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Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida

Faculty of Letters, Languages, and Arts

Department of English Language and Literature



Difficulties of Listening Comprehension in Middle School

The case of 3rd Year Pupils at Abi Rass Al Nassiri,

Sidi Boubker, Saida.

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Presented by:

Miss. TALBI, Saadiya

Supervised by:

Dr. SELLAM, Latifa

Jury Members

Mrs. Maarouf Nawoul

President

University of Saida

Dr. Sellam Latifa

Supervisor

University of Saida

Mrs. Sekkal Mariem

Examiner

University of Saida

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents whose love always strengthens my will

To my lovely sister and brothers.

To my teachers, my friends, and those who helped me to achieve this work.

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Abstract

Listening is one of the most important skills used by people while communicating with each other .It is considered as an essential part for students in all stages of education,since it represents the primary medium of learning. . The current study tends to explore the main causes and factors that determine the difficulties listening comprehension and to find out the remedial strategies that can be approached for promoting listening skills. It is done by the means of two research instruments a questionnaire for pupils at middle school and an interview for EFL teachers; which investigate the hypotheses that looks into the difficulties of listening comprehension in middle school. The main findings clearly showed that listening is the most difficult and complex skill to learners. It is also showed that learners face some obstacles related to: speech rate, memory limitation, lack of knowledge and other difficulties. Finally , this study aims at suggesting some implications are drawn for EFL teachers and learners to overcome the common obstacles.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

FL: Foreign Language

L2 : Second Language

MCQ : Multiple Choice Questions

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

TL: Target Language

3rd AM: Third Year Middle School

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

English is an international language used to communicate among people in the world. In Algeria, English is not used as daily communication among people but it is utilized in a very limited interaction, and it is learned as a school subject or at university. In the field of ELT, great attentions have been oriented towards the communicative properties of language. At this level, all of the four important skills: speaking, reading, writing, and mainly listening are to be involved within the teaching/ learning process without the exclusion of any one of them.

Particularly, though teaching listening skills in an EFL context is consensually regarded as a crucial issue, is still an insufficient covered aspect of language teaching. In fact, middle school learners encounter difficulties in listening comprehension which can be directly attributed to deficiencies in the teaching and learning environment itself.

For this purpose, this study endeavours to explore the main factors that lead to the 3rd AM year pupils' low achievements in listening comprehension; and to suggest remedial tools and strategies to overcome the learners' difficulties. Thus, the core attempt of the researcher is to seek to, provide satisfactory answer to the following research question:

What are the main difficulties encountered by 3rd AM learners in listening comprehension?

This question led to formulate the following hypotheses:

1. Third year middle school learners may not be aware of the importance of listening Comprehension.
2. Third year middle school learners may encounter difficulties related to: Speech rate, Lack of prior knowledge of the target language, Short-term memory.

To tackle this former problematic, an exploratory study was undertaken with 3rd AM pupils in the middle school. This present study embodies four chapters. The first chapter describes the general background of ELT situation in the Algerian middle school education. The second chapter discusses some of the literature pertaining to the main areas that provide the core of this research study, namely the key concepts of listening skills and the importance of listening comprehension.

The third chapter provides a thorough account of the research tools and procedures, and seeks to analyse and discuss the collected data based upon the theoretical account held in the previous chapter.

After collecting, analysing and interpreting data, some suggestions and recommendations are proposed in the fourth chapter. This area is concerned with implying a range of tasks that are of paramount importance to promote the listening comprehension and the strategies to achieve this goal.

Chapter One
Teaching Listening Skill

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1.1 Introduction

English has become increasingly the vehicle language used for communication across the globe. This fact led to the increase in demand and urgent need of learning and teaching the target language. This chapter presents an overview of the Algerian educational context with reference to ELT listening skills, particularly third year in middle school. The EFL teaching and objectives of these pupils are described in accordance with the syllabuses for English recently designed. This chapter also deals with the different sources of input.

1.2 English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algeria

English as a foreign language started to gain ground in Algeria , it is regarded as a *means to facilitate a constant communication with the world* (Naouel 2013). This interest in English began after the independence, especially when the Algerian government adopted an eradication policy of the French rule and culture, which was the first language spoken during the French colonization. To avoid a contradiction with the Arabic and the Islamic Algerian identity, the Arabisation process came to give the Arabic language back her real status in the Algerian society. Thanks to this process, Arabic was declared as the national language and the language of instruction for all subjects except sciences and medical courses, in primary, middle, and secondary schools in the 1970's, and after in university by the 1980's

From 1971 onwards, Arabic replaced French as the medium of instruction in primary schools; by 1976 all middle school education was conducted in Arabic; by 1984 all secondary education, and by 1986 most university education ...had undergone this change .

(Benmoussat's unpublished doctoral dissertation 2003:106)

Later on, the policy decision makers felt the need for educational reforms, which include the reintroduction of French as a first foreign language, and the introduction of English as a second foreign language at an early stage, exactly at the first year middle school, for a period of seven years, i.e., till the last year of secondary school, this considerable space of English is gained because of the rapid development of information and communication and because of the globalization process.

In Algeria, ELT text books and curriculum guidelines are government prescribed. The changing needs of the Algerian school made it imperative that ELT methodologies be

revised and updated. Since the 1980, Algeria has been involved in a large scale text book design program for middle and secondary schools. Attempts were made to revise the national curricula on the basis of functional notional and skill based objectives.

In speaking about the teaching of English in schools, in Algeria, two approaches have been adopted since its inception. The first one being the communicative approach which focused on communication which is the first and the easiest way to learn a language, especially when the learners get in touch with native the culture of the people speaking that language. But this was not practical considering difficulties of time and space, which led the Algerian educationalists to look the second approach adopted, was the competency-based approaches which help the learners acquire a communicative competency by centralizing on the learner as the target of the learning process. The focus in this approach was on the meaning conveyed by the context rather than the grammatical forms used in it. for another approach.

1.3 Teaching Foreign Language Listening

Since comprehension is the overriding desired outcome, foreign language teaching typically focuses on the product of listening: the correct answer. He asserts: *While an exclusive focus on the product of listening allows teachers to verify comprehension, the answer (correct or incorrect) does not help listeners gain an insight into the processes underlying successful comprehension, which is a characteristic of successful listeners* (Vandergrift 2011:66). Furthermore, He adds *an exclusive interest in the right answer often creates a high level of anxiety, since an interest in the correct answer is often associated with evaluation. Therefore, focusing on a growing body of research that examines a process approach to the teaching of EFL listening, it will be argued that an emphasis on the process of listening through regular classroom practice, unencumbered by the threat of evaluation.* (Vandergrift 2011:81).

1.4The Algerian Middle School Syllabi and Textbooks

Even though there is a plethora of English language teaching material available on the market. Covering many aspects of English language teaching and learning in Algeria neither the teachers nor the students can get rid of the textbook which always remains a necessary tool for language instruction . In Algeria, there are four Middle School textbooks: **Spotlight on English One, Spotlight on English Two, Spotlight on English Three and On the Move.**

1.4.1 Spotlight on English One

Spotlight on English One is the official English textbook intended for the first year Middle School learners who start learning English for the first time. The textbook includes seven files entitled ;‘Hello’, ‘Family and Friends’, ‘Sport’, ‘In and Out’, ‘Food’, ‘Inventions and Discoveries’, and ‘Environments’ .There are five sections within each file :‘Learn the Language’, ‘ Learn about Culture’ ,‘Reminder’, ‘Check’, and ‘Project’.

The first file deals with language items as lexis, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. Moreover, this section comprises many sequences .Each sequence contains three rubrics: ‘Listen and speak’, ’Practice’, and ‘Procedure’. The first rubric presents the learners the language items to be learned. The second rubric ‘Practice’ offers the learners to practice what has been presented in the previous rubric. The last rubric ‘Produce’ requires the learners to do some writing activities as order and alphabetic completion. The second file ‘Learn about Culture’ shows the learners that learning a foreign language is also learning a foreign culture. The third file ‘Check’ is related to language assessment. It is intended to support the teaching/learning process via the evaluation of the learners’ performance and progress all along the whole file. The last rubric ‘Project’ demands the learners to do a project work as a personal product.

The textbook units as well as the sequences do not include the learning objectives about the four language skills, which can be considered as the criteria on which to base the assessment, for example, the student should be able to listen for gist, to read for specific information, and so on. In spotlight on English One ,the first stage is related to the ‘Listen and Speak’ rubric and aims at developing items of language dealing with structure ,vocabulary ,and pronunciation .As a matter of fact, the following activity illustrates the sequence presentation :

D-Listen and repeat:

B .Role play: work in pairs. Ask and answer

e .g. What’s your name ?

My name’s Sally. /I’m Sally (Spotlight on English One: 21).

The above activity clearly reflects one of the most common principles of the behaviorists' view of the teaching which lies in repetition and habit formation. In addition, the students are not informed about the reasons of listening; they listen because they are asked to do so. As a result, the students are not really involved in the teaching /learning process and they just learn unconsciously. Said differently, the learners should be aware of what they are doing otherwise they will lose concentration and interest. More importantly this reflects a convention view of listening which considers it as 'the mastery of discrete skills or micro-skills and that these should form the focus of teaching and testing' (Richard: 2002).

1.4.2 Spotlight on English: Book Two

Spotlight on English: Book Two is the official second year textbook in the Middle School. It consists of five files. Each file includes three sequences. Each sequence is made of 'Listen and Speak', 'Discover the Language', and finally 'Self-assessment'. As the sections of textbook, they are 'Listen and Speak', 'Discover the language', 'Learn about culture', 'Check', 'Project', and 'Self-assessment'. As to the sections of the textbook they are: 'Listen and Speak', 'Discover the language', 'Learn about culture', 'Check', 'Project', and 'Self-assessment'. The first section is made of three rubrics : 'Pronunciation and Spelling' which is designed to help the learners to improve their spelling and pronunciation, 'Practice' which relates to revision and consolidation of language items learned in the previous rubric ,and 'Go Forward' which is a matter of reading activity.

The second section intends to enable the learners to discover new language items through reading and conversation. Its rubrics are: 'Reading Passage', 'Practice', and 'Reminder'. In the last rubric the learners are asked to learn inductively like finding out rules through many texts .The fourth section, that is 'Check' is made up of activities through which the teachers can assess their students' performance. As to the fifth section, its aim is to call on the students to carry out a project. The last section 'Self-assessment' is made up of a grid that allows the learners assess their own work.

Book Two reveals that 'Listen and Speak' rubric in 'Sequence One' starts with a presentation of the language forms mainly in a dialogue between two persons ; 'Sally and Steve' (spotlight on English :Book Two :8).According to Harmer *such a presentation phase is the stage where the teacher introduces a situation which contextualizes the language to be taught.*(Harmer,2001 :80). In other words, the students are presented the language items

to be learned within a context. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this 'Listen and speak' rubric does not start in a manner that activates the students' previous knowledge and understand better.

1.4.3 Spotlight on English: Book Three

Spotlight on English: Book Three is the official textbook designed for teaching English for third year learners at the Middle School. It consist of four files: 'Communication', 'Travel'; 'Work and Play', and 'Around the World'. Each file is made of six sections; that is, 'Language Skills', 'Snapshots of culture', 'Activate your English', 'Do the Exercises and Draw the Rules', 'Project Round-up', and 'Where Do We Stand Now?' the first section comprises three sequences turning around five rubrics: 'Listen and Speak', 'Say it Clear', 'Practice', 'Imagine' and 'Read and Write'. The second section aims at helping the learners become aware of the different cultures around the world and acquiring a cross-cultural competence.

The third section ;that is , 'Activate Your English' is mainly designed to help the learners keep in mind the words they have learned in the files of the book by using them in meaningful sentences of their own. The fourth section 'Do the Exercises and Draw the Rules' is related to language practice .The fifth section 'Project Round-up', requires the students to carry out a project. Finally yet importantly, 'Where Do We Stand Now?' deals with a set of activities to check the students' progress through the file. In book three 'Listen and speak' rubric shows that the latter follows the three phases: presentation, practice, and production. The first phase relates to the warm-ups to the listening and comprehension tasks. Indeed, the students are first required to do activities related to greetings.

1.4.4 On the Move

Being the last textbook to be released to complete the middle school English course, On the Move, intended for fourth year level, is made up of six (6) files following the same organization. The files are: 'It's My Treat', 'You Can Do It', 'Great Expectations', 'Then And Now', 'Dreams, Dreams' ...and 'Fact and Fiction'. Each file comprises six (6) parts that are Language Learning, (receptive stage); Take a Break, Skills Building, Project Round up, Where Do We Stand Now? and finally, Time For...Each file also begins with a 'Preview', a kind of a pedagogical plan of the intended for both students and teachers, and 'Food For

Thought' which serves as a warm-up consisting of pictures to help learners expect and know what is coming in the content of the file. Language Learning, this section deals with teaching grammar in context. It means that grammatical points are learnt through listening and reading activities. This section also consists three parts: 'Listen and Consider', 'Read and Consider', 'Words and Sounds'.

While the first part aims at getting the learners exposed to the grammar items of the file, the second one 'Read and Consider' introduces the grammatical points to be taught. Like the first part, it consists of a 'Reading Task', 'Grammar Window', and 'Practice'.

As far as the third part, it allows learners to be familiar with the pronunciation of some particular sounds with the use of the dictionary and to improve their pronunciation. Take a Break, this part or section is concerned with fun and relaxation. Learners enjoy cartoons; work out puzzles, tongue twisters, idioms and expressions or words that are related to the theme of the file. Skills Building, this section is composed of three parts: 'Research and Report', 'Listening and Speaking', 'Reading and Writing'. The first part includes several reading and writing home activities. These activities can be achieved individually or in small groups. The second part includes a variety of tasks; the purpose is to develop listening and speaking skills.

The last part aims at developing learners' reading / writing skills and; therefore, the emphasis is put on the building and the development of skills. . Project Round Up, this section is devoted to the procedure to follow to carry out the project work. Where Do We Stand Now? ; It is an evaluation section comprising two parts that are "Progress Check" and "Learning". While the first aims at assessing learners' performances from the beginning of the file until "now", the second part deals with learners' self-assessment. Time For..., it is a "Leisure Time" section where the learners are provided with songs, poems, proverbs and cartoons meant for entertainment and amusement. It comes as a step of rest after considerable intellectual efforts and before moving on to the next file.

1.5 Teaching EFL to 3rd AM Pupils

As has been mentioned above, English is used in Algeria as a second foreign language after French, as it was a French colony for more than a century (138 years). Actually, English is taught first in the elementary school along the four school years; then it is taught in the secondary school for three years as a compulsory subject. While at university,

it is taught as an obligatory module in all fields of study, such as, biology, economics, physics, etc. or it is a field of study itself whereby, students hold a licence degree in English. In the following subsections, the status of English at the middle level of education, and the main objective EFL teaching/learning at this level are to be discussed

The syllabus of EFL teaching/learning is designed by new structures to promote the enhancement of the communicative and functional aspects of language. It intended to develop the learners' communicative skills. It is conceived with the purpose to deepen and develop the skills. The syllabus of 3rd AM is then elaborated and designed to meet the needs, interests of the learners.

1.5.1 The Syllabus

The Ministry of Education has recently designed the current English syllabus in 2005. It consists of a list of units based upon selected themes according to the needs of third year pupils'. Throughout these themes, the pupils will develop the overall competencies as worded in the syllabus:

- interacting orally in English
- interpreting oral and written texts
- producing oral and written texts

(The Teacher's guide, 2005)

Pupils' Entry Profile

The learner has completed two school year (1st AM and 2nd AM) in which he has been exposed to : Firstly, to interact orally in English .Secondly, to identify the phonological system of English grammar and lexis.Thirdly, to interpret and produce simple oral and written messages ,working in groups .

Pupils' Exit Profile

It is also called *Intermediary Objective of Integration*. In the third year of middle school,the learner is supposed to consolidate the learner's 2nd AM acquisitions, interacting in real life life situations, expressing oneself in more elaborated English and carrying on studying English at the next school level (4th AM). (The Syllabus for English, 2005).

1.5.2 Thir Year middle school Pupils' EFL Objectives

As English is widely spread in all over the world, by becoming the dominant language of various fields of life such as, science, technology, communication and telecommunication, culture, and especially economy, Algerian authorities are well aware of the urgent need of promoting the teaching and learning of this language. Hence, they mobilized all the efforts and steps of educational reforms to maintain the use of English in the national educational context. To achieve this, they underlined explicitly the principal objectives and goals of ELT:

- Help the learner to get integrated in modernity.
- Join the linguistic community of English for all types of transactions
- Develop the skills and abilities that may enable the learner to get integrated in the living society as well as to be aware of his/her relation with others. This participation relies on the assumption of exchanging ideas, and experiences in science, culture, and civilization. This fact allows the learner to know oneself as well as the others through self- reflexion.
- Mastering English as a linguistic tool to communicate effectively is said to enable the learners to: have access to the world science, technology and culture.
 - open to the academic and professional world
 - develop high spirits of tolerance and open mindness to the world.

(Syllabus for English, 2005:4)

Teaching English at the middle school level is a part of the national policy of the foreign languages and a part of the provisions of the educational reform system introduced in 2001. It is highly recommended that teaching English should contribute to the progress of the learner in all dimensions and values, including, openness to the world, respect, and tolerance as well.

Under the general objectives of teaching and learning foreign languages, three ones are sub-categorized in order to maintain the development of competencies and skills of the learner:

- Linguistic objectives
- Methodological objectives
- Cultural objectives

Linguistic objectives

The 3rd AM learner is supposed to be equipped with a basic amount of language material: grammar, phonetics, vocabulary and the four skills. The 3rd AM syllabus aims at consolidating and developing the 2nd AM acquisitions.

- Grammar: the learners will be trained in discovering the rules of English.
- Phonetics: improving the pronunciation and intonation.
- Vocabulary: increasing the learners stock of lexical words.
- The four skills: more training in listening, speaking, reading and writing aiming at communication and interaction in a free and creative way.

Methodological objectives

- Promoting the students' learning strategies aiming at autonomy.
- Acquiring methods for working and thinking.
- Acquiring self-evaluation strategies.
- Exploiting various documents and feeling interested in subjects that are not dealt with in class.

Cultural objectives

The cultural objectives are also of vital importance towards the teaching and learning of English in order to:

- Discovering the context of English civilization and culture.

1.5.3 Integration of Language Skills

It is worthwhile noting that the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) are most of the time integrated in terms of joining two different skills within a

classroom session. For instance, listening is generally combined with various tasks as speaking (repeating), writing (taking notes, filling charts), or reading (matching, filling blanks).

This embodied in the fact that no language skill can occur solely on one hand, and in stimulating the learner's interest of listening on the other hand. For instance, through reading activities, the learners train themselves to extract information from the reading passage in terms of scanning and skimming. Via writing activities, they train themselves to produce messages relevant to the given text using the accurate punctuation, capitalization i.e., to make use of the acquired knowledge both in English and in the other subjects. It implies developing listening and speaking but even reading and writing may intervene. At this point, the learner is well aware of the importance of EFL learning process in order to use the TL in meaningful situations. According to the Ministry of Education, in the pedagogical instructions (2005: 14) the learner should:

- listen carefully to give feedback
- grasp the necessary information or the main idea.
- listen as much as possible with interest to focus on the important elements of the message.
- neglect all the new vocabulary items and unnecessary for the understanding of the message.

Generally, the EFL teacher prepares his/her pupils for the task by starting a prelistening e.g., picture, general background of the context, etc. in order to lead them guess the coming points of learning. Hence, the pupils train themselves to speak, to:

- start a conversation, take part in a discussion,
- express opinion, advice, order
- suggest and comment
- ask for in the classroom settings, EFL teacher needs to create conditions in which the learners can make use of the TL by opting appropriate strategies and techniques such as,

conversation, pair work, role player, group work, and activities that involve the whole class. give information.

1.6 The Different Sources of Input

Listening is one process practiced by different people and presented by different sources. EFL learners use lots of sources either inside or outside the classroom.

1.6.1 Teacher Talk

Wilson (2008) writes a Swiss saying: "*Wenn alles schläft und einer spricht, dass nennt der Lehrer unterrichtet*". (41); which means that: "*when everyone is sleeping and one person is speaking, that is what the teacher calls teaching.*"(41) In EFL classes, a lot of learners do not pay attention to teacher's talk because they are not aware about the fact that it is the most affective and the most fruitful source of input during lessons. What makes it more beneficial is that the teacher has the total control of his listeners and his language where he can slow down, speed up, repeat ambiguous points, and explain more. In addition teacher talk is interactive because the teacher responds and reacts to students' needs and questions.

Teacher talk can be presented in three forms. The first is that it can be planned this means that the teacher plans what he is going to present or to say. This concerns real world information that does not have any relation with the lesson, for example, the teacher informs his students about the time of an exam. In this case listeners concentrate more because this information benefits them. The second aspect is semi-planned in which the teacher provides pedagogical activities for students to listen to such as talking about personal anecdotes or biographies. These activities are only prepared not scripted.

The third one is spontaneous input which includes the comments and encouragements that can create a sort of dialogue between the teacher and his students. For example, one student comes late and enters to the classroom, and the teacher asks him about the reason then the student answers and so on. There is a case proves the importance of teacher talk. The case is when there are no materials to use for practicing listening, so the teacher will be the only source of input for students.

1.6 .2 Student Talk

Student talk or working in groups is another source for improving the listening skill during classroom listening session. In this case students sit in groups tackling many topics such as, anecdotes which are personal at first, and, then they will be interesting. To prove

that student talk is working and students are listening to each other, teachers have to organize a set of activities from which we mention one activity as an example; Reporting back is an activity where all of the students have the opportunity to speak, but before the activity starts, the teacher informs his learners that they will report back what was said. It is obvious that they will report what they was listening .

1.7 Conclusion

The importance of English as a universal language and the advance of technology and educational reform are key-determinants for new developments in English language teaching and learning. The present chapter has tried to analyse and describe the Algerian educational situation of ELT with reference to third year middle level on one hand; and outline the different sources of input. The next chapter is a review of literature of listening comprehension.

Chapter Two
Theoretical Background on Listening Comprehension

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- 2.9 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

Starting from the idea that naturally the spoken form of the language emerged first then the written form, this leads us to consider that the most important skill of English language is listening skill. Second language process begins with the language components as an oral input which needs the receptive ability (listening). Because of the importance of English language as an international language, the English language bases on the quality of the input which is initially given as a form of oral input in different occasions as normal lectures, laboratories or even recorded materials. This means that listening skill has more importance than the other skills because it is the starting point of teaching foreign language. To cover this issue, it is important to highlight the essential related concepts of the process of listening skill which are briefly: receptive and productive skill ;priority of listening, definition of listening comprehension which is followed by stages and the importance of this skill , and it sheds light on the status of listening comprehension in EFL. Finally, this chapter ends with the difficulties that EFL listeners encounter in their learning process.

2.2 Receptive and Productive skills: Priority of Listening

Students often find a tremendous amount of challenges while they are listening to the language they are learning. Gass (1997) cited that there is no model of second language acquisition that avail itself of input in trying to explain how learners create second language grammar. It has been claimed that over 50 percent of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening (Nunan, 1998). Despite this, we often take the importance of listening for granted, and it is arguably the least understood and most overlooked of the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing, in the language classroom.

It established that listening is a basic language skill prior to the other language skills. It is a prerequisite to and more useful than speaking. Rivers (1988) suggested that listening is more useful than speaking English for specific purposes, because the listening activity seems to require more recognition vocabulary from the foreign language learners for a rapid comprehension than a sophisticated and complex knowledge of syntax.

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Moreover, Ingram (1974) considers the fact that *comprehension is ahead of production a linguistic universal of acquisition*. Krashen (1984) asserts that *speaking is the result of acquisition. The ability to speak a second language emerges or develops on its own after the acquirer has built up enough competence listening and reading*. Krashen here goes far to focus on the speaking as a productive skill in regardless listening and reading to carry this development on with receptive skills. Lund (1991: 2002) goes even further to suggest listening after reading: *Listening after reading helps learners recognize acoustically what they can already comprehend in print and in stills satisfaction and confidence in listening*. Lund goes through reading than put its benefits that contains all acoustic knowledge in enhancing and develop listening comprehension. He build a confidence in which student after reading they will be satisfy between the print, utter words and what they listen.

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. 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 (Feyten, 1991). A study by Wilt (1950), found that people listen 45 % of the time they spend communicating. He found that 30 % of communication time was spent speaking, 16 % reading, and 9 % writing. That finding confirmed what Rankin discovered in 1928, that people spent 70 % of their waking time communicating and those three-fourths of this time spent listening and speaking.

Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides the foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long

role in the processes of communication. In general, we do respond overtly, because speaking is a subsequent behavior to listening.

2.3 Definition of Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is the complex process of understanding speech in a second or foreign language. In listening, what the listener wants to achieve is an adequate understanding of what the speaker means (Brown, 1990). It is through auditory organs and the brain's cognitive activities, and use phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and all kinds of non-linguistic knowledge, perception of sound into a process of information.

In human communication, listeners not only listen to others, but also have to comprehend what others talk about. That is what is called listening comprehension. Listening comprehension includes the auditory perception and all sorts of cognitive competence in attaining the goal of understanding (O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper offer a useful and much more extensive definition:

Listening comprehension 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 resources to fulfill the task requirements. (1989: 434).

The definition of listening comprehension becomes an important area of research, and several definitions have been proposed, among them that of Thompson and Rubin (1996:331) in which listening comprehension is considered as *an active process in which listeners select and interpret information that comes from auditory and visual clues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to express.*

For Purdy's, listening comprehension refers to *the active and dynamic process attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and non-verbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings (1997:8).* One of the recent definitions is suggested by Rost that listening comprehension is a complex process that helps the speaker understand spoken language (2005:305).

To sum up, listening comprehension is not simply hearing speech. Rather, it is an active process whereby listener receives oral stimuli, attends as spoken input, attaches meaning to oral symbols, comprehend and interpret the message.

2.4 The Processes of Listening Comprehension

There are different views about how listeners apply their linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge to the incoming sound during the process of comprehension. For this purpose, three processes of comprehension models have been developed in order to account for the comprehension of spoken language. These processes are bottom-up, top down and interactive processing. Harmer states :

In metaphorical terms, this can be linked to the difference between looking down on something and on the contrary, being in the middle of something and understanding where we are by concentrating on all the individual features. (2001 :201)

2.4.1 Bottom-up processing

Bottom (base : linguistic aspects) to get the up (roof : meaning).

Nehei (2003) claimed that Comprehension is predicted to take place in a definite order, in bottom-up processing starting with the lowest language units and then moving up to the highest level. Listeners make up their understanding starting with phonemes and then they combine them into words which together shape phrases, clauses and so on until they fulfill a literal understanding. The last, is then interpreted depending on relevance of the information at that time to understand what the speaker means. Yet, listening comprehension is achieved piece by piece going from the parts of the whole. According to this idea, expectations that comes from the background knowledge are prerequisite for comprehension.

2.4.2 Top -down processing

From top (semantic aspects : meaning) to the down (linguistic aspects). This process goes in opposite direction of the previous model. The listener comprehends discourse by moving highest unit, schemata, context and culture to the lowest, language knowledge in processing a text, emphasis is on the use previous knowledge rather than relying upon linguistic knowledge. The benefits of this model are that it can compensate to a certain level for the linguistic limitations when the listener's language knowledge is not sufficient for comprehending a spoken input (as cited in Nehei & Koichi, 2003).

2.4. 3 Interactive processing

Comprehension is not a simple matter-either of moving from lower to higher or from higher to lower element-but is an interactive process Nunan (1993). The interactive model involves the previous two processes; it assumes that the application of various types of knowledge does not require a specific order to understand a language. As both Nunan (1993) and Buck(2001) argued that linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge involved in the language understanding can be used simultaneously so that the limitations at one level would be compensated by any another level without looking at its place in the hierarchy. Anderson and Lynch (1988:13) have presented a figure summarizing the relationship between the different information sources of information with regard to the interactive process of listening comprehension.

2.5 Stages of Listening

In any classroom, listening sessions are divided into three parts ; pre-listening, whilelistening, and post-listening. In each stage both teachers and students has many roles to play.

2.5.1 Pre-Listening Stage

The pre-listening stage gives students an overview about what they are going to do before starting listening. In the pre-listening stage there are two sub stages ; the first is to activate students' schemata which helps them to expect the content of the listening passage.To activate students' schemata, there are six ways ; the first one is brainstorming which means extracting and generating a big number of ideas from the central one. The second is using visuals which help activating schemata which have a relation with the listening passage, andvisuals are helpful for students whose style in learning is visual.

The third one is using relia; an example of activity provided with relia is when the teacher brings photos to the classroom where the pre-listening task is to guess who the people in photos are. The fourth is using texts and words in which students read before listen. This stage can be an introduction to the topic. The fifth is situations ; real world situations such as answering phone calls or ordering in the restaurant can be helpful in predicting the sequence and the development of the listening passage. The sixth sub stage is opinions, ideas and facts. This activates and refreshes students' prior knowledge. An

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example to get students involved before listening is to ask them to do researches by their own or to teach other students. (Wilson 2008).

2.5.2 While-Listening Stage

During-listening is the stage where students are at time to practice listening through a set of activities provided by the teacher. According to (Wilson 2008), students have to listen to the input once ; for example, listening for gist, but they have other occasions when they want to listen for specific information or for details. As they can hear the input twice in order to check or to answer a detailed question. There are two views about how many times students should listen to the message. The first view says only once taking their view from real life communication where the listener hears the message only one time. While the second view, for listening purposes, states that students have many opportunities to hear the input because this reduces their anxiety. Students listen to the message different times because it may be difficult, long or boring. Repeating messages may be done several times if the focus is the study of the language.

Moreover, if the listener has not understood the passage after hearing it more than three times, the problem here may not be the one that can be solved by repeated exposure to the same passage. With long messages, for example, teachers may consider chunking texts by dividing them into various pieces. This can ease understanding and avoids overloading students.

2.5.3 Post-Listening Stage

According to (Davis and Pearse 2000), post listening is the stage that helps students to relate what they have heard with their own ideas and experiences, like what they do in real life. This stage permits students to move smoothly from listening to another language skill. For example, learners may practice speaking by performing plays similar to the ones they have heard. Speaking here is not to help them with the speaking skill, but it is intended to help impede knowledge of that play, so they can enhance the listening scopes.

2.6 The Importance of Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension needs an intensive concentration and requires a fast understanding of what is said. To intensify listening comprehension, many factors have to be taken into consideration from listeners' part. Context, facial expressions and body gestures, for example, are some elements that the learner can benefit from in order to ease the interpretation of what is intended to be conveyed by the speaker.

According to (Lightwood and Spada 1993), there is one effective way that leads students to well acquire a foreign language. They call "a steady diet" of listening comprehension activities. That means to acquire a language, we have to practice it. (Rost 1994) declared that listening comprehension is very important in foreign language instruction because of many reasons. One reason is that listening is a process by which we get input, and without understanding it learning cannot occur.

According to (Doff 1995), listening has a great impact in developing speaking. In other words, we cannot develop our speaking skill unless we develop our listening skill. If an English language learner have the ability to understand spoken English, it will be easy for him to listen to the radio and to study or communicate with foreign visitors. To make this ability more developed, learners need plenty of practice and exposure to English. Listening to English is also very important in acquiring it. You can recognize that if you compare between two learners; one is living in a country where the target language, English, is the first language, and the other is living in a country where English is only spoken in academic settings. The difference is that the first can acquire it more easily and rapidly than the second. As a result, learners need as much exposure to English as possible.

Referring to (Nunan 1997) quoted in (Khaled 2010), listening comprehension is not an easy skill, but it is very complicated and very necessary process. It gets its importance from the important role it plays in constructing either first or second language acquisition.

2.7 The Status of Listening Comprehension in EFL Instruction

In spite of its importance, the teaching of listening comprehension had long been a neglected aspect of English in many EFL programs. There are three main reasons for neglected listening, the first is that until a few decades ago there was a great agreement that listening comprehension should not be taught explicitly. The proof for this is what Mendelsohn (1984) calls "*osmosis*". i.e., learners improve their listening comprehension

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through listening to the teacher all day in any case, without explicit instruction into listening. The second reason for poorly taught listening comprehension is that average classroom teachers do not feel confident and at ease in teaching listening. In fact they provide lot of exposure to listening but do not teach their students how to go about it .i.e., learners listen and answer without being taught how to listen. (Mendelsohn1994).

The third reason why listening comprehension is neglected is the traditional listening materials that are unsuitable for teaching listening comprehension. The listening materials in most courses are not representative of the spoken English of real world; it is written language that has been read aloud and recorded, or it is a clearly scripted simulation of spoken language; which sounds artificial. (Mendelsohn 1994).

2.8 Listening Comprehension Difficulties

Since listening is a complex active process in which learners decode and construct the meaning of the text by drawing on their previous knowledge about the world as well as their linguistic knowledge, there seems to be many factors that affect listening comprehension.

These factors include familiarity with and ability to understand the phonology of the non-native language, vocabulary size, and background knowledge about the topic, text, structure, schema, and culture. The mental state of listeners can also have an impact on their ability to understand what has been said. That is, if a listener is anxious or in some other way distracted and unable to pay attention, it will be more difficult to process what was said.

2. 8.1 Characteristics of the Listener

The factors targeted here include working memory capacity, proficiency and experience with the foreign language (FL), the use of metacognitive strategies, and anxiety. Understanding a foreign language taps general cognitive abilities, as well as knowledge acquired as the result of dedicated study and exposure to the non-native language . General cognitive abilities known to affect FL comprehension include working memory and metacognitive strategies such as planning, prediction, monitoring, evaluation, mental translation, personal knowledge, and directed attention.

2.8.1.1 Working memory

Working memory refers to a limited capacity system of temporary storage and manipulation of input that is necessary for complex tasks such as comprehension and reasoning (Baddeley, Hitch 1974). According to Brown (2006), listeners must hear words (bottom-up processing), and then interpret what has been heard before hearing a new input. Meanwhile, they need to use their background knowledge (top-down processing) to make sense of the input: derive meaning concerning prior knowledge and schemata. According to Hedge (2000), during these processes, because listeners try to keep numerous elements of message in mind while they are inferring the meaning and determining what to store, the load on the short-term memory is heavy.

Working Memory is a set of cognitive processes that all listeners use with varying degrees of efficiency as they attend to, temporarily store, and process incoming speech.

2.8.1.2. Proficiency and experience with the FL

According to Anderson and Lynch (1988), the word schema or this term integrating in listening context which mainly abstract and general mental relevant knowledge ,memory, and experience that allow us use what we hear into what we know. Although language proficiency is a different from student to another because the foreign language knowledge varies according the awareness about practices in proposition ‘textbase’ as stated by Kintsch(1983).

2.8.1.3Vocabulary

Vocabulary plays a key role in listening, especially for a foreign language learner. In the listening skill, we must pay attention to the size of the new vocabulary to which learners are confronted. Brown and Yule (1983) mention that, learners start looking for the meaning of a word and loose the thread of speech. That is why they should train to go on listening and to accept the fact that it is not necessary to understand every word because good listeners, according to Brown and Yule, encourage speakers and liberate the conversation. Hence, when teaching the listening skill, it is useful to devise sessions aimed at practicing to sub-skills of reaching the meaning of unknown words from the context using the appropriate strategy. Hung (1998) informed that listening passages with known words are easier for learners to understand, even if the theme is unknown to them. His research represented that knowing the meaning of the words might arouse students learning

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interest and lead to a positive effect in listening ability. Another problem is here that many words have more than one meaning and if they are used their less common usage students get confused.

2.8.1.4 Background knowledge

We can simply make a boring topic an interesting one for the learner. In listening tasks interest and motivation should be present. The problem here is a great one because the teacher should keep silent while his students are listening to the records or to any speaker. The beginning would be a best time to put his learner in a comfortable atmosphere and to provide them with the necessary knowledge to interpret correctly the ideas to be communicated. This introduction will play the role of reference and the clear and strong reference is, the less time and energy you'll spend at the end of the listening task, some times it is too hard to change interpretations already done by the learner taking into account many factors and especially psychological ones (hesitation, introverts learners) .As Moses said :

Students learn and remember new information best when it is linked to relevant prior knowledge. Teachers who link classroom activities and instruction to prior knowledge build on their students' familiarity with a topic and enable students to connect the curriculum content to their own culture and experience. (2003).

Background knowledge is a source of information. Basics of this typical knowledge are our academic learning and especially on our everyday life experience .The importance of that knowledge in FL acquisition makes it affect the students' interaction with the learning material. If teachers succeed in drawing a link between new information and the students' prior knowledge the learning will be better. Gho (2002), mentioned that listeners with rich background knowledge use it to cover and feed their weakness in misunderstandings, unclear speech, and a lack of local or specific context from earlier parts of the passage. This use of background knowledge can be detrimental, however because listeners that rely too heavily on prior knowledge , prior conversational units, and relational history with the speaker may be unduly biased by this information (Bodie, 2008).

2.8.1.5 Metacognitive strategies

Learning strategies for listening comprehension has been an interest of many researchers; Chamot (1995) defines learning strategies as *the steps, plans, insights, and reflections that learners employ to learn more effectively*. The listening strategies can be divided into two groups' bottom-up strategies and top-down. Bottom-up which depends on the speech itself and the language clues in it; these strategies based linguistic features and encourage learners to analyze individual words for their meaning or grammatical structures before constructing the meanings to form propositions (bottom-up processing). Top-down strategies referring to the listener and her/his use of mental processing ; these strategies focus on the overall meaning of phrases and sentences and encourage learners to make use of real world schematic knowledge to develop expectations of text meaning (top down processing).

As well as, Vandergrift (1999) summarizes listening strategies in three categories as metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socioaffective strategies. According to Vandergrift (1997), metacognitive strategies are defined as *mental activities for directing language learning* which include planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's comprehension. These strategies refer to the thinking about the learning process such as selective attention and comprehension monitoring Goh (1997, 1998).

2.8.1.6 Anxiety

Clark, et al. (1989) found that listener anxiety can have a profound effect on comprehension abilities. When listeners are concerned that the message is too complex or that they will not be able to understand it, their ability to concentrate falters, and comprehension declines ; this is true even in the mother tongue language. Listeners became more anxious when in a new situation, listening to new information, trying to sort conflicting information, listening to seemingly illogical passages, or when they think their performance reflects their abilities or intelligence. Hussey, (2010) stated that anxiety affected on listeners' abilities to resolve ambiguities in their native language in real time, directly. (Chang, and Read, 2008), found the ability to take notes may decrease anxiety during FL listening comprehension, in other words factors are related to the testing conditions.

2.8.1.7 Lack of Concentration

Students' motivation is one of the crucial factors that affect listening comprehension. It can be difficult for students maintaining the concentration in a foreign language learning classroom. In listening comprehension, even the smallest pause in attention may considerably spoil comprehension. When students find the topic of the listening text interesting, comprehending would be easier. For all that, students find listening very boring even if they are interested in the topic because it needs a huge amount of effort in order to not miss the meaning.

2.8.2 Characteristics of the Passage

Many listening difficulties also represented when treat passage features that cover each of the authenticity, redundancy, information density, and complexity and length of the passage. These factors determined in the sake of identifying listening difficulties in FL. The authenticity becomes the first factor that lay down on the listeners in listening comprehension. Redundancy is the second factor from the five below, it refers to how repetitions of words reflex the passive act of the listener. Than the information density presents the absolute factor which can be dynamically differing between listeners one by one and his/her degree in language as more as knowledge.

Complexity comes to highlight and focus on listening skill as a complex system, its importance as first skill from which technically not easy system to practice. Finally, the vocabulary is stand as necessary condition and its relationship with the background knowledge ; it is also difacilitate the system dynamically.

2.8.2.1 Authenticity

Authenticity of aural materials can be defined in many ways, involving the speaker, the listener, the context, and the message (Breen1985). Many students feel a huge gap between listening activities in the classroom (or homework) and actual situations when they interact and sharing ideas in oral expression. This is because most listening materials, including dialogues in textbooks, are very grammar-oriented script with perfectly controlled speed, voice tone, accent, and correct grammar. However, this is far different from real life conversation. Thus, there is a wide distinction between controlled listening materials and real life listening and controlled in many ways with a few professional speakers.

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The speakers read a piece of real language that is created by a real speaker for a real audience in order to convey a message of some sort (Gilmore, 2007). In other words this means speaker guide the conversation to be sure that the sending message is according the listener needs, such looking for degree of him. However, there are some arguments against using authentic materials in listening tasks, especially at basic and first level. Authentic materials are too difficult and may discourage learners, and also there is skepticism about exposing the learners to err in grammar usage, particularly at the initial stages of language study. Penny Ur (1984).

2.8.2.2 Redundancy

Redundancy refers to the repeating terms through exact repetition, paraphrase, and elaboration (Chaudron, 1983). Across a variety of passage types (e.g., both conversations and lectures), speakers will circle back to previously introduced points to check for comprehension in their listeners, or simply to reiterate information they believe is most important (Field, 2008). Perhaps counterintuitively, redundancy is often classified as a form of simplification of input because it involves re-presenting information, thus giving the listener another chance to comprehend the information, sometimes in a form that is easier to process or retain (Chaudron, 1983) and (Parker, 1987). Further, redundancy is argued to be a superior manner of simplification compared with syntactic simplification, which involves modifications like restricting the passage to canonical word order (e.g., Subject-Verb-Object is the canonical word order in English; Crystal, 2003).

2.8.2.3 Information density

Aiken, et al. (1975) stated that sometimes measures of density only include those pieces of information that have not been previously given in the passage in the numerator that they control for redundancy, and so these measures directly capture the density of unique information in a passage.

2.8.2.4 Complexity and length of the passage

The passage information process in special way and challenging between each other to let the listener acquires a new meaning. Number of dependent clauses, the degree of subordination, the number of negatives, and the number of references in the passage are measuring this complexity. According to Blau(1990), the simplifying sentences are not

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necessary to improve FL comprehension. Furthermore, recent results imply that modifying sentences structure does not affect foreign language learners listening comprehension.

Nissan, (1996) found that when the number of negatives is more than one impact an item's difficulty amount in the corresponding passage. Kostin (2004) also discovered that no relationship between referentials and dependent clauses in her examined dialogues. Other similar analysis was failed to explore the relation between negation and items difficulty.

We concluded that negatives in the passage may increase item difficulty, but the effect is unlikely to be strong. While the results from Nissan et al. (1996) and Kostin (2004) imply that the presence of two or more negatives may increase item difficulty, and those of Yanagawa and Green (2008) expect that negatives may increase the difficulty of particular kinds of items, Ying-hui (2006) failed to find any effect of negatives on difficulty. None of the studies investigating referentials or dependent clauses found a relationship between these factors and item difficulty, so there is no evidence to date that these factors will impact FL listening comprehension. Another reason makes listening text difficult is the length of the passage. The level of students play a great role when listening long parts and keeping all the information in the mind. It is not easy for the lower level student to listen more than three minutes long listening then completing the desired activities. Short listening texts facilitate listening comprehension and diminish boredom, keep learners concentration alive (Atkins et al 1995). If the text contains a lot of information, it is not easy to store everything in mind, exceptional listening ability and strategy required to understand (Carroll, 1977).

2.8. 3. Auditory features

In this part, treating the speech is common and important to describe the factor of auditory in the sake to determine listening difficulty. The speaker's status, gender, the situation, and context (where and when) are the most variables that effect on the message receiving by listener. For reaching our aim we should deal with, the speaker accent that sometimes uses different varieties of language as reason to confuse the listener or annoying the listener from all sides. The second factor is both of noise and distortions which related to external angels to deal with listener. The external means both contextuality and situationality that affect the expressions understanding, unfamiliar words and difficult items. Finally, the left factor is about the speech rate, the fast language heard by the FL

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listeners that decrease his/her degree of understanding also sending the message in common conversations.

2.8 .3.1. Speaker accent

Understanding the spoken language means concerning and controlling a speech rate or the pitch voice (adaptation of idiosyncrasies). Listeners become more competent in the skill but challenges presented when trying to adopt the difference accents of the speaker, than listener less more accents (Weil, 2003). In this case of a speaker with a different accent, a listener must cope with variation arising from both the speaker's own idiosyncrasies and additional variation the speaker shares with others from the same linguistic background. Furthermore, Floccia et al. (2009) cited that accented speech affects immediately the listener to recover and retrieve the speaker's message than identify particular words of this message. Balasubramanian, and Bunta (2005) investigated how accents of varying degrees of familiarity affected the listening comprehension of native and non-native listeners. So the parameter of adaptation standing as challenger to all people, we support by new unfamiliar accented words.

2.8 3.2. Distortion and Noise

Distortion also noise exist when ideal condition are absent. Recorded conversations mostly mixed with noise and distortions that illustrated in T.V and radio according to many known reasons, in turn-taking real life model noise suffering seems when listener tries to understand non-native language. Indeed, these acoustic distortions can have a deep effect on a listener's ability to understand what they are hearing. When listening to sentences in a unfavourable conditions, even people listening to their native language struggle to understand what was said (Payton, Uchanski, Braida, 1994 ; Adank et al. 2009). Field (2003) considers these phonological processes include reduction, assimilation, elision, and resyllabification, among others and all of them degrade the input from the citation form.

When the competing noise shares phonological characteristics with the non-native language in the target passage, as when the passage is presented against a background of babble noise, it is harder for FL listeners to determine which parts of the signal are from the target passage and which are from the competing noise (Carhart, Tillman, Greetis, 1969 ; Brungart, 2001 ; Freyman, Balakrishnan, Helfer, 2004).

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In addition, Field (2004) argues that listeners, and especially beginning-level listeners, do not even try to understand each and every word. Instead, they use background knowledge, co-text (information relevant to passage topic from sources like pictures, headlines, etc.), analogy, and/or knowledge about the speaker to construct a schema in which they can integrate incomplete acoustic information. Field describes this process in the context of Forster's (1989) description of cross-word processing, where top-down information is used to compensate for incompletely or incorrectly perceived lexical information.

2.8.3.3 Speech Rate

All foreign language listeners have probably experience of listening to something and not quite understand it, because it seemed too fast that they could have understood if only it has been a little slower. Listener's perceptions that speech is too fast are often due to the lack of automaticity in processing. For them when speech becomes slower, listeners process the language easily. There is an evidence suggests that the faster the speech, the more difficult is to comprehend (Buck 2001).

Spoken English language come into numerous forms. For example; in monologues, the speaker uses spoken language for any length of time and the stream of speech will continue whether or not the hearer comprehends. The level of difficulty of comprehension changes from planned to unplanned monologues. i.e., planned monologues usually manifest little redundancy that is relatively difficult to comprehend, while unplanned monologues exhibit more redundancy that makes for ease in comprehension.

To sum up, the number and the length of pauses used by the speaker play an important role in comprehension, because the learners will need to be able to comprehend language delivered at varying rates of speed and at times, delivered with few pauses, unlike reading when a person can stop and go back to reread (Brown 2000).

2.8.3.4 Physical conditions

Sometimes inconvenience of classrooms affects students listening comprehension. In the large classrooms students who are sitting on the back rows may not hear the recording as students sit in front. Students who prefer to stay next to the windows also effected by the noise that come from outside. As a teacher we have to take into account all this conditions in a body. The size of the classroom also makes difficult for teacher to manage the all class in group activity or to get feedback from students. The temperature of

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class can be counted as a factor that makes listening comprehension difficult. The class that does not have air conditioner or heater may be too hot in summer or too cold in winter.

2.9 Conclusion

Listening skill is very important skill because the other skills (speaking, reading ,and writing) are dependent skills if isolated from listening skill. Beside to that, while learning a foreign language, learners are faced with a huge number of difficulties. For example, they find themselves unable to comprehend recorded texts, direct speech, songs, or even dialogues. This is due to many factors such as speed of speech, accent, pitch, and so on. This inability leads to other difficulties in language learning. That is why they are required to be exposed to it by listening. From that listening is considered to be a basic skill in language learning and acquisition, and it is placed at the top of language skills because before you start speaking the language, you have to be exposed to and to get used to it. In conclusion, the next chapter will present our work field which is the pupils' questionnaire and teachers' interview. The third chapter provides the analysis and discussion of each question included plus the graphic results.

Chapter Three

Data Analysis

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3.1 Introduction

The present research is about eliciting teachers and learners opinions about the difficulties of listening comprehension, since the teachers and the learners are the main variables of this study. Their views and opinions are very crucial to test the stated hypotheses, and the most appropriate tool to investigate that is through addressing a questionnaire to pupils and an interview for teachers. The pupils' questionnaire aims at finding out whether the learners give importance and a value to listening comprehension, and to pick up the obstacles they encounter in listening comprehension. The teachers' interview is intended to investigate the teachers opinions about the difficulties that face learners in listening comprehension and the main strategies to overcome this difficulty.

3.2. Research Design

This research study is carried out to explore the main causes and factors that led to the EFL pupils' low achievement of listening comprehension . This issue was drawn from the fact that our pupils though they spent over three years in studying English, it is often noticed in our classrooms the total absence or lack of oral ability to generate even the most basic utterances. To obtain more reliable answers to the problematics, a case study was adopted in this research of a particular situation to help us gathering data about the factors and causes of pupils' low achievement in the listening comprehension despite the amount of time they afford in learning English in the middle school.

In this regards, the case study conducted in this research is appropriate to examine the factors that cause behavioural patterns of a given unit and its relationship to the environment. Evidently, Kothari (1990: 113) postulated that: *The object of the case study method is to locate the factors that account for the behaviour-patterns of the given unit as an integrated totality.* Case study is an intensive investigation that highlights on providing a detailed account of one or more cases. For instance, one might study a classroom that was given a new curriculum for oral skills.

It is also useful for testing whether theories and models actually work in the real world; as Yin wrote:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (1984: 23)

Hence, case study is a research methodology based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, or event to explore causation in order to find underlying principles. It can include quantitative evidence as well as qualitative one, relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. In brief, it can be based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

According to Adelman et al. (1976 cited in Nunan 1992: 78), case study as a method of research is ‘strong in reality’ and therefore likely to appeal to practitioners, who will be able to identify with the issues and concerns raised; and It can represent a multiplicity of viewpoints, and can offer support to alternative interpretations. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2000) assumed that case studies can establish cause and effect as they observe effects in real context which is in turn, a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. Yet, some researchers such as Kothari (1990) proclaimed that case study method consumes more time and requires lot of expenditure, and the findings obtained are often not comparable and the results may not be generalizable except where other readers/researchers observe their application.

3.2.1 The Research Sample Population

At the centre of any investigation into educational phenomena are the participants that constitute the *raison d’être* of the study. The subjects of the study were EFL teachers and the pupils of third year middle schools from Abi Rass Al Nasiri middle school in a village called Sidi Boubker.

a) Teachers’ Profile

EFL teachers were required in this investigative study in an attempt to elicit information about their perspectives on their pupils’ interactions in the classroom. Accordingly, our informants were selected at random regardless of their age, sex, and length

of experience in their teaching career. The rationale of including them in this study was twofold: first, to gain more relevant and in-depth data since they are the direct observers of their learners and, second, to gain additional guidance in order to ensure that the research was being conducted appropriately.

b) Pupils' Profile

The subjects were (40) third year pupils from the middle school of Abi Rass Al Nasiri located in a small village called Sidi Boubker ,30 kilometers from Saida.

3.2.2. The Research Instruments

In the current study two different instruments were used to get qualitative and quantitative data. First, a questionnaire was administered to the third year Middle school pupils; and an interview was conducted with EFL Middle school teachers .So that triangulation emerged out of this process as Gorard et al. (2004 : 45) pointed out : If we are using two different methods then the results have to be genuinely combined if something new is to result. In this way, triangulation is a practical approach to combine both qualitative and quantitative research to counteract the weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative research. Seale (2004: 297) advocated that employing different methods in a research project can generate consistent findings. Likewise, Malterud (2001: 487) states that, *qualitative studies can also be added to quantitative ones, to gain a better understanding of the meaning and implications of the findings.*

a) Pupils' questionnaire

A questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that is filled out by the research participants. It refers to a series of written questions on a topic about which the subjects' opinions are sought (Sommer et al.: 2001). It is widely assumed that the questionnaire is one of the most popular research tools in applied Linguistics for it is easy to construct, collect and treat a large amount of data. As Dörnyei pointed out:

The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible. (2007: 101)

The questionnaire is considered as a relatively popular means of collecting data that can be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. It enables the researcher to collect the appropriate

data with close reference to the research objectives, and likely to be analysed, measured in numerical data as maintained by Wilson et al.:

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse. . (1994: 1)

In order to achieve the purpose and the objectives of the study, a questionnaire is distributed in middle school to third year pupils. The research hypotheses were translated into open-ended question .The aim of this questionnaire is to find out the difficulties that they may encounter in their learning process. It contained six questions; each of them has its own objectives.

b) Teachers' Interview

A number of different interview types can be employed to gather data. Interviews are often associated with survey – based approach, as well as being a technique used by many qualitative researchers. In structured interviews, researchers usually asked an identical set of questions for all respondents. Structured interviews resemble verbal questionnaires and allow researchers to compare answers from different participants. Less rigid are semi structured interviews, in which the researcher uses a written list of questions as a guide, while still having the freedom to digress probe for more information. In unstructured interviews, on the other hand, no list of questions is used, instead, interviews develop and adopt their own questions, unstructured interviews are more similar to natural conversations.(Mackey and Gass2005)

The interview was addressed to the the teachers of Abi Rass Al Nasiri middle school in Saida as a selective sampling.It aims at asking them some questions about their pupils concerning listening comprehension ,it contains six questions .

3.3 Data Analysis

This section will analyse the data gathered previously from teachers interview and learners questionnaire quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.1 Pupils' Questionnaire

Question one attempted to know the learners' attitudes towards learning English

	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
Yes	28	70 %
No	12	30 %

Table 1 : Attitudes toward learning English.

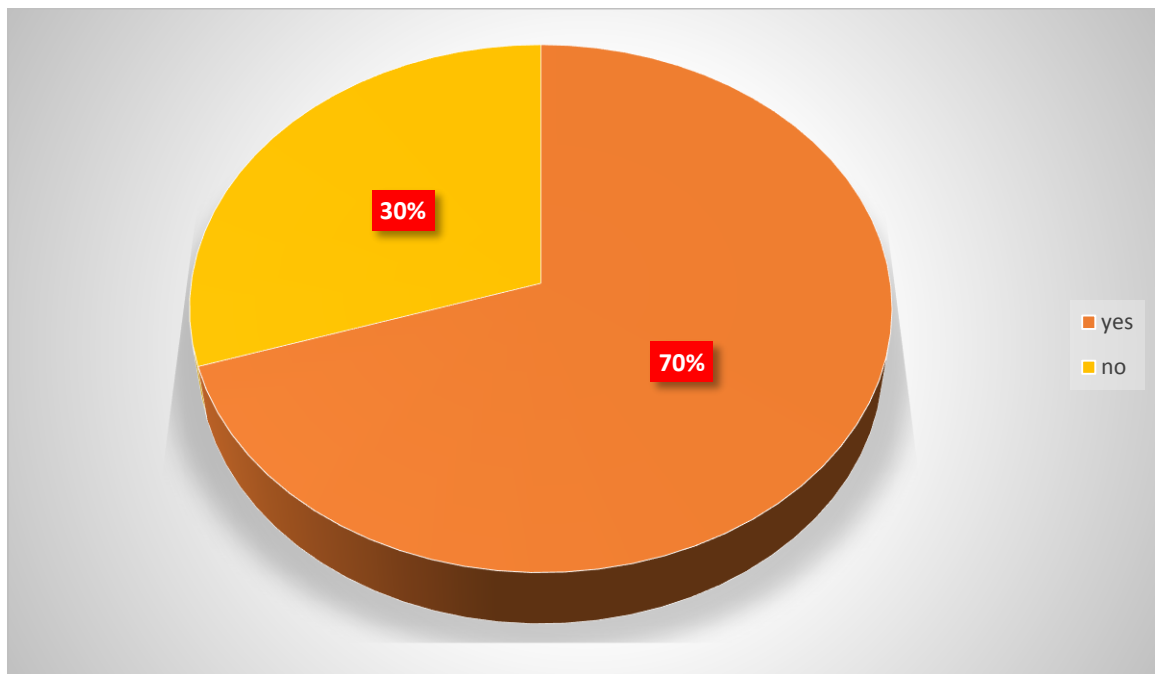


Figure 1 : Attitudes toward learning English

According to the results shown in the table, the majority of students (70%) declare that they enjoy to learn English. This may reveal that they like and believe that it is the language of the world, while only (30%) of our participants didn't enjoy learning English.

Question two inquired about the skill they prefer better

	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
Speaking	20	50 %
Writing	2	5%

Reading	5	12%
Listening	13	33%

Table 2 : Pupils' Preferable Skills.

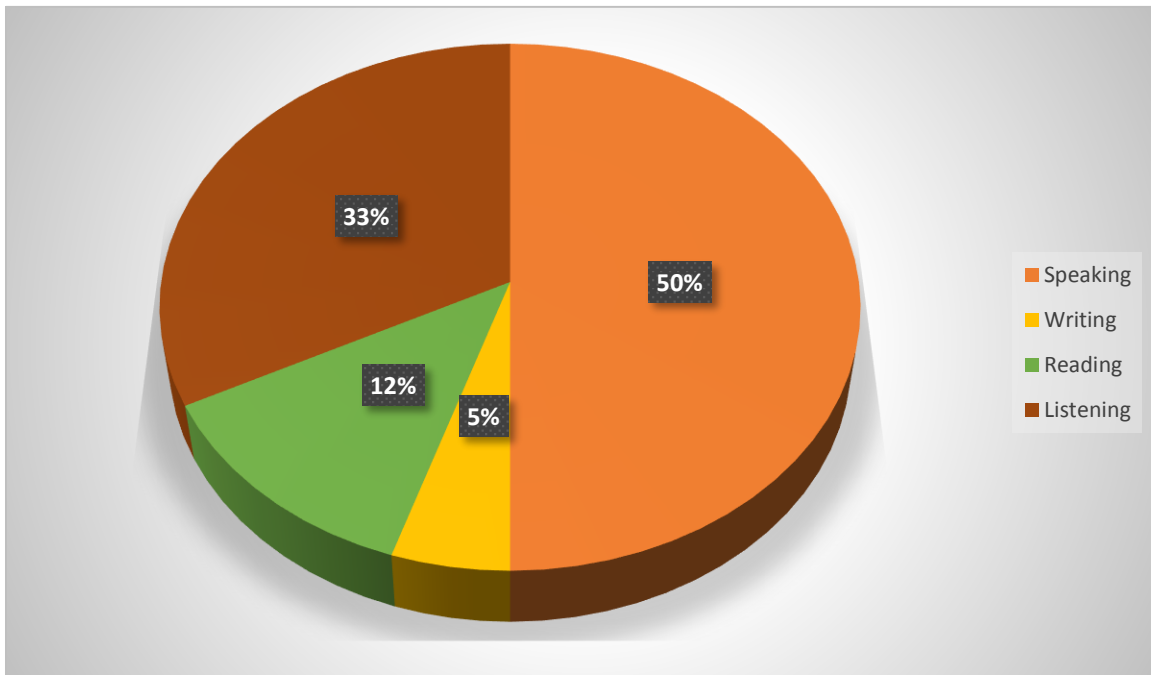
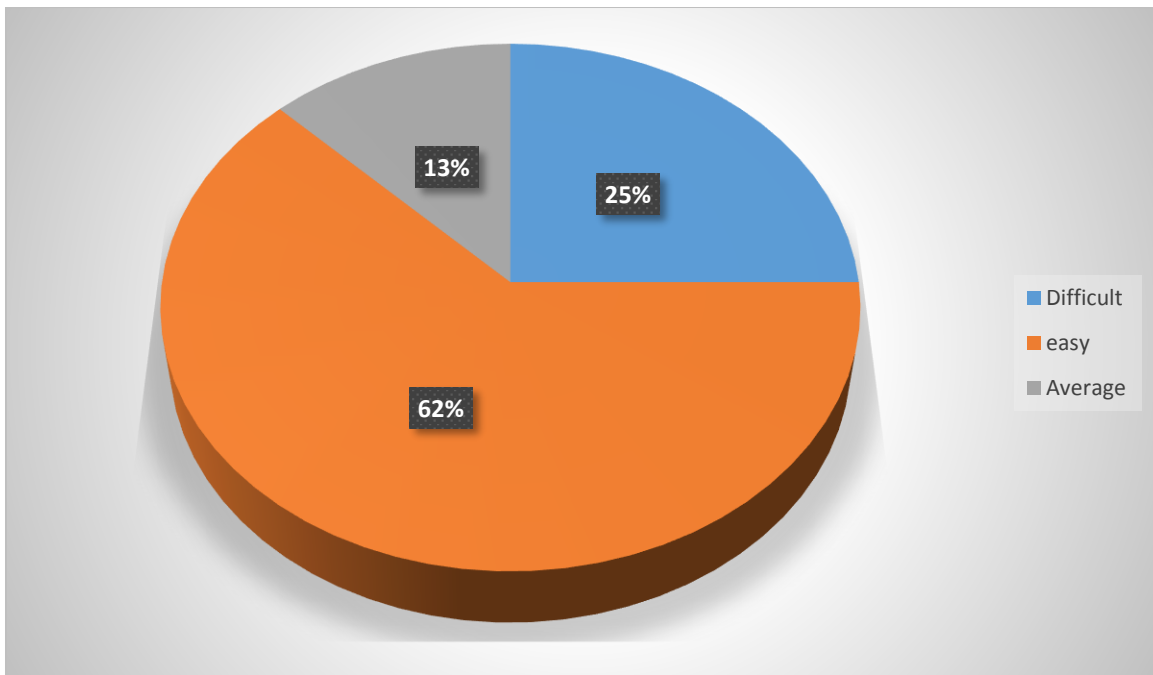


Figure 2 : Preferable skills

Nearly half of pupils (50%) prefer the speaking skill, and five students (33%) prefer the listening skill better than the other skills, and only five students (12%) chose the reading skill while the other two pupils (5%) like the writing skill.

Question three attempted to know the learners point of view about the difficulty of listening skill when compared to the other skills

	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
Easy	25	62 %
Average	5	13 %
Difficult	10	25 %

Table 3 : Comparing Listening with other Skills**Figure 3 : Comparing Listening with other skills**

The pie chart above shows that more than half of pupils (62%) find that the listening skill is easy when compared with other skills, and (25 %) of them find that listening is difficult than the other skills, while only five learners (13%) find that listening is somehow difficult (average).

Question four aimed at asking pupils understanding teacher speech

	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
Always	4	10 %
Sometimes	28	70 %
Never	8	20 %

Table 4 : Pupils's understanding of teacher speech

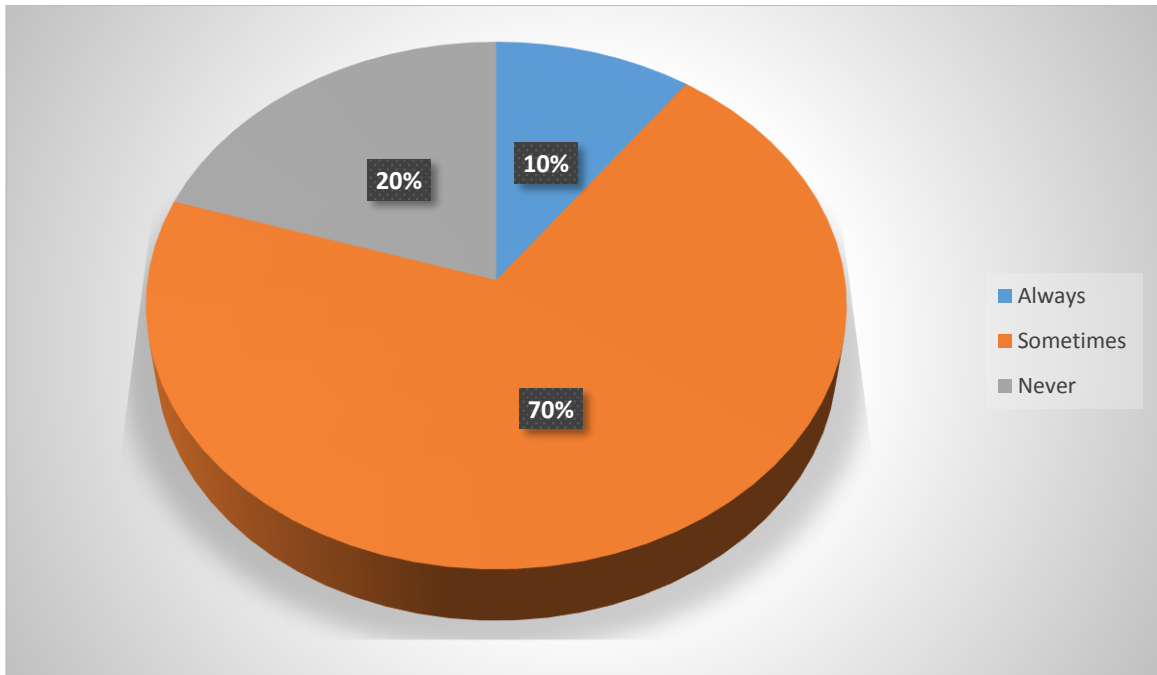


Figure 4 : Pupils' understanding of teacher speech

From the figure, we notice that the majority of pupils (70%) understand what their teacher is saying .Whereas, (20%) they don't find any difficulty to understand what the teacher is saying, while (10%) of them don't understand the teacher at all.

Question five asked the learners to select the main difficulties they may encounter when engaging in listening activities

Option	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
a	10	25 %
b	15	38%
c	2	5 %
d	5	12%
e	8	20%

Table 5 : The Difficulties Encountered by the Learners' in Listening Comprehension

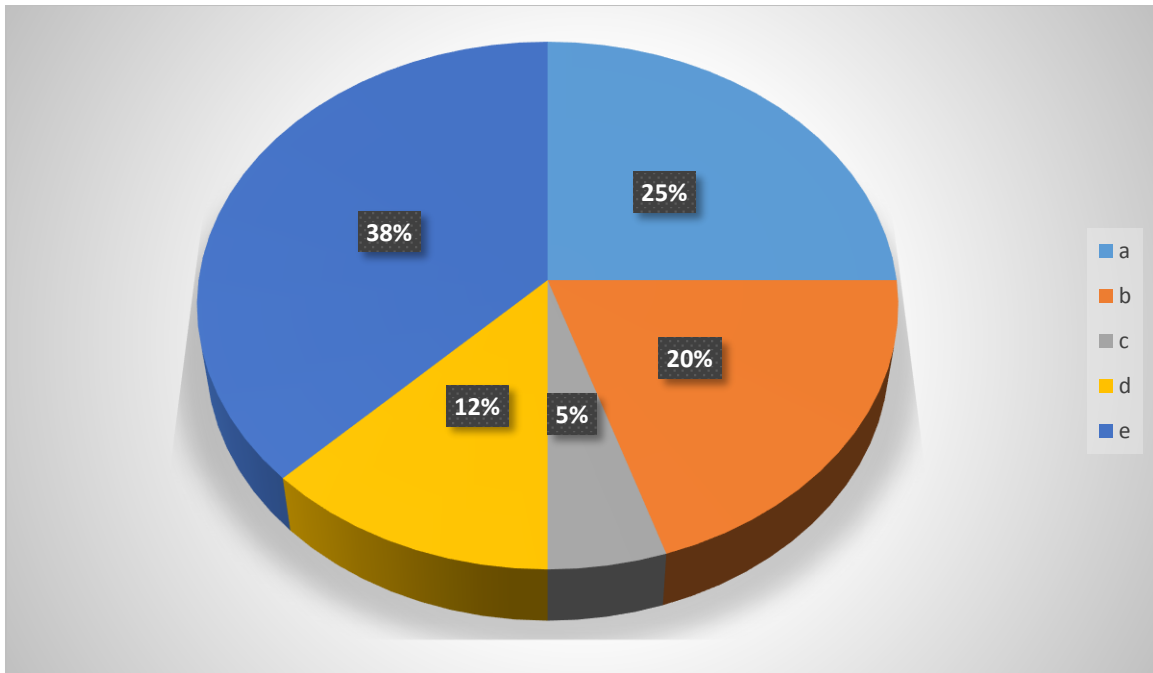


Figure 5 : The Difficulties Encountered by the Learners' in Listening Comprehension

The figure above demonstrate that (38%) of pupils think that the speed of speech is the main problem encountered when listening. (25%) of them find difficulty to understand the spoken text, and (20%) of learners mention that the main difficulty in listening comprehension is to quickly remember words or phrases. (12%) of them state that the lack of knowledge related to the topic is the main problem they encounter when listening, while (5%) of them view that the length of the text is the main problem they face.

Question six aimed at asking the learners about the strategies they may use when listening

	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
a	8	19 %
b	12	28 %
c	3	7 %
d	20	46 %

Table 6 : The Strategies used by the Learners when Listening

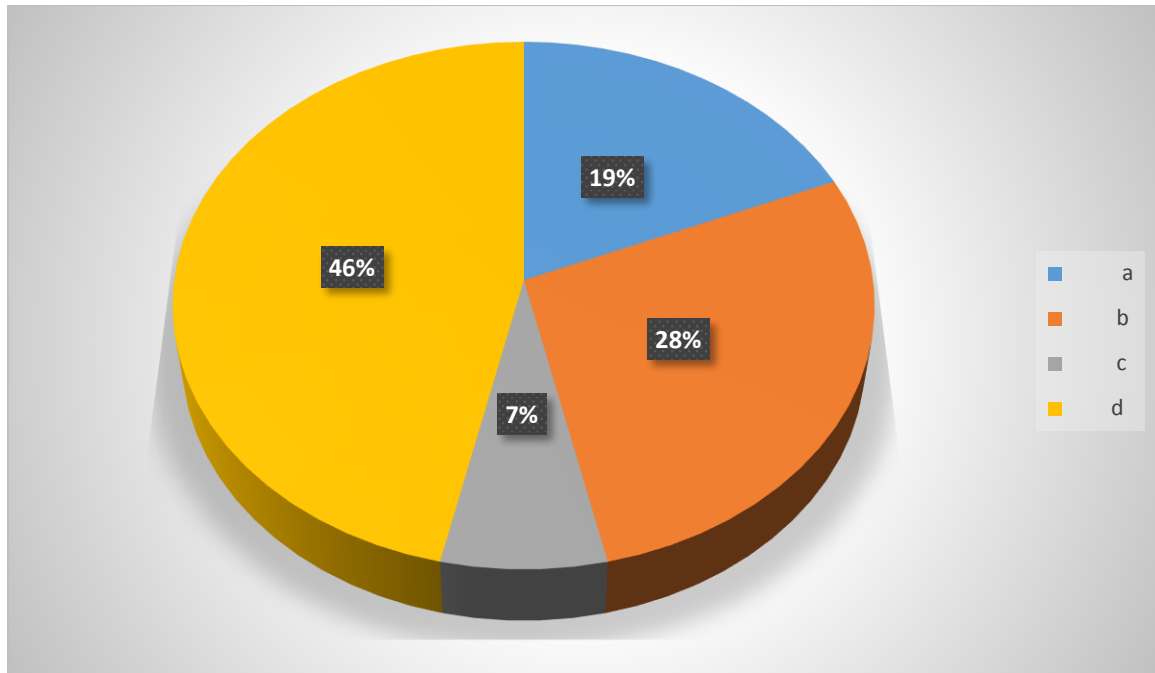


Figure 6 : The Strategies used by the Learners when Listening

From the figure above, we notice that the majority of pupils' view that ask the teacher for more information is the most strategy used when listening. Twenty eight percent of learners relate what they hear to what they know about the topic you are listening to, (19%) of them pay attention to details .Seven percent of pupils try to guess the meaning of new information.

3.2 Teachers' Interview

This section will report the results of the teachers' interview qualitatively, and will discuss the main results concerning learners' difficulties and teacher role.

Question one asked the teachers about their teaching experience

Teacher 1 says that he teaches for 12years in middle school.

Teacher 2 says that he teaches for 30 years.

Teacher3 says that he teaches for 3 years.

Question two required to state their intended objectives when teach the listening skill

Teacher 1 mention that the intended objectives are: identifying main ideas, understanding and responding to simple requests, and understanding the development of simple stories.

Teacher 2 says that the intended objectives are identifying the different sounds, checking comprehension of the text, and recognizing the sound patterns of simple rhyning words.

Teacher 3 views that identifying important words in what someone has just said and hearing the differences between common sounds are the most intended objectives in teaching listening skill.

Question three required the teachers to state the appropriateness of English curriculum for third year Middle School

Teacher 1 and teacher 2 state that English curriculum is not appropriate for third year

Teacher 3 states that English curriculum is appropriate for third year but for all the levels.

Justification

The teacher who answered 'Yes' they think that the English curriculum goes with the pupils abilities and there is no problem faced by them concerning it.

Teachers who answered 'No', they give different reasons for their answers one reason is that the curriculum is over loaded and it is suggested to slim it down. Another reason is that the curriculum does not go with the pupils real level .In other words, it is not appropriate for this level and it would be better for first-year secondary school.

Question four inquired about the learners' difficulties in listening comprehension

Teacher 1 sees that students are suffering from the non-acquisition of the listening comprehension, difficulty to identify the vocabulary.

Teacher 2 maintains that speed of speech, accents, and they find it difficult to repeat what they had listen are the most difficulties that face learners, memory limitation.

Teacher 3 views that that the main difficulty encountered by her learners are the lack of knowledge and speed of speech.

Question five asked the teachers about their role during a listening comprehension session

Teacher 1 cites that his role is first to guide then and facilitate their acquisition.

Teacher 2 says that the teacher plays different role during a listening comprehension session such as an informer, as manager, and as monitor when checking their activities.

Teacher 3 states that the teacher should be an informer, as monitor during a listening comprehension session.

Question six asked the teachers to express their ideas about their suggestions to their learners concerning listening comprehension.

Teacher 1 proposes that create a relaxed atmosphere that which help them to listen carefully.

Teacher 2 suggests that listen to conversations, monologues and also performed in the targeted language as cartoons, films, videos are most strategies to overcome such difficulties.

Teacher 3 proposes that reduce anxiety and practice by listening to songs.

3.4 Discussions and Interpretations

The major purpose of this exploratory research was to find out factors that middle school learners display low achievement in their listening comprehension.

The findings of this study based on views and experiences of the participants regarding the difficulties and challenges they usually confront with. The findings are analysed and interpreted .Both teachers and learners have similar ideas concerning their perceptions on the reasons behind the difficulties of listening comprehension, though they differ in their interpretations of these factors according to their experiences and level in EFL learning and teaching process.

Third year middle school learners have positive attitude towards learning English as Foreign Language .They classified listening as the second skill in terms of it importance ,and they considered it as an easy skill when compared with other skills. These results confirm the first hypothesis which views that learners are not aware of the importance of listening comprehension.

Third year middle school pupils encounter a number of difficulties when engaging in listening activities such as: speech rate, short memory, lack of knowledge, length of the listening text. The reason behind such difficulties may not be that untutored learners use strategies, but they do not choose wisely. This means that the hypothesis which says that third year middle school pupils encounter problems in listening comprehension is valid.

The analysis of the teachers' answers show that they are aware of the importance of listening comprehension and its difficulty. EFL teachers mentioned that the teacher should play different roles during a listening comprehension session such as monitor, a manager, an informer, a guider and a facilitator.

EFL teachers cited a number of difficulties that their learners encounter when listening such as : non acquisition of listening comprehension, memory limitation, and they offered some suggestions to overcome such difficulties including : reducing anxiety ,performed in the targeted language.

3.5 Conclusion

The chapter was devoted to a description of the empirical phase; two research instruments were addressed to third year middle school pupils and their EFL teachers. During this exploratory study, valuable insights were gained in accordance with the research question and objectives. Furthermore, the results obtained from the participants allowed us to confirm our hypothesis and draw evidence concerning the difficulties which generally our learners are confronted during their learning process. Therefore, the coming chapter will attempt to provide some suggestions and recommendations that can alleviate these difficulties.

Chapter Four
Suggestions and Recommendations

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4.8 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

Relying on the results obtained in the preceding chapter, the main causes of our EFL pupils' low achievement in listening skills are correlated to the implied hypotheses. In fact, no one can deny that young learners meet barriers whenever they tend to listen in the target language. To this extent, this chapter deals with teaching listening activities, teachers and learners role in listening, besides, we include also the main principles for teaching listening comprehension.

4.2 Teaching Listening Activities

Listening is a highly complex solving activity (Barnes, 1984) in which listeners interact with a speaker to construct meaning, within the context of their experiences and knowledge. When students are made aware of the factors that affect listening, the levels of listening, and the components of the listening process, they are more likely to recognize their own listening abilities and engage in activities that prepare them to be effective listeners. Karakas (2002) states that listening activities try to prevent failure so that they can support the learners' interpretation of the text. Listening activities are usually subcategorized as pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities.

4.2.1 Pre-listening Activities

The activities chosen during pre-listening may serve as a preparation for listening in several ways .During pre-listening the teacher may :

- Check students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text.
- Provide students with the background knowledge necessary for their comprehension of the listening passage or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess.
- Clarify any cultural information that may be necessary to comprehend the passage.
- Make students aware of the type of text they will be listening to, the role they will play, and the purpose (s) for which they will be listening.

Sample pre-listening activities:

- looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs
- reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures
- reading something relevant

- predicting the content of the listening text
- doing guided practice

4.2.2 While Listening Activities

While listening activities relate directly to the text, and students do them during or immediately after the time they are listening. If students are to complete a written task during or immediately after listening, the teacher should allow them to read it before listening. Student need to devote all their attention to the listening task. The instructions should be explained for the task before listening begins so that they are not distracted by the need to figure out what to do. Writing should be kept to a minimum because the primary goal is comprehension, not production .Having to write while listening may distract students from this primary goal. If a written response is to be given after listening, the task can be more demanding .Tasks have to be organized so that they guide listeners through the text.

Global tasks such as getting the main idea or topic have to be combined in a way in order to have students' attention focused on the elements of the text crucial to comprehension of the whole .Before the listening activity begins, the students need to review questions they will answer orally or in writing after or while listening.

Sample While-listening activities

- listening with visuals
- filling in graphs and charts
- following a route on a map
- checking off items in a list such as true /false
- searching for specific clues to meaning
- completing cloze (fill-in) exercises

4.2.3 Post Listening

After listening, comprehension may be evaluated through a particular task in order to measure the overall progress in listening. At this stage ,the teacher has to decide if the tasks used were appropriate for the listening purpose .There are two common forms that post-listener tasks can take .These are reactions to the content of the text, and analysis of the linguistic features used to express the content.

4.3 Teachers' Role

Within the current trend in English Language Teaching (ELT), the intention is to raise the learner's awareness and to create a learning environment in which learners establish their own goals and learn to monitor their performance, to become consciously aware of their progress. EFL teachers' role in teaching listening skill based on what grateful efforts they do in listening skill activities. The main purpose of ideal teachers is to facilitate the process of students' learning progression. To reach these goals, teachers try to play the role of the active element in the class.

According to Jeremy Harmer, the teacher act differently. He/ she modifies his/ her methods and techniques from one activity to another, and sometimes from one activity' stage to another (57). This means that teachers should be flexible in their way of teaching to reach students' needs because in different stages of listening lessons teachers may find that some points need to give them the priority to be taught first for their importance.

Teachers can help their learners by ensuring that they focus strongly on listening and speaking skills in pronunciation lessons because perception and production skills play a major role in language use, language development, and language learning. Some written analysis is useful, but it should always lead to productive practice . In other words, the role of the teacher is to help learners perceive and produce sounds because it is impossible to expect learners producing sound that are not exist in their mother tongue or never heard before. Therefore, if the learners learn how to listen carefully to their teachers when they produce sounds, then they will be able to produce sounds correctly.

Providing feedback is also one of the teacher's roles since the learners sometimes do not know if they are right or wrong. So the teacher is required to inform the learners of how they are progressing and what they need to focus on. The most useful feedback comes immediately after the response of the student. It should come in the form of descriptive praise if the student's work is good. On the other hand, if a student's response is incorrect the teacher should provide immediate correction to help remove the misconception and to supply accurate information about their performance as well as their progress.

Long time duration of listening skill lessons, boring topics, studying at afternoon, and no new strategy followed by the teachers are some affective factors that influence the

psychological aspects of students that leads to students' careless and unconsciousness. Students' awareness is a very effective factor in the progress of the lesson its self and in the process of teaching and learning. If students feel uninteresting or tired, whatever EFL teachers do, they will never succeed in promoting students' listening skill. For that reason, EFL teachers should follow motivational strategies to attract students' attention to make them involved in the lesson. Students' awareness has an important role in the process of teaching because it is the most difficulty that EFL teachers face

The teacher is responsible in selecting the kind of activities and exercises that are helpful, taking into the consideration that the designed activities must suit the learning styles and approaches of the majority of the learners.

4.4 Learners Role

The role of the learners is not only responding to their teacher but also taking actions toward their own learning as well as their improvement. As an effective element in the teaching / learning process, the learners of English have to direct their learning strategies towards promoting self-autonomy in and outside the classroom. As claimed by Benson *we are born self-directed learners* (2001:36). In the classroom, the learner has to do many things to insure that output becomes input, for instance, taking notes, paying attention to the teacher, collaborating with the teacher and the classmates...etc. Outside the classroom, each learner is responsible for his/ her own progress by organizing data driven from the course, memorizing the courses, revising for the exam, surfing the web for more information about a specific point that needs more clarification, checking dictionaries...etc. Briefly speaking, if students being involved and aware about what the teachers say or instruct, in this case, students facilitate the role of teachers and get progress in their learning promotion.

4.5 General Principles in Teaching Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension lessons must have definite goals, carefully stated. These goals should fit into the overall curriculum, and both teacher and students should be clearly cognizant of what they are.

1. Listening comprehension lessons should be constructed with careful systematic planning. This implies, that the listening tasks progress from simple to more complex as the student gains in language proficiency; that the student knows exactly what the task is and is given directions as to *what to listen for, where to listen, when to listen, and how to listen.*"

2. Listening comprehension lesson structure should demand active overt student participation. The most overt student participation involves his written response to the listening comprehension material, and that immediate feedback on performance helps keep interest and motivation at high levels.

3. Listening comprehension lesson should provide a communicative urgency for remembering in order to develop concentration. This urgency, which along with concentration is a key factor in remembering, should come not from the teacher, but from the lesson itself. This is done by giving the students the writing assignment before they listen to the material.

4. Listening comprehension lessons should stress conscious memory work. One of the goals of listening is to strengthen the students' immediate recall in order to increase their memory spans. "Listening is receiving, receiving requires thinking, and thinking requires memory; there is no way to separate listening, thinking, remembering."

5. Listening comprehension lessons should teach, not test. This means that the purpose of checking the students' answers should be viewed only as feedback, as a way of letting the students find out how they did and how they are progressing. There should be no pass/fail attitude associated with the correction of the exercises (Paulston & Bruder, 1976).

4.5.1 Principles of Teaching Listening in the Classroom

1) Never teach too much or for too long

Since listening demands a lot of concentration, if the listening activities last too long or the tasks are too numerous, students will quickly become exhausted and get distracted. Thus, teachers can alternate activities to sustain students' concentration and interest. In addition, after listening to a long passage, give students chance to talk, share, or do, in case they get tired too quickly.

2) Help students overcome their fear of unfamiliar words

Unfamiliar words are the greatest enemies for less skilled listeners. They often have difficulty identifying the words they hear; therefore, teachers should do as much as possible to familiarize the students with new vocabulary from the speech they are going to listen.

3) Encourage sharing and collaborative learning

To help students without enough confidence in English listening, we should create more chances for them to interact with their peers. Their classmates may be able to help them successfully to complete each activity without panicking.

4) Tolerate spelling mistakes

Since the goal of listening teaching is to help students understand spoken English, when we use writing or speaking as means to check students' comprehension in class, we should tolerate any spelling mistakes, especially for low-intermediate learners. They may have difficulty expressing themselves precisely in English, but it does not mean they always fail to listen accurately. The bottom line is that as long as we can see that the meaning they are trying to express is correct, and then it is acceptable. Under this premise, students can sometimes be allowed to use L1 to show their comprehension.

5) Always review what they have learned

For low-intermediate learners, teachers can help them continuously to review what they have learned, to refresh their memory. We should link new information and ideas to ones that have already been covered, and repeatedly emphasize the learned strategies or skills to achieve the eight effects of "spiral learning".

4.6 Effective tasks in listening skill

There are various types of tasks for teaching listening skill lesson mentioned briefly by Ahmed Bacher but it is important to explain them in details as the following:

1) True/ false tasks: This type of tasks aims to ensure information of what students listened to by asking students to decide whether the statements are true or false. For example, after or while listening to a conversation that took place in hospital, teacher asks students if the conversation took place in a classroom. Therefore, if students understood what they have listened to, they will get the answer easily and state whether it is true or false.

2) Cloze tasks: In this type of activities, teachers ask students to fill in the gaps in a written passage. This instruction takes place after listening to a conversation, dialogue, storytelling, or other recorded materials. For example, if students listened to conversation between two students who talked about, for instance, their marks in different modules. Therefore, teachers, in this case, ask students to fill in the gaps by the correct mark according to the appropriate modules

3) Multiple choice questions (MCQ):

After listening to the tape or the teacher, teacher asks students to give a correct answer to some question but the teacher here provides students by options and students should select just the right one(s). The purpose of giving students extra choices is to enrich students by new vocabulary and teach students how to decide intelligently. As an example, the story that students listened to was about a mother and her son Peter. The proposed question is what the name of Juliet's son? The options that teacher gives, for instance, are John, George, Peter, or James.

4) Dictation:

Dictation is a very prominent task that most EFL teachers rely on for teaching different educational levels (secondary and high school, or even at university level). Teaching listening skill by using dictation task is a simple activity that needs especial conditions. According to H. Douglas Brown that the appropriate passage longer is around 50 to 100 words which should be repeated three times (132). This means that the dictated passage should not be so long or so short. If students feel that the passage is long, they will get boring. Teachers should prepare the circumstances to fit the aim of teaching. Dictation task needs quiet classroom situation, acceptable tune (teacher voice), and a great degree of students' concentration. Noise in classroom disturb the teacher and affect negatively students' desire to listen to the teacher. EFL teachers' purpose behind teaching dictation is to enhance students listening ability. Moreover, Dictation exercises are excellent practice for listening comprehension. They can also be used for different purposes. Dictation can be used as a revision drill, a punctuation exercise, or a spelling test.

4.7 Dictogloss as an Interactive Method of Teaching Listening Comprehension

Dictogloss is a classroom dictation activity Dictogloss involves traditional dictation but is different from dictation in objectives and procedure (Wajnryb, 1999). Dictogloss aims to offer learners a chance to demonstrate how they weave the segments from a listening text into a comprehensive passage. It is not merely about transcribing a listening text, but also about how to reconstruct a meaningful passage. Dictogloss also encourages learners to discover what they do not know about the language by comparing their results with the original text. Generally, there are 4 steps when using Dictogloss:

4.7.1 Preparation

Teachers arouse students' interest about the topic and guide them to make predictions so that students can listen more effectively, and hence successfully complete the task in the next stage.

4.7.2 Dictation

Teacher read the text twice. The first time, teachers read at normal speed and ask students to listen carefully without writing anything. Students need to get the gist of the listening; they must pay full attention to understand the global meaning of the text.

For the second time, teachers read the text slowly and pause regularly so that students can have enough time to take notes. Teachers should emphasize that students have to write down key words rather than copy down complete sentences.

4.7.3 Reconstruction

Students work in groups to share their notes and work in order to replicate a text with similar meaning. After piecing the words together, they have to ensure that the text is grammatically correct, textually cohesive, and logically reasonable.

4.7.4 Analysis and correction

Teachers use one group's passage as an example to pinpoint any errors and to correct them. Although teachers are expected to offer correct answers and comment on students' work, it is advised that students be encouraged to discover the errors and to propose corrections themselves.

4.7 Conclusion

The process of teaching listening skill is different from teaching the other skill because the nature of listening skill is abstract. Listening skill considered as the hidden skill because all what happen in listening skill lessons in the mind of students. For that reason, EFL teachers try to reduce listening skill abstractness by using materials and design tasks to give students concrete view about this skill

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

All teachers of English realize that if FL students were unable to communicate in the language they are trying to acquire, the whole process of learning would be actually worthless. If the learners do not listen effectively, they will be unable to communicate orally successfully. The aim of study was to spot the main factors underlying the low achievement in listening comprehension of EFL learners at middle school. It has been concluded that various determinants lead to the low achievement of listening comprehension by which the learners face difficulties to generate accurate and meaningful utterances .

The scope of this study was to reveal the main difficulties of listening comprehension .In addition, this research work endeavoured to contribute the improvement of pupils' listening comprehension ,and provide useful implications for both teachers and learners to overcome the obstacles they generally encounter when they tend to take part in the listening classroom activities.

After formulating the research questions and hypotheses, we tried to give a clear picture of EFL teaching /learning situation in Algeria at the middle school level. In addition, we provided a general background and context for the research problematics. We indicated theoretically the research methodology being used along this study in order to tackle effectively the research problem.

In this context, two distinct tools were used in this study .The questionnaire was administered, and the interview conducted with EFL teachers of middle schools. The data was collected, analysed, and then interpreted. Relying on the results, it has been proved true that third year middle school pupils are not aware of the importance of listening comprehension since they consider it as an easy skill which requires just hearing sounds .

In addition, third year middle school learners encounter difficulties in terms of memory limitation, lack of knowledge, speech rate which stands as an obstacle to pupils ,it is difficult to grasp a meaning than receive the appropriate message. Therefore ,teachers are first guide to supervise, advise, monitor, and encourage pupils to raise their listening comprehension to master speaking skill.

Finally, it should be mentioned that this investigation is not sufficient to cover or spot the light on listening comprehension difficulties that face middle school learners. In addition, this theme is wide as more as the large of this skill we dealt with .

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APPENDICES

Appendix 01: Pupils' Questionnaire

Pupils' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of research work which is about the Difficulties of Listening comprehension faced by third year middle school pupils. I will be very grateful if you help me to answer these questions by putting a tick (✓) on the appropriate box.

1. Do you enjoy learning English?

Yes

No

2. Which skill do you prefer better ?

Speaking writing Reading Listening

3. How do you find the listening skill when compared to the other skills ?

Easy Average Difficult

4. Do you find it hard to understand what your teacher is saying ?

Always Sometimes Never

5. What are the difficulties you are facing when engaging in the listening activities ?

a) I find it difficult to understand the spoken text

b) Speed of speech is too fast

c) Length (size) of the listening text

d) Lack of knowledge related to the topic you are listening to

e) I find it difficult to quickly remember words or phrases i have just
heard

6. Which ways do you use when you are listening ?

a) You pay attention to details

b) you relate what you hear to what you know about the topic you are listening to

c) You try to guess the meaning of new information

d) Ask the teacher for more information

Thank You

Appendix 02 : Teachers' Interview

Teachers' Interview

Dear Teachers

This interview is a part of a research work .I will be very grateful if you help me to answer these questions whose aim is to gather information about Difficulties of Listening Comprehension in Middle schools,your precious help is mostly appreciated.

1. How many years have you been teaching English in Middle schools?

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2. What are your the intended objectives when teaching the listening skill ?

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3. Do you think that the English curriculum is appropriate for third year Middle School?

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Justify your answer?

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4. From your experience in TEFL, what are the main difficulties your pupils encounter in listening comprehension?

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5. What is the role of the teacher during a listening comprehension session?

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6. What are the main activities you use to develop listening comprehension?

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7. What do you suggest to help your learners overcome such difficulties?

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8. What do you think about the topic?

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Thank You