Therefore, teachers must encourage students to engage in intensive listening in class, requiring students to understand the general meaning and also to become familiarized with English pronunciation, intonation and the changes in language flow. In activities outside the class students need to engage in extensive listening; listening to many different variety of language phenomena and gaining more knowledge through TV programs, radio, the Internet and as many other kinds of exposure to listening training they can find. Exposure to demands of listening should include aspects of everyday life, science and technology, and academic lectures. Teachers must create language-learning environments that stimulate students’ interests and raise students’ passion and enthusiasm for learning English.

(E) Combining Listening with other Skills:

According to language acquisition theory, human capacity for discrimination between language intention and language content is a crucial step in the language acquisition process. Thus listening comprehensive ability plays an important role in acquisition and improvement of language skills. Therefore, in listening teaching, there is a need to combine the development of listening ability with the development of other skills such as reading. In order to improve listening ability it is necessary to listen frequently to a teacher reading well, since it is very difficult to generate a high quality output without appropriate input. Secondly, students need to practice reading aloud among themselves. By such activity students will learn to combine the act of listening with reading. Students must be actively engaged in producing language of high quality if they are to improve their English proficiency levels. Similarly, by combining listening with writing, teachers can divide the work into two parts. First, students might answer teachers’ questions in written English after listening to spoken language material. It is also important to remember that good listening entails recalling the essence of the material rather than the precise detail. Thirdly, teachers should combine listening activities with speaking in ways that bring out the basics of oral communication. Inevitably, listeners will lose the information
resources without speaking; speaking will lose its objective without careful listening and, as a result, speaking ability will not be acquired. Listening and speaking rely on each other and regulate each other. It is important to strengthen listening through speaking and to improve speaking through listening. Students need to retell and discuss the material they have just heard in order to synthesize their understanding. In this way they learn to combine listening with speaking properly. Students who are able to do this are able to overcome their passive response to the situation and gradually they learn to feel safe when they respond. In order for this to happen, a truly interactive and penalty free listening class is required. Teacher/student and students/student exchanges should be emphasized as opportunities for a free exchange of opinions when participants can consolidate their listening approaches and skills during the process of communication. Through a variety of listening-reading, listening-writing and listening-speaking activities, students can not only strengthen their language skills but also sharpen their interests and raise their motivation to improve their learning efficiency.

Austin, S. (1970), cited in Saricoban, A .(1999), proposes the following points to improve learners’ listening skills we should let them :Adopt a positive attitude.

1. Be responsive.
2. Shut out distractions.
3. Listen for the speaker’s purpose.
4. Look for the signals of what is to come.
5. Look for summaries of what has gone before.
6. Evaluate the supporting materials.
7. Look for non-verbal clues.

2-11. A Review of Some Related Previous Studies:

According to Mike, D. (1994), listening comprehension has become the foundation of a number of theories of second language acquisition (SLA) that focus on the beginning levels of second language proficiency (Asher, 1969; James, 1984; Krashen et al, 1984; Winitz, 1981). The primary assumption underlying these theories is that large amounts of listening practice before speaking or reading may prepare the learners to acquire a second language with greater efficiency than if they were taught all the skills simultaneously. Another assumption is that language acquisition is an implicit process in which linguistic rules are internalised by extensive exposure to authentic texts and particularly to comprehensible input that provides an appropriate level of challenge to the listener (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.129).

Tohsaku (1988), cited in Mike, D. (1994) has found that if listening skills are developed first that will lead in turn to the development of speaking skills. Okazaki (1988) recommends teaching listening by giving students the same comprehensible input as they would encounter in real life. Okazaki also says listening comprehension activities can and should be used as language learning experiences in themselves. Mikado and Matsumoto (1988) have made suggestions for improving the reliability of listening comprehension tests. They suggest increasing the number of questions and introducing more multiple choice items. As well, questions should be taken from all parts of the text, not just from one area. The findings from the investigation tend to support the above theories and research concerning second language acquisition.

Rahman, M. Saidur (2014) tried to find out the difficulties/problems face both the teachers and the students in terms of listening skill in the classroom at Secondary level Education in Bangladesh. At secondary level education CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach is introduced and the students and teachers are asked to practice all four skills equally to develop their communicative skill. But only speaking, writing and reading skills are given maximum importance. The teachers are avoiding teaching listening skill to the students. The study focused on teachers and students problems in terms of teaching and learning listening skill in the classroom. Five research questions were developed to find out the problems. Sufficient data and information were collected from teachers” and students’ opinions through questionnaire, FGD and class observation. Both the teachers and the students of Non Government Secondary high schools took part in this study. After collecting the data, it was analyzed and the findings came. The study discovered some reasons that were helpful to find out the answers of the problems. Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations were made.

In her study , Amna, A.Y (2009), investigated lecture comprehension problems of first year students listening to lectures in a FL subject matter classroom. Data was collected regarding the lecture comprehension difficulties of these students by means of a short open-ended questionnaire and interview. The analysis of the data provides an index of linguistic, conceptual, discourse, acoustic, environmental and psychological variables that hinder effective comprehension. The results of the study have implications for both EFL teachers and subject
A study was conducted by Ekrem, S & Firat, A. (2014) to reemphasize the importance of listening skill in ELT context and to determine prospective English teachers’ perceptions of listening comprehension problems. The study was conducted at ELT Department at a state-run University in Turkey and subjects were 124 prospective English teachers. The questionnaire on the ‘Beliefs on English Language Listening Comprehension Problems’ was used to collect data to assess prospective teachers’ beliefs about the English language listening comprehension problems they could encounter in unidirectional listening. The data was analyzed in SPSS program. The study revealed that participants used top-down processes effectively during the listening process, but they were not so good at using bottom-up processes. In addition, no significant difference was found in terms of genders’ perceptions of listening problems.

An important study was conducted by Anusu, O. (2012). This study was grounded on Dell Hymes’ theory of communicative competence. The descriptive research design was adopted, with direct observation and interview methods of data collection being used. Note-taking and tape-recording were used to record class proceedings and interviews. A total of twelve secondary schools were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Fourteen teachers of English were involved. A descriptive analysis of data was done. Frequency tables were used to highlight the data. This helped to establish the extent to which CLT was used. The study revealed that the major challenge lay on time, and wide syllabus. These, together with the large classes limited the teachers ability to involve learners in meaningful participatory activities. The pressure for formal examinations made the teacher concentrate on training and drilling the learners on how to pass the exams at the expense of communicative competence. The teachers chose to teach the learners how to pass exams and not how to use English in different situations. The result of this is that the learner will not be able to speak English both in school and after school. A teacher whose aim is to cover the syllabus will be unwilling to follow an approach that does not recognize that second language learning in a class room set-up is guided by what has already been prescribed. To such a teacher CLT is a waste of time. Tasks should be formulated by students themselves because learner-initiated questions have the advantage that will lead the learner to develop those strategies for understanding which will ultimately take him beyond the tutelage of the teacher.

3-Methodology

3-1 Method of Study: The study adopts descriptive analytical approach.

3-2 Population of Study:

The population of this study covers all English language teaching staff in the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017 in the College of Science and Arts in Tanumah which is about 115 Kilometers away from Abha; the main campus of King Khalid University.

3-3 Sample of Study:

Twelve EFL instructors are randomly chosen as a representative sample.

3-4 Data gathering instruments

For collecting data, the study employs a structured interview. This interview targets all English language teaching staff. The interview seeks to reveal EFL university instructors viewpoints about some issues that are related to the listening skill in terms of challenges of teaching listening skill, strategies of teaching listening, ways of developing listening skill of the students, ..........etc.

4- Data Analysis and Discussion

In this part, the structured interview will be analyzed and discussed.

4-1 Analysis of EFL University Instructors’ Interview

As it has been mentioned before, the structured interview is conducted on the
university teaching staff. Here is a summary of instructors’ responses to the interviews items. Each question will be considered separately.

4-1-1 Section One : General Information

This section shows general information about the respondents in terms of experience, qualification and colleges of graduation. The following bar graphs show the characteristics of the sample.

(i) Years of experience:

(ii) Qualification

(iii) College of Graduation:

4-1-2 Section Two: Answer the following questions briefly:

1/ Have you faced any challenges in teaching English listening skill?

All the interviewed EFL University instructors believe that have faced challenges in teaching English listening skill.

2- If your answer is yes what challenges have you faced?

Most participants think that they have faced a considerable number of challenges in teaching listening skill. These challenges can be summarized as follows:

1- The number of listening laboratories is not adequate.

2- Listening material on tape lacks visual and aural environmental clues. Not seeing the speaker’s body language and facial expressions makes it more difficult for the listener to understand the speaker’s meaning.

3- The selection of listening books in level two and level four is not appropriate for the students' standard. The audio tracks of these books are almost big for students which makes it difficult for the students to figure out or to capture the meaning of the content.

4- The listening laboratories are not well-organized and provided with all kinds of digital facilities.

5- The large class is a big problem for teaching listening skill.

6- There is no auditory and visual library for students to practice listening skill.

7- Listening skill is neglected in intermediate and secondary school curriculum besides that past EFL teachers simply did not put enough focus or emphasis on listening skill so that students have poor listening ability and "this is the biggest challenge to us" one of the instructor commented. In other words, majority of the participants consider that some of the students’ poor listening ability is a big challenge to them. However, they attribute these challenges to the following factors:

a- Personal factors related to the learner such as insufficient exposure to the target language, and a lack of interest and motivation.

b- Some participants think that most students complain about ‘unfamiliar words’, and ‘difficult grammatical structures’.

(c) The deficient linguistic knowledge of the students.

3- To what extent do these challenges affect the development of listening skill of your students?

- These challenges have negative impact on the development of listening skill to large extent.
- These challenges affect the students' listening ability to a great extent; they feel less motivated. As the students do not put learning into practice, they
forget everything after few months or years.

4. What strategies of teaching listening skill do you use to develop listening skill of your students?

Most participants use the following strategies of teaching listening skill to develop listening skill of their students:

a. Listening to recorded audio tracks
b. Acting out dialogue
c. Discussion
d. Repeated listening
e. Explanation
f. Giving students additional tasks
g. Group and pair work
h. Use of technology (e.g. mobile phones)
i. Oral drill

5/ What would you like to suggest in order to reduce the impact of these challenges you face in teaching listening skill?

To reduce the impact of these challenges encountered by EFL university instructor in teaching listening skill and to improve EFL university students’ listening skill, the interviewed participants propose the following suggestions:

- The listening laboratories should be well-organized and provided with all kinds of digital facilities.
- EFL instructors have an important and crucial role in assisting students surmounting their difficulties in listening skill by providing them with different types of input like lectures, radio news, films, TV plays, announcements, everyday conversation, and interviews besides providing them with extensive listening practice.
- EFL instructors need to expose their students to longer text extracts to develop their listening skill. Auditory and visual exposure is very important to enhance and develop students’ listening skills.
- EFL instructors should design listening tasks that arouse students’ interest and help them learn listening skills and strategies. These tasks do not only test the students’ listening comprehension but also motivate them to use various types of listening strategies in order to gain the maximum benefits in doing their activities.
- EFL instructors should familiarize their students with the rules of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers’ pronunciation.
- EFL instructors should give their students the necessary feedback on their performance because it can promote their error correction and increase their motivation, and help them to develop their confidence in listening exercises.
- EFL instructors should ask their learners to always listen to documentaries, and news on the radio and television, talk to native speakers face to face or on the Internet so that they can create and reinforce a good habit of listening in themselves.
- EFL instructors should explain the different cultures to the students.
- EFL instructors should change students’ attitudes towards listening skill.
- There should be an auditory and visual library that helps students develop their listening skill.
- Listening skill should be emphasized in intermediate and secondary school curriculum.

6/ Please feel free to add any other observations you have about listening skill?

Teaching listening skill is one of the most difficult tasks for any EFL university instructor. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. Developing listening skill is also difficult for students because there are no rules as in grammar teaching. Speaking and writing also have very specific exercises that can lead to improved skills. Teaching listening requires a bit more on the part of the teacher than that of the learners, but the responsibility should not be shouldered by the instructors alone; the student should also play his part.

- Practicing listening skill in every sense by students is invariable.
- Students should be involved in listening exercises by asking them for example to write a report on certain TV or radios programmes which are delivered in English.
- Students should think of the objectives of the course of listening positively, not only to think about having good grades in exam.
- Students should listen more to useful learning English materials or programmes.
Students should be encouraged to use English in their everyday conversation.

5- Results, Conclusion and Recommendations

5-1 Research findings

On the basis of the analysis and discussion of the interview questions, the study has come out with following results. That is, the challenges the EFL university instructors face in teaching listening can be summed up as follows:

1- The number of listening laboratories is not adequate
2- Listening material on tape lacks visual and aural environmental clues.
3- The selection of listening books in level two and level four is not appropriate for the students' standard.
4- The listening laboratories are not well-organized and provided with all kinds of digital facilities.
5- There is no auditory and visual library for students to practice listening skill.
6- The deficient linguistic knowledge of the students.

5-2 Conclusion

This study shows that EFL university instructors have faced a considerable number of challenges in teaching listening skill which have negative impacts on developing listening ability of the students. The proposed recommendations which were derived from the study attempt to assist both students and instructors in overcoming these challenges.

5-3 Recommendations from the study

The study proposes the following recommendations:

(i) The listening laboratories should be well-organized and provided with all kinds of digital facilities.
(ii) EFL instructors should design listening tasks that arouse students' interest and help them learn listening skills and strategies. These tasks do not only test the students' listening comprehension but also motivate them to use various types of listening strategies in order to gain the maximum benefits in doing their activities.
(iii) EFL instructors should familiarize their students with the rules of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation.
(iv) There should be an adequate number of listening laboratories.
(v) The selection of listening books in level two and level four should be reevaluated so as to be appropriate for the students' standard.
(vi) Listening skill should be emphasized in intermediate and secondary school curriculum.

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