

## FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION AT MISURATA PREPARATORY SCHOOLS, LIBYA

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### ABSTRACT

English language proficiency is the main goal of any learner of a language. Speaking and listening are major components of key skills and literacy qualifications. We need listening skills to understand and to be understood. It has become one of the most important factors of success and excellence for students who wish to speak, understand, advance their career path or continue their education abroad. When students listen to the English language, they face a lot of listening difficulties. This paper examines the teaching of listening comprehension at Misurata preparatory schools. It investigates the challenges that students face in learning listening comprehension skills. Students move to secondary education without a suitable foundation for listening comprehension skills. For this reason, the present study attempts to investigate some listening hindrances faced by students at preparatory schools to elicit their views about listening comprehension skills. This study reports the factors that the students believed had influenced their listening comprehension skills at Misurata preparatory schools. It is an effort to generate awareness among teachers, educators, language policymakers, and learners of English about the proper implementation of this important receptive skill. Data was gathered through a questionnaire from the students' responses. A qualitative method was adopted to analyze the obtained data. This study revealed that listening comprehension is hindered by: limited knowledge of words, accents, phonological difficulties, speech rate, insufficient practice of listening skills in the classroom, inadequate time to teach listening skills, and students are not encouraged to listen to programs outside the classroom.

**Key Words:** Listening skills, factors, strategies, preparatory students.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life. It is an important skill for obtaining comprehensible input that is necessary for language development. It is considered the mother of language. It plays a vital role in acquiring a second language. Communication is interpreted in school curricula as giving listening an autonomous status as a goal of language learning (British Council, 1981). Teaching listening is the most important skill in school education. English teachers in Libya teach the aspects they think will be on test pages. This procedure leads to the avoidance of teaching listening activities. Listening should be taught in the classrooms and tested during the studying school year. Teachers of English seem to exclude teaching listening activities or are poorly taught in classrooms because there are no listening tests in the plan of teaching English programs during the school year. Vandergrift (2016) confirms that Listening is considered the heart of language learning. Developing listening comprehension ability would enable the students to increase comprehensible input. It helps language learners to acquire pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, syntax, tone of voice, pitch, and accent. Without listening, communication cannot be achieved. Vandergrift (2016) adds that teachers can help students

develop sound strategies for comprehension through a process approach to teaching L2 listening. Listening should be received primary attention in the early stage of ESL instruction. Hedge (2000) in Machackova (2009) points out that the importance of listening in language learning has changed over the last few years. Listening used to be overlooked and educators supposed that listening abilities would be acquired during grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice. Nunan (2001:23) states that listening is a process of six stages: hearing the message, paying attention, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. Underwood (1989:1) points out that listening is an activity of paying attention to the speaker and subsequent attempts to understand what we hear.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening has received a significant place in the field of teaching and learning a second language (Morley, 2001). English has become an important language for higher and scientific education, technology, research, business, and commerce. The world has become one village. English is playing an essential function in this process. English as a language of globalization, has caused modifications in the language of schooling policies of many international locations around the globe making itself a significant course for the education system from the school level, (Pathan et al, 2016). Therefore, language skills enhance the process of language learning. Listening is the most difficult skill to be mastered. The listeners have to discriminate between sounds and understand vocabulary, grammatical structure, and stress. Dunkle (1991) and Feyten (1991) in Vandergrift (1999) support the primacy of listening comprehension in structural methods. Gary (1975) in Vandergrift (1999) provides advantages of listening at the early stages of learning which comprise cognitive, efficiency, and utility of language.

#### 3.1. Definitions of Listening

Vandergrift (1999) in Lascottet (2015) defines listening comprehension as a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance. Nunan (2015) describes listening as an active process. He explains that when people listen, they do a great deal more than decode sounds into words, phrases, and sentences rather than use contextual knowledge to construct a reasonable interpretation of what has been said. Contextual knowledge comprises the situation, the topic, and the relationship between the speakers. Goh (2014) in Nunan (2015) says:

Listening is not just hearing. It is an active process that may begin even before the first speech signal is recognized and it may go on long after the input or spoken information has stopped. Meaning cannot be simply extracted from the sound signals, and understanding is the result of active construction occurring at all levels of text (sounds, grammar, lexis, and discourse structure) and context (the topic, the participants, the communicative purpose, and the place or setting for the interaction (p.40).

Chastain (1971) in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) defined listening as the ability to understand native speakers at normal speed. Nadig (2013) in Hamouda (2013) defined listening comprehension as the various processes of comprehension and making sense of spoken language.

These comprise knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences. Brown and Yule (1983), define listening as a person understanding what is heard. Ur (1992) says that sometimes the listener is required to give some overt, immediate response to what has been said, this may be verbal or non-verbal. Sirait (2019) says that Listening is a process of oral symbols with paying attention carefully, understanding, interpreting to get information, capturing content, and comprehending the meaning of communication that is not transferred by the speaker through spoken language.

### 3.2. Importance of Listening in Learning L2

The placement of listening in second or foreign language programs has undergone a substantial change in recent years (Richards, 2005). Nation and Newton (2009) argue that listening is the natural precursor to speaking. The early stages of language development in a person's first language are dependent on listening (p.37). Acquisition theories highlighted the importance of listening in learning another language, especially during the early stages of the process, (Goh 1999). She (1999) adds that many theories of second language acquisition had also begun formally to recognize the important role of comprehension, particularly listening comprehension, in language acquisition and learning. Good oral communication is essential to every aspect of life and work. Hamouda (2013) points out that listening is a significant component in obtaining understandable input. Field (2008) provided two reasons for ignoring teaching listening skills: (1) lack of priority is partly historical since it was seen as a passive skill. It can be mastered through other skills. (2) difficulty of teaching it. Listening has an important role in the process of learning a second language facilitating the emergence of other language skills. Azmi et al (2014 and Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) argue that one of the problems that hinder teaching listening skills is that schools pay more attention to other skills like reading, writing, and grammar rules rather than listening skills. Vandergrift (1999) states that to place speaking before listening is to put the cart before the horse. One cannot ask the learners to speak a language without listening to it first. Morley (2001) points out that listening comprehension is now felt to be a prerequisite for aural proficiency as well as an important skill in its own right. She (2001) adds that an appropriate aural comprehension program that targets learner listening at all levels of instruction is essential for foreign language competence (70). Byrne (1994, p.15) provides the main goals of the listening comprehension program. **1)** to expose learners to a wide variety of samples of spoken language. **2)** train learners to listen flexibly to get specific information, the main idea, or interact with instructions. **3)** to provide the learners through listening with a stimulus for other activities such as discussion, reading, and writing. **4)** to give the learners opportunities to interact with others in small groups. Haron (1985) in Rost (1994) suggests that listening should be developed in all school children because it is a vital means of learning. Listening is fundamental in language learning. Nuna (2015) states that David Mendelsohn once described listening as the 'Cinderella Skill, (p.35). This skill occupies a big chunk of people's time listening to the language. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) write that people spend 40-50 % of their time listening while speaking takes 25- 30%, reading 11-16% and writing takes about 9 %. It provides input that can be significant for second language acquisition in general and it develops speaking skills in particular. Goh (2000) in Spear-Swerling (2016) states that one reason behind the paradoxical neglect of listening comprehension in English language acquisition is a tendency to view listening comprehension as an ability that develops naturally, without the need for instruction but now we know that listening comprehension is sensitive to instruction. Richards, (1983) outlines three dimensions in the teaching of listening

comprehension: **(1)**. In approach, the article discusses the nature of spoken language discourse and offers a theory of listening comprehension that considers the process the listeners use. **(2)** In design, it analyzes learners' listening needs, proposes a taxonomy of micro-skills, and establishes objectives for teaching these skills. **(3)** the last dimension is the procedure. It presents classroom activities and exercises types that can attain these objectives. Chuang and Wang (2015) state that listening takes a significant meaning as it is an essential source of language input in second language acquisition. Listening becomes pivotal for a foreign language to occur. Jones (2008) argues that listening should not be viewed as an ad hoc addition to English second language classroom teaching methodology, but it is considered a significant means of improving the learners with comprehensible input and as an essential component of the whole language learning process. Ahmadi (2016) conducted a study that deals with the importance of listening comprehension in language learning. The study revealed that learners of listening comprehension skills can be improved by teachers' assistance and the use of appropriate learning materials and activities. The research confirms that if learners want to speak a second language, they must understand speakers who speak it. Rivers (1981) says that speaking does not itself constitute communication unless what is being said is comprehended by another person. Cook (2008) comments on the importance of teaching listening comprehension saying that the main focus in recent discussions of teaching methodology has been on listening as a way of learning rather than as a way of processing language. The students cannot learn the language if they never hear its sounds, words, and structures. Listening provides the foundation for learning a foreign language. Therefore, this skill plays a central role in learning the language. Listening is given priority to speaking because of the following reasons as mentioned by Nation and Newton (2009):

1. It has a cognitive benefit. The learner is not overloaded by having to focus on two or more skills at the same time. 2.
- Speed of coverage: receptive knowledge grows faster than product knowledge. It is possible to experience and learn much more of the language by just concentrating on listening. If learners had to be able to say all the material in the lessons, progress would be very slow. 3.
- Moving very quickly to realistic communicative listening activities is easy. This will have a strong effect on motivation. 4.
- It has a psychological benefit. Learners will not feel shy or worried about their language classes. Having to speak a foreign language, particularly when you know very little, can be a frightening experience. Listening activities reduce the stress involved in language learning. 5.
- Listening activities are well suited to independent learning through listening to recordings.

Wood (1986) cited in Dunkel (1991) mentions evidence for the benefits of delayed oral practice in early-stage learning: **(1)**

A tendency toward better all-around performance has been noted in learners who have experienced a silent period than in those who have not passed this period. **(2)**

Learners who are required at too early a stage to speak are likely to suffer from a phenomenon known as "task overload" which probably hinders language learning and the exercise and development of discriminatory skills, creates anxiety, and encourages interference from L1.

**(3)** In natural circumstances both child and adult acquirers of foreign languages typically go through a "silent period. A child understands much of what is going on around him (p.436). To understand speakers, as mentioned by Brace (2013) students should know: (1) the grammatical

features of Standard English (2) text structures and organization (3) topics and concepts (4) cultural and world matters (5) metalinguistic awareness, (p.152). Cole et al. (2007) clarify that people with good oral communication skills:

- can relate well to colleagues and customers at work
- can get the information they need from organizations and individuals they have to deal with
- can explain things clearly and make a case for themselves
- have a reduced risk of experiencing conflict and aggression from others
- have more productive relationships with other people
- are more successful in their careers (p. 5).

Anderson and Lynch (2003, p.64) suggest some historical views of the role of listening in the second language learning process. They are as follows:

**1.** The first view considers language learning as a series of connecting processes. Students should begin with listening before speaking because listening is the means to immediate oral production. One cannot put the cart before the horse. Learners cannot speak before they listen to the language first. Learners have to start with listening activities from the early period of learning the language.

**2.** The second view considers language learning as an integrative process. All four skills are used together. Each skill supports the other. It is impossible to speak in a conversation if another person is not listening. The roles are exchangeable. The listener becomes a speaker and the speaker becomes a listener. According to Anderson and Lynch's point of view, the four skills complement each other. A listener to a lecture may take notes and write a report of the lecture. The same person might describe the lecture to friends and follows it by reading the notes.

**3.** The third view of language learning is best taught as a comprehension-focused process, i.e., the concentration in the beginner phase of the learning course is on the activities that develop the learners' comprehension without requiring the students to produce language. They consider listening to be a key to successful learning or a primary source of language experience. Without being taught to listen, the students will never be able to communicate with speakers of English in real situations.

### **3.3. The Role of the teacher in Teaching Listening Skills**

Teachers of English have a crucial role in teaching listening comprehension skills. Teaching listening is not an easy task. Learning English as a second language is of utmost critical, and the need to guide educators to contribute to successful teaching is seen to be a vast necessity (Ganaprakasam and Karunaharan, 2020). Orafi (2008) in Owen, et al. (2019) claims that the teacher is the source of knowledge. The teacher is the one who provides information to students in the classroom. A lot of things can be done to create a context for teaching useful language, but it all depends on the teacher as a decision-maker to perform and practice listening activities in the classroom. Brace (2013) claims that the teacher's role is to ensure that students develop the confidence to become effective listeners and speakers to meet their future needs in social,

academic, family, and community contexts. She (2013) adds that the strategic use of a range of instructional procedures creates a strong foundation for a comprehensive approach to teaching speaking and listening (p,5). Al-Mutawa and Kilani (1998) comment on the role of the teacher saying that the teacher's task is to provide opportunities for the students to listen to living English used in everyday situations such as in shops, restaurants, public speeches, and interviews. Makovec (2018) comments on the role of a teacher saying that some factors influencing the role of teachers are internal and external. Internal factors include those that affect a teacher's perception of his or her role. External factors comprise views and expectations about the role of the teacher that arise from other stakeholders, such as students, colleagues, school leaders, and inspectors of English. Both of these factors are an important part of a teacher's professional identity. Internal factors that influence a teacher's understanding of their role are created by the teachers themselves and can be divided into two categories: the teacher's beliefs about the important role of teaching listening skills and the teacher's expectations for his or her role. Effective teachers can plan learning experiences and instruction that assist students to become confident and competent communicators in a range of contexts. Students need to be able to efficiently select and use the processes and strategies that will help them to communicate and interact with others.

### **3.4. Some factors affecting Listening in L2 learning**

Listening is one of the most important skills in English language learning. Instructing aural skills requires more consideration in improving students' language learning. English is widely accepted as a medium of communication and occupies a definite place in the curriculum of EFL schools, colleges, and universities. Learners encounter listening difficulties when they listen to the English language (Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016). The challenge is more critical and delicate in countries where English is taught as a foreign language. Libyan students do not have a chance to practice the language outside the classroom. Learning English is confined only to the classroom. In a few cases in language classrooms, listening was considered to be the most difficult language skill for learners since it requires more attention and concentration to understand the listening material that contains understanding exchange and dialogue content. Listening skills usually require a considerably long period to master, normally involving the student experiencing a variety of emotions ranging from depression and frustration to exhilaration and pride, teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks that a teacher face, (walker, 2014). Goh (1999) points out that listening has long been a means of learning in tertiary education where lectures, seminars, and tutorials are still the most common modes for delivering content and exchanging ideas. It is just as important for school pupils (p 44). She (1999) adds that Listening is a complex ability. It involves more than understanding what words mean. Accordingly, listeners face several challenges. Learning to listen in a foreign language is even more difficult because there are more challenges to confront (Renandya., & Widodo, 2016).

Listening comprehension in foreign language learning appears to be one of the under-researched areas because of the difficulty in determining the exact issue with listening. Listening poses challenges to instructors and learners of L2 due to the difficulty of mastering it. Ur (1984); Underwood (1993); Renandya & Widodo (2016); and Shamsitdinova (2020) provide factors affecting understanding the spoken language:

#### **3.4.1. Phonological difficulties.**

Some sounds do not exist or are not used contrastively in the native language. Melnik (2019) states that the mismatch between the properties of the native language and the foreign one leads to distortions in the perception of non-native sounds and to foreign accents in their production. Arabs mispronounce some sounds of English due to a lack of exposure to English as a foreign language (Jahara and Abedrady, 2021). Some sounds are not available in the Arabic Language. The researcher provides the following English sounds as an example of the unavailability in the Arabic language: /p/, /v/, /g/, /ʒ/, /ŋ/. The previous sounds affect students to pronounce English words appropriately because they are not available in their first language. The students substitute the sounds /v/ with /f/ and /p/ with /b/. Some teachers do not alert the students to pronounce the sounds correctly. The students may pronounce “where can I park” as “where can I bark? The meaning is completely different. Learners want and need to develop intelligible speech patterns. Teachers of English have to pay attention to pronunciation in the classroom. Mispronunciation of the words leads to misunderstanding the message. When we recognize that pronunciation instruction cannot possibly receive unlimited attention in the classroom, it becomes clear that teachers need to set priorities (Munro, 2010). (Jahara & Abedrady, 2021) points out that the best way to comprehend people is to listen to them carefully to improve one’s pronunciation. (Nakazawa, 2012) points out that many EFL learners experience inhibition and anxiety when they communicate. Because of inhibition, they lack the confidence to pronounce words appropriately. Ahmad (2017) says that some learners are better at imitating sounds than others. The degree to which are exposed to English will improve their pronunciation. Nakazawa (2012) advises teachers and students to use pronunciation computer programs and watch TV to improve their pronunciation aspect. He (2012) adds that the latest advancements in technology have played a definite role in reducing learners’ anxiety, allowing them to be more confident. By using these programs, learners, feel less anxious and more comfortable when exchanging information, and are not as afraid of making mistakes when they exchange roles of conversation. (Nakazawa; Muir; & Dudley, 2007). (Renandya, and Handoyo, 2016) Confirm the view of utilizing the advancement of modern technology in improving listening skills. The popularity of the internet can be used to overcome the difficulty of pronunciation problems, as learners can access the internet to listen to a variety of talks featuring very different accents from all over the world.

### **3.4.2. Knowledge of intonation and stress.**

Vivian, (2008: P.83) defines intonation as the systematic rise and fall in the pitch of the voice during speech. Intonation and stress carry a great deal of meaning. The naturalness of speech depends highly on intonation and stress Go (2015). They considered the key to speaking English fluently with good pronunciation. Intonation and stress refer to the music of the English language. Intonation is about how we say things, rather than what we say (Zulugarova (2018). Intonation is important for intelligibility because it is used to express intentions. A speaker can show that he or she is asking for information, asking for confirmation, seeking agreement, or simply making a remark that is indisputable or common knowledge, through the intonation of the voice. Intonation is the melody of the sentence. It is created by the rising and falling of the pitch of the voice. Intonation and stress give additional information about an utterance. A word can be produced in different ways, depending on intonation, voice quality, and speech rate (Fikkert & Chen, 2011). Shastri (2010, P. 4) confirms that intonation helps to understand the attitude and mood of the speaker. The voice of the speaker can show that he is asking for a question, asking for information, seeking agreement, or making remarks. If the listeners misunderstand the importance of intonation,

it leads to a misunderstanding of the meaning and causes unintelligibility of the message.

*Stress is crucial to properly pronounce words in the English language.* Harmer (2007) points out that words are often not pronounced as one might expect from their spelling or written form. The word secretary for example appears on paper to have four syllables, but when it is spoken there are only three, and the first syllable is stressed / sekɹətəri / or even in a rapid speech heard only two / sektri /. When the word changes its shape morphologically, the stress may shift too such as in the word “JaPAN”. the stress falls on the second syllable, but when the word is changed to an adjective, the stress changes to the last syllable such as “JapANESE” (p. 43).

Hwaider (2017) conducted a study concerning with problems of teaching listening skills to Yemeni English foreign language learners. The study revealed a set of problems teachers encountered in teaching listening that contribute to the difficulty of listening skills. The problems were classified into linguistic problems which comprise pronunciation, stress, intonation, vocabulary knowledge, and syntactic structure, and non-linguistic problems which are considered the main problems in teaching listening in the main context of the study including obstacles related to learners, teachers, and teaching environment that led to neglecting teaching this significant skill. The teacher should help the learners in overcoming these problems. To develop aural skills, the teacher should emphasize classroom activities.

### **3.4.3. Speech Rate.**

Speech rate has been identified as a major factor affecting listening comprehension (Zhao, 1997). For English foreign learners, a text spoken at normal speed or even at a slow speed is often perceived as being too fast by language beginners or elementary levels. Zhao (1997) argues that speech rate has long been proposed as an important factor affecting communication between native speakers and non-native speakers of a language. There is a common belief among foreign language learners and teachers that a slower speech rate would facilitate L2 learners' listening comprehension. Although, this common-sense belief, is theoretically logical and intuitively appealing, but has not found uniform empirical support. Zhao (1997) explains that a slowed speech rate is frequently cited as a facilitative characteristic of foreigner talk and teacher talk in the second language acquisition literature. Researchers correlate speech rate with an understanding of spoken language. An Increasing speech speed results in a decrease in comprehension of language. Learners of L2 often complain of the speed of the speakers. Learners of a second language often ask for repetition of the listening material as a result of their inability to comprehend the text. Many EFL learners, especially those with lower proficiency levels in the language, find that of all the skills areas of English, it is listening that is the most difficult for them (Renandya & Farrell, 2010). Learners cannot control the speed of the speakers because they work on the meaning of some words and leave the other part. They feel that the speakers swallow the words or the words disappear before they catch them. Speech rate, as one of the main factors, has caused one of the major difficulties in evaluating listening comprehension. It is believed that the speech rate should go up as the students make progress (Chastain 1988; & Rivers, 1981). The slow rate of speech is generally believed to be usually easier to comprehend than the natural speech rate; this gives the students enough time to process the stream of information at a slower rate of delivery (Hayati, 2010). However, researchers did not support the positive effects of a slower listening comprehension rate. Researchers have to guard against the idea that comprehending slow speech rate is not an end but rather a short-path practice to comprehend natural speech (Hayati, 2010).



Slow delivery removes the naturalness of the speech. Underwood (1989) states that speed can make listening to text difficult.

#### **3.4.4. Size and knowledge of vocabulary**

Vocabulary has occupied a special place within applied linguistics during the past twenty years. Helping learners gain a wide range of vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental issue for improving their general language proficiency. The more vocabulary the learners have, the more they can understand spoken language. Ketsman and Masmaliyeva (2009) in Bustamante (2019) argue that vocabulary is central to the learning and teaching of a second language. It serves as the passageway in studying the different kinds of oral and written communication. In order to communicate well in a foreign language, learners should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them in different contexts as well as for different purposes Ataş (2018). Rost (2011) points out that vocabulary acquisition is an important goal of listening instruction, as there is a robust relationship between effective listening and vocabulary accessibility. The breadth of vocabulary knowledge is defined as the size of a learner's vocabulary, i.e., the number of words for which the learner has at least some knowledge of the meaning (Stahr, 2009). Meara (1996) in Stahr (2009) argues that vocabulary size is the basic dimension of a learner's lexical competence and emphasized that learners with large vocabularies are more proficient language users than learners with smaller vocabularies. Thornbury (2005) argues that a vocabulary of 2500 words covers nearly 95% of spoken text compared to 80% of written text i.e., words used in speaking are less size than words used in writing (p.23). Whereas Waring and Nation (2004) in Rost (2011) argue that a recognition vocabulary of 3,000-word families is necessary for the comprehension of every day (non-specialist) conversations. vocabulary size of Hong Kong students as said by Chiu (2005), most first-year university students know fewer than 3,000 English words, which is a disappointing outcome following twelve years of English teaching at primary and secondary school. Stahr (2009) comments that learners' knowledge of words will be strongly associated with their listening success. However, knowledge of a word does not guarantee that the word will actually be recognized in continuous speech. Moreover, recognizing most of the words in the input does not guarantee to understand of spoken language. In L2 contexts, four major views on the role of vocabulary in language comprehension as adapted from Nation (2008); and Tseng and Schmitt (2008) in Rost (2011) are:

- The instrumentalist view sees vocabulary knowledge as a major prerequisite and causative factor in comprehension.
- The aptitude view sees vocabulary knowledge as one of many outcomes of having strong general 'intelligence' or 'feel' for a language.
- The knowledge view, which sees vocabulary as an indicator of strong world knowledge. This world knowledge enables listening comprehension.
- The access view, which sees vocabulary as having a causal relationship with comprehension provided that the vocabulary can be easily accessed. Access can be improved through practice. This access can involve several factors including fluency of lexical access, speed of coping with affixed forms, and speed of word recognition. Knowing a word involves numerous types of word knowledge, such as meaning, word form, collocation, and register (Nation, 2001).

Vocabulary-building skills are one of the key emphases of the English Language curriculum at the preparatory level. It is important to provide pupils with ample opportunities to master these skills through purposeful and meaningful tasks. Students learn some of their vocabulary when their

teacher teaches new words directly in the classroom, for example, using explanation, demonstration, and even translation. It is also known that students learn some of their vocabularies indirectly through incidental encounters with words, for example, by inferring the meaning of a new word from the context. The English Language curriculum has always attached high importance to the learning and teaching of vocabulary-building skills. Teachers have to encourage students to raise awareness of how words are formed and related to one another, by explaining lexical relations such as synonyms, antonyms, and collocations, and teaching idiomatic uses of words.

### **3.4.5. Inability to get utterances repeated:**

According to Underwood (1984), listeners sometimes are not always in a position to get the speakers to repeat an utterance. This takes place when the learners are out of the classroom such as listening to the radio or watching television. She mentions that listening takes place in real-time, and once heard. Therefore, there is no chance to listen again in this situation. Unlike listening to a tape or CD, the recorded material is under their control. They have a chance to listen again. When listening to people face to face, the listener can ask the speaker for clarification, or more information.

### **3.4.6. Colloquial Language.**

Colloquial or informal language refers to the English language in daily life use, including slang, contractions, idioms, and non-standard language patterns lacking accurate grammatical structure (Leech & Svartvik, 1975) cited in (Karimi, 2018). Colloquial language is more casual and spontaneous. It is used to communicate with friends or family members either in writing or in conversation. It is utilized when writing personal e-mails, text messages, and business correspondence. Leech and Svartvik (2002) define informal language as the language of private conversation. It is the first type of language that a native-speaking child becomes familiar with. It is easier to understand than formal English, which is used nowadays in public communication of popular kinds such as advertisements, and popular newspapers mainly employ a colloquial style (p. 12). Colloquial speech refers to the total set of utterances in a familiar, informal context such as at home, at a place of relaxation, or at the workplace (Epoge, 2012) in (Hasanah, 2019). The tone of informal language is more personal than formal language. Learners who have been exposed to standard written English and/or “textbook” language sometimes find it surprising and difficult to deal with colloquial language. Ur (1992) points out that the biggest problem for L2 learners is the language used by normal people. People when traveling to an English-speaking country such as England, they face a different language from what they learned in classrooms. Idioms, slang, reduced forms, and shared cultural knowledge are all manifested at some point in conversations. Colloquialisms appear in both monologues and dialogues (Maulidiyah, 2014). Karimi (2018) points out that listening to colloquial varieties of a language is of high importance for a number of reasons. Listening typically develops faster than the other aspects of language, i.e., speaking, reading, and writing, and can be thought to facilitate the acquisition of the full set of language competencies (Oxford, 1990). Listening provides authentic language input which is used in real-life conversations (Rost, 1994). Teachers have to provide students with informal language activities in the classroom. Learners have to listen to the language used outside the walls of the classroom as conversations used in an English-speaking country. Instructors have to enhance students to listen to conversations on YouTube or interviews on TV. Nowadays, there are many facilities for

listening outside the classroom. Gochitashvili and Shabashvili (2021) comment on colloquial language saying that students should study spoken language in addition to formal language when learning a foreign language. This is critical for effective communication in a real-world context.

### **3.4.7. Reduced Forms.**

The term reduced forms refers to a phenomenon commonly observed in the informal speech of native speakers (Ito, 2001). Some researchers believe that EFL learners would not be able to improve their aural skills, because most of the instructional materials used in the classrooms are simplified and unnatural, no matter how different the employed techniques are used. The instructional materials lack the strength to cover how the real listening process in real situations occurs (Brown & Yule, 1983; & Rosa, 2002) Cited in (Khaghaninezhad1 & Jafarzadeh, 2014). As a result, being exposed to modified and unnatural language used in the classrooms, the learners often fail to understand the real language used by native speakers in the actual environment. In pronouncing clauses, speakers are guided by the need to express meanings efficiently. This means that words that play a less crucial role in the message may be slurred or dropped, and other words are given more prominence (Brown, 1977) cited in (Richards, 1983). Reduced forms have a crucial effect on L2 learners. Students may recognize the words in their written form, but it is very difficult for them to comprehend or recognize these words in real conversation listening. Khaghaninezhad1 & Jafarzadeh (2014) conducted a study that investigated the effect of explicit “reduced forms” instruction on Iranian EFL learners’ overall listening comprehension and their ability to recognize and produce them in their daily conversations. The results of the study showed that the control participants significantly improved their listening comprehension skills. The experimental participants had outperformed implying the efficacy of “reduced forms” practice on the overall listening comprehension improvement. The results also showed that the experimental participants significantly improved their reduced forms awareness as well as their ability to produce “reduced forms”, while the control participants didn’t show any improvement in reduced forms recognition or production.

Learners must identify and cope with the connected speech forms they hear and utilize them when speaking. If students cannot recognize the reduced forms, their language will sound unnatural and formal, with too many stressed forms making it difficult for the listener to know the points of focus. The feature of reduced forms is the most problematic area of language for second-language learners. This feature is still forgotten in teaching ESL Reduced forms are known to be used by highly proficient English users in most interactional contexts (Underwood & Wallace, 2012). Reduced-form instruction does not receive more attention in class as highlighted by Isaacs (2009) due to the implementation of pronunciation components in the communicative classroom rests with its exclusion from mainstream practices. Reduced forms require repetitive practice, which positively affects building fluency.

### **3.5. Strategies for Developing Listening Skills**

Improving listening comprehension skills is one of the urgent contemporary educational problems in the field of second language acquisition. Listening is considered a difficult skill to learn, especially for young beginner’s level. Mendelsohn (1995) cited in Mendelsohn (1998) defines strategy as methodology that is rooted in strategy instruction. It views the objective as being to teach students how to listen. This is achieved by making learners aware of how the language functions and by making them aware of the strategies that they use, i.e., developing "meta-strategic

awareness. Then, the task of the teacher becomes to instruct the learners in the use of additional strategies that will assist them in tackling the listening task (p. 134). It has been argued that awareness of strategies and other variables in learning can have positive influences on language learners' listening development (Bolitho et al., 2003) cited in (Vandergrift et al., 2006). Understanding how L2 listening comprehension works can seriously influence language pedagogy (Khuziakmetov & Porchesku, 2016). Chamot (2005) in Brown (2007) defines strategies quite broadly as "procedures that facilitate a learning task. In order to build effective listening skills, various approaches to listening lessons must be created to teach students to listen for information in real-life settings and process the information effectively. This comprises carefully sequenced listening materials that permit students to practice at appropriate levels and provide scaffolding (Newton & Nation, 2020) cited in (May, 2020). The listening activities should focus on helping students to feel confident, i.e., moving from a product approach towards a process approach. Some strategies have dominated in the last 40 years for developing listening skills.

### **3.5.1. Bottom-up Processes**

These are the processes the listener uses to assemble the message piece by piece from the speech stream, going from the parts to the whole. Bottom-up processing involves perceiving and parsing the speech stream at increasingly larger levels beginning with auditory-phonetic, phonemic, syllabic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, propositional, pragmatic, and interpretive (Nation & Newton, 2009). Richards (2008) says that bottom-up processing refers to using the incoming input as the basis for understanding the message. Comprehension begins with the received data that is analyzed as successive levels of the organization, sounds, words, clauses, sentences, and texts until meaning is derived. Comprehension is viewed as a process of decoding. The listener's lexical and grammatical competence in a language provides the basis for bottom-up processing. The input is scanned for familiar words, and grammatical knowledge is used to work out the relationship between elements of sentences. In utilizing bottom-up listening strategies, listeners rely heavily on their knowledge of the phonological rules of the language in order to process the "data" for comprehension (Rost, 2002) cited in (Siegel, 2018). Speech perception and word recognition are considered the bottom-up processes in listening: They provide tangible data for comprehension (Rost, 2011). Nunan (2015) provides examples of bottom-up which include the following:

1. Scanning the input to identify familiar lexical items.
2. segmenting the stream of speech into grammatical constituents.
3. using phonological cues to identify the information focus in an utterance.
4. using grammatical cues to organize the input into constituents (p.39).

It seems that in many cases students are locked into a bottom-up learning mode. By this, they are desperately trying to understand every single word within a listening text. This approach is useful for beginners.

### **3.5.2. Top-down Processes**

refers to the use of background knowledge in understanding the meaning of a message (Nunan, 2015). This technique involves the listener in going from the whole, their prior knowledge, and

their content and rhetorical schemata to the parts, i.e., the listener uses what he knows of the context of communication to predict what the message will contain, and uses parts of the message to confirm, correct or add to this. The key process here is inferencing. Background knowledge may take several forms. It may be previous knowledge about the topic of discourse, it may be situational or contextual knowledge, or it may be knowledge stored in long-term memory in the form of “schemata” or “scripts” plans about the overall structure of events and the relationship between them.

### 3.5.3. Metacognitive strategy.

Metacognitive awareness strategies are useful for students to accomplish their listening tasks. Students need to apply certain mental steps or operations in listening to encounter their listening problems. These mental steps are referred to as strategies to help the learners of L2 to achieve reasonable listening comprehension (Goh, 2002) in Looi-Chin et al., (2017). Rost and Vandergrift (2012) define the metacognitive approach as our ability to think about our own thinking or “cognition,” and, by extension to think about how we process information for a range of purposes and manage the way we do it (p. 83). *Cognitive listening strategies* involve manipulating language to make it easier to understand, i.e., it’s about simplification. This strategy enables listeners to be agents of their own thinking, individuals who can construct an understanding of themselves and the world around them, control their thoughts and behaviors, and monitor the consequences of these thoughts and behavior (Kluwe, 1982) cited in (Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). Learning to listen remains mainly an individual affair, however, learners do not benefit significantly from the knowledge and experiences of their peers and teachers (Goh and Vandergrift, 2012). Metacognition lies at the heart of learner-oriented listening instruction. The metacognitive approach is crucial to helping learners engage more effectively with input and guide their overall listening development in and out of the classroom. As mentioned by Goh and Vandergrift (2012), the goal of a metacognitive approach to listening is to develop learners who:

- understand the challenges of listening in a second language.
- think about their learning development individually and collaboratively with others.
- habitually make plans to self-direct and manage their progress in listening.
- use listening strategies appropriately.
- have greater self-efficacy and motivation; and, last but not least.
- can improve their listening proficiency to process aural input and engage effectively in oral interaction (p. 83).

The goal of this approach is to help second language learners to become self-regulated listeners who increase their chances of aural comprehension in and out of the classrooms and improve skills for real-life listening situations. This can be achieved through strategic actions, collaboration with others, and individual reflection. Vandergrift et al., (2006) developed a metacognitive awareness questionnaire to assess second language learners’ metacognitive awareness about listening strategy use and themselves as listeners. They (2006) confirm that attention in listening comprehension research is increasingly being directed at learners’ self-reports of their understanding and

awareness of the processes involved in listening in another language. Metacognitive strategies involve the three processes of planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Vandergrift, 1999) cited in (Looi-Chin, 2017).

Vandergrift et al. (2006) developed a metacognitive awareness questionnaire to assess second language learners' metacognitive awareness about listening strategy use and themselves as listeners. The questionnaire comprises 21 items used to assess second language learners' metacognitive awareness about listening strategy use and themselves as listeners. The Questionnaire (MALQ) is designed for researchers and instructors to assess the extent to which language learners are aware of and can regulate the process of L2 listening comprehension. It is also intended to serve as a self-assessment instrument that learners can use to appraise their awareness of the listening process and reflect on their strategy when listening to texts in the L2. The Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) is designed for researchers and instructors to assess the extent to which language learners are aware of and can regulate the process of L2 listening comprehension. It is also intended to serve as a self-assessment instrument that learners can use to appraise their awareness of the listening process and to reflect on their strategy used when listening to texts in the L2. The researchers propose the metacognitive framework serves two important functions in language learning: (1) self-appraisal or knowledge about cognitive states and processes, and (2) self-management or control of cognition. Metacognitive awareness helps learners become self-knowing, self-directed, and self-managed in their learning.

Learners may have limited success in listening due to the challenges in constructing the meaning of words. Therefore, a study on listening strategies can be useful for educators to address the problems of listening comprehension. Research has pointed to the powerful role of metacognitive knowledge in learning and the potential for greater use of metacognitive strategies to enhance learning, foster learner autonomy, and foster success in L2 listening (Vandergrift, 1997., & Vandergrift 2002). Instruction on strategies can help students to improve their performance on listening tasks.

Looi-Chin (2017) conducted a study designed to identify the students' levels of Metacognitive Awareness Strategies for performing their listening tasks and to examine the influence of the strategies on their test scores. The study was conducted through two stages Pre-test and Post-test. A hundred participants were chosen based on convenience sampling. After submitting their Pre and Post-tests, they were required to complete a Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire developed by Vandergrift et al. (2006). The findings show a significant improvement in performing the listening comprehension task, based on the MCQ given. The study findings revealed that metacognitive strategy awareness positively affects students' test scores. ESL teachers can enhance the use of MALQ strategies for listening comprehension.

Metacognitive instruction can be helpful for guiding and assisting less-skilled listeners in developing their listening comprehension ability. Teachers have to utilize metacognitive strategies to assess and evaluate students improving their listening comprehension ability. Teachers must motivate students to improve their listening skills. Therefore, Teachers have to choose adequate means of instruction that makes listening sufficient and creates a favorable psychological environment to listen to a foreign language.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was employed for this study. It is considered a good way to collect information and a more reliable instrument. It is one of the most widely used data collection techniques within the survey strategy, (Saunders et al., 2016, p.55). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) say that a questionnaire is a preformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives (p.142). The questionnaires were given to 120 students at the preparatory level. The sample was chosen randomly from 8 schools to elicit the students' views regarding teaching and learning listening comprehension skills because this skill is considered the most problematic aspect of language teaching and learning. Learning and teaching a second language are challenging for second language teachers and learners. Most complaints of the learners come from the difficulty of listening comprehension. The research questions focused on the listening factors hindering students' understanding of spoken language effectively.

##### 4.1. Data Analysis.

###### **Q.1. Do teachers teach you listening activities? (Never, rarely, sometimes, usually, always)**

This question aims to know whether the teachers teach listening activities to students at the preparatory level or not. The answers of the students to question one show that about 30% of the teachers usually teach listening activities and about 5% of the students say that teachers never teach this skill. None of them chose always (0%), whereas 15% of teachers sometimes expose students to listening activities. 50% of students say that teachers rarely teach listening activities. Instructing listening skills is necessary at all stages of education. Listening comprehension is an extremely important part of language learning. Second language acquisition studies have illustrated that comprehensible output and input are crucial for the acquisition of a language (Swain, 1995) cited in (Solak, 2016). It is essential for students to understand the language they are exposed to and to respond appropriately so that they can become competent users of that particular language. Listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Listening is considered an impetus, not an obstacle to interaction and learning. Teaching students listening skills lead to lasting advantages in a student's academic career and beyond, including a greater ability to communicate, faster second language acquisition, lower levels of frustration, anxiety, and depression. Improved relationship skills.

###### **Q.2. Are listening facilities (Available, unavailable, available but in poor condition) in the school?**

The responses to question two show that 57% of students said that listening facilities are available in schools, whereas 43% answered that the listening teaching aids are available but in a poor condition, and none of the students said that the listening facilities are unavailable. This means that there was an opportunity for students to listen to aural activities that are available in textbooks. Teaching listening needs materials and media that cannot be separated from technology. Teaching listening requires audio materials for learning activities inside the classroom or for students' practices outside the classroom. Language laboratories are widely used for teaching listening. The audio materials are also improved into audiovisual materials which are interesting. This technology is followed by widely used computers. The aim of using listening facilities is to provide students with listening skills in order to enable them to understand what people are saying. Teachers must exploit the teaching facilities available in schools to teach listening skills. Given the importance

of listening in language learning and teaching, It is essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners., this means modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations: those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom. One of the best ways to introduce students to listening strategies is to integrate listening activities into language lessons using multimedia technology (Galina et al., 2011). The *language laboratory* helps students develop good listening skills and aids the process of communication. Listening aids allow students to listen to different accents, native speakers, and spoken language in real situations. The more students listen to the language, the more they can acquire the language effectively.

**Q.3. I find listening comprehension activities (interesting, difficult, boring).**

The answers to question three clarify that 87.5% of students say that listing activities were difficult, whereas only 12.5% said that listening materials are interesting, and none of the students chose the boring option. Almost all students view listening skills as difficult to master. This is because the students do not listen to the language. Listening is a challenge for both teachers and students. Lack of vocabulary, speed of speech, unclear pronunciation, lack of concentration and motivation, condition of studying at home, and limitation of the media make listening difficult for L2 students (Megasari, 2021).

**Q.4. If you have difficulty in listening, it is due to (Insufficient practice, bad condition of listening aids)**

The answers of students to question five clarify that 90% of students complain of the insufficient practice of listening skills, whereas only 10% of them said that the listening aids were in a bad condition. Listening well requires a lot of practice inside and outside the classroom. The more practice the students do, the more able to understand spoken language. Listening to the *language*, especially during the first period of formal schooling, help children improve their cognitive skills in acquiring language. students need more aural practice so that they can be more confident to listen to people in real-life situations. The way to improve listening skills is to practice "active listening. This is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but more importantly, the complete message being communicated. In order to do this, you must pay attention to the other person very carefully. It was necessary for teachers to motivate students to improve their learning of language through their listening skills. Teachers have to encourage students to listen outside of the classroom. Listening practice is only confined inside the classroom (Sheypak & Spektor, 2011).

**Q.5. Is speed the main problem in understanding spoken language? (Rarely, sometimes, usually, always)**

The responses of students show that 74% of them admit that speed was always the main obstacle to comprehending spoken language. Only 10% of the learners said usually. whereas 12% chose usually, and only 4% rarely viewed speed as the main hindrance to listening comprehension. Speech rate is considered one of the main factors that hinder listening comprehension. Listeners cannot control the speed of speech. The biggest problem with listening comprehension is that listeners are not able to control how quickly speakers talk. Second, listeners cannot have words repeated and this can cause critical difficulties for them. The slow speech rate is generally believed to be easier to understand than a natural speech rate. This gives the students enough time to process



the stream of information at a slower rate of delivery. Students need to listen to the English language daily if they want to improve and communicate appropriately. English contains features like weak forms, elisions, link-ups, and contractions, which could have further compounded the students' difficulties. The perception of speed could have been due to the difference in the nature of spoken English and spoken the learner's first language (Goh, 1999). Speaking too slowly may also have a negative impact on intelligibility.

**Q.6. My vocabulary size is insufficient to understand what I am listening to. (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree).**

This question is aimed at identifying whether the real problem in understanding conversation is confined to the limited knowledge of vocabulary or not when the students listen to spoken language. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the listening process. The answers to question six show that about 80% of students strongly agree that the restricted size of vocabulary obstacle the listening and understanding, whereas only 20% of students agree that the problem lies in the limitation of vocabulary. None of the students chose the other two options. Vocabulary size produces a significant correlation with listening comprehension. Gaining a wide range of vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental issue for improving their general language proficiency. Number and knowledge of vocabulary have a positive influence on understanding conversation. The more vocabulary the students have, the more they can understand speakers. Vocabulary is considered a key to learning a second language. Listening vocabulary refers to the words the listeners need to know to understand what they hear. Listeners cannot understand what they are listening to without knowing what most of the words mean.

**Q.7. My listening ability improved as a result of using listening visual aids. (Strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, agree)**

The aim of the question is to know whether the students' listening comprehension improved through listening visual aids in performing listening activities or not. The answers were that 90% of the students strongly agree their listening skills improved, whereas, 6% of them agree. Only 4% said disagree, but no one said strongly disagree. The results of the question proved that the achievement of competency in *listening* through audio-visual *aids* leads to better achievement in *comprehension* ability. Buck (200, p.47) suggests that audio-visual *support* can *aid* language learners, especially less proficient learners, and is particularly helpful with more difficult texts. Videos, worksheets, PowerPoints, textbooks, smart screens, etc.) are useful and helpful in teaching language skills in this class.

**Q.8. The teacher uses group or pair work in teaching listening. (Never, rarely sometimes, usually, always)**

The responses show that 84% of teachers rarely use group or pair work in the class, whereas, only 2% said sometimes, 6% of the students negated utilizing group or pair work technique, and only 8% of students answered that teachers always use this technique. The use of pair and group work as a teaching and learning methodology greatly benefits all learners. Through participation in group work, the students learn from and with one another. Zohairy (2014) in Almanafi and Alghatani (2020) claims that pair work constitutes a vital element in English language learning. It represents an alternative whereby the learner can, in some cases, progress more rapidly than

working alone. The learners will learn to clarify and consolidate their thoughts and generate ideas by working within groups. Working in pairs and smaller groups can significantly improve learning and aid students become more successful. In this way, students are more included in the learning process as the usual pace of the lesson changes with students becoming the focus of attention. This can often be a great way to add energy to the classroom, especially when the topics are considered heavier or more difficult. Low-proficiency students can learn from top students in the class. This strategy has a positive impact on the learning process.

**Q.9. I forget what I have listened to. (Never, rarely, sometimes, usually, always)**

The answers to question nine show that 65% of students always forget what they have listened to. Whereas 20% of students said that they usually have this problem. Only 10 % of the students cannot remember what they have listened to. 5% of students answered with rarely forget what they have listened to, but none of the students chose never option.

As far as second language learning is concerned, students often complain that they have bad memories. From a recognition memory perspective, they have bad memory habits which can be the reason for their poor recall of the heard information. According to Goh (1999), the most common problem faced by students in listening in the order of frequency is quickly forgetting what is heard. Many learners tend to quickly forget what they heard after the speaker finishes talking or they may spend too much time translating. Effectively, teachers choose some tables, flowcharts, schematics, timetables, or multimedia presentations to help learners recall the heard information.

**Q.10. I find it difficult to understand the listening text when speakers speak with varied accents**

**(Never, rarely, sometimes, usually, always)**

The survey to question ten shows that 74% of students' listening comprehension was always interrupted by speakers' accents. Only 13% of them answered that accent was the problem, whereas 11% said usually and 2% of respondents replied that accent hinders their comprehension, and no one chose never option. Most of the students admit that the accent is one of the main factors that obstacle listening comprehension. Accented speech can lead to a significant reduction in listening comprehension. Goh (1999), says that 66% of learners mentioned a speaker's accent as one of the most significant factors that affect listener comprehension. Unfamiliar accents both native and non-native can cause serious problems in listening comprehension and familiarity with an accent aids learners' listening comprehension. An unfamiliar accent sometimes makes comprehension impossible.

**Q.11. I listen to English programs outside the classroom. (Never, rarely, sometimes, usually, always)**

The answers of students clarify that 89% of them never listen outside the classroom, and only 11% of learners rarely listen to materials outside the class. This indicates that students were not encouraged to practice outside the classroom environment. Students often do not listen enough outside the classroom, and that is a problem. Nowadays video plays a more important role in learning than classical audio tracks. It is important to make listening practice fun, natural, and well-adjusted to the tastes and interests of the students. Students improve their English skills by giving them lots of opportunities to listen to English. This will help them to feel more confident and prepared for their listening classes in the classroom. Practice builds confidence. Students have to listen freely at home. Therefore, language and communication skills have become essential

personal, social and professional survival skills. Listening can be developed outside the classroom through videos on YouTube, songs, tv, and radio. Listening to the news on the radio as audio media have a positive and meaningful effect on improving students' listening comprehension skills even without the visual exposures supporting the content. Budyana et al. (2018) point out that listening to the news on the radio as audio media has a positive and meaningful effect on improving students' listening comprehension skills even without the visual exposures supporting the content.

**Q.12. Is listening comprehension skill tested during the year of study? (Yes, No)**

The responses show that 100% of students negated that listening skills are tested during the school year of study. Listening ability is central to pedagogy and evaluation of learning in the English language classroom. Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning in English language arts. Without an effective evaluation program, it is impossible to know whether students have learned, whether teaching has been effective, or how best to address student learning needs (Ghorbanpour et al., 2021). Tests of language skills force teachers to teach the language effectively and cannot ignore it pedagogically.

**Q.13. Do teachers divide listening tasks into pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening stages? (Never, rarely, sometimes, usually, always).**

The answers to question thirteen indicate that only 25% of teachers always follow this technique, whereas 43% of teachers sometimes do this strategy. 15 % of students said that teachers rarely divide listening tasks into stages. Only 9% of teachers teach the activities through stages of pre, during, and post. About 8% of teachers never lay stress on dividing the lesson into stages. Learners need to practice active listening to get better at it. Task-based learning has the advantage of getting students to use their skills at their current level, developing language through task listening stages, pre, during, and post-stages. It has the advantage of placing the focus of students toward achieving a goal where language becomes a tool, making the use of language a necessity. It is important to plan and organize a listening activity into stages to support students and help them succeed at listening in English. The task is an activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome. By assigning tasks and focusing attention on different aspects of a listening text, teachers can help students develop their listening skills and identify where they need to improve.

**Q.14. The time allotted to teaching listening activities (adequate, inadequate).**

According to students' responses, 82% of them view the time allotted to teaching listening skills as insufficient, whereas only 18% of respondents see that the time is enough for teaching aural skills. Teaching a second language is time-consuming, especially at the beginner level. Learning a language is a complex, time-intensive task that requires dedication, persistence, and hard work. The more time spent on teaching listening skills, the better improvement of students' ability to comprehend a second language. The key thing is that the listening materials should be highly interesting and comprehensible. If teachers are willing to invest time in giving students lots of input-based practice through both extensive reading and listening, there is no doubt that they will attain a higher level of proficiency in due time (Renandya, 2010). One of the principles recommended by Peterson (2001:89) for teaching listening comprehension in a second language. is increasing the allotted time for listening activities.

**4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The questionnaire items which were answered by the students confirmed that the students in preparatory education encounter problems when they listen to spoken language. They are unable to understand conversations when they listen to speakers. Accordingly, it was found out the following points:

1. Listening skills did not receive priority in language teaching. Listening activities are poorly taught at the preparatory level which is considered a foundation for the secondary level. In general, the results showed that teachers of English neglect teaching listening activities. Some teachers completely skip teaching this important aspect to acquire a second language.

2. Listening outside the classroom is fundamental to developing aural skills. Radio or TV programs are very important and helpful in acquiring listening skills. The programs on TV or radio include the naturalness and spontaneity of ordinary speech. This helps them to cope with speakers in real-life situations especially there are no native speakers to exchange conversations within context. The results indicate that about 89% of the students never listen to the radio or TV programs to improve their listening skills and 11% of them rarely do the strategy. Listening to English language audio regularly improves listening comprehension. Teachers do not encourage students to listen outside the classroom. Learning English is not only confined inside the classroom which is made dependent on the goals of language learning in a classroom or a particular activity.

3. The time allotted to teaching the English language is not enough. The results of question (14) prove that English course in preparatory education does not receive adequate time since teaching a foreign language consume much time. Learning a *second language* is often a difficult and *time-consuming* journey, especially for beginner and elementary levels. Educators have to dedicate more time to teaching English as a foreign language.

4. Learners were not exposed to different varieties of English in their listening comprehension skills which hurts their language comprehension because it contributes cultural values regarding the different ways of using the language functions or other aspects of language like different accents, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Therefore, learners have to be exposed to different varieties of English. It is more convincing that students need some exposure to variations in spoken English. Reduced forms make students unable to understand speakers in real-life situations. It's important to plan and organize a listening lesson to support the students and help them succeed at listening in English. By assigning tasks and focusing attention on different aspects of a listening text, instructors can help students develop their listening skills and identify where they need to improve.

5. Schools must be provided with suitable teaching facilities such as laboratories, smart screens, and charts to make instruction and learning easier, helpful, and beneficial. Good teaching aids help determine the success of students and the effectiveness of a teacher's lesson. Instruction school facilities have an impact on the overall school experience of students and teachers. The lack of teaching facilities limits the ability of a student to achieve various learning and extra curricula activities. Moreover, a lack of facilities has a negative impact on teachers' job satisfaction, which undermines their motivation of teaching.

6. Testing listening skills are excluded during the studying school year. Assessing aural skills force teachers and students to focus on teaching and practicing listening activities.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Listening has rightly assumed a central role in language learning. Teaching listening skills is essential for second language learning. Listening is considered a greater and greater importance in foreign language classrooms. The skills underlying listening have become more clearly defined. Strategies contributing to effective listening are now better understood. Teaching methodology in the mainstream has not yet caught up with a theory. In many language curricula, listening is still often considered a problematic skill for teachers and learners. Aural skills can also help students build relationships because as they engage themselves in conversation, their peers are more likely to view them as open and interested. Developing effective listening skills is just as important as developing speaking skills. Instructing aural skills is highly demanding.

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