ABSTRACT

THE TEACHING OF THE ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS,
A Case study of first year students at the College of Education,
Saber, University of Aden.

This study comprises of six chapters as follows:

CHAPTER ONE: It focuses firstly on the language skills and their relationship. Secondly, it deals with English language teaching in Yemen, and thirdly comes English listening skills and how to teach them. Also it sheds light on the Rationale and the significance of the study, the limitations of the research, the area of the work and the objectives of the study. Eventually it concludes with the hypothesis of the Research and the organization of the work. Therefore, the following main ideas are there in this chapter.

Introduction and Definitions:

   It is impossible for a student to pronounce a single sound or simple sentence which is not there in his mother tongue or that has not been known or learnt or heard before. So English listening skills are very important and necessary for foreign language learners. Further more, skill means the performance
that can be performed or done easily and in depth. At the same
time listening means, the ability of a listener to understand or
identify the speaker’s sayings, pronunciations, vocabularies,
grammar and grasping his meaning. In other words it is an art
of many skills and of complex operations that make the listener
give special attention to the sound waves, which is received by
the ear. In addition, there are essential differences between
hearing, listening and auding such as: hearing can be at the
recognition level, while listening can be at the selection level,
mean while auding is a continuous listening process.

The Rationale and the significance of the study:

The present study intends to investigate the needs of the
English learners for the listening skills especially the needs of
the first year students at the Education College, Saber,
University of Aden. So this topic has been chosen by the
researcher because of the following reasons, Listening skills
are neglected in comparison to the other skills viz. speaking,
reading and writing in Aden University, and there are very few
competent teachers and researchers of this discipline who may
guide in effective learning of this skill. At the same time, there is
no provision for modern technology like the language laboratory used in the classroom, except for a tape recorder. Furthermore, the teacher is the center of the process, whereas the learners’ participation is rare and passive. The textbooks are not of a recent origin, and the syllabus is designed by the teacher only.

**The Objectives of the Study:**

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- The study intends to improve the best classroom techniques for teaching the English listening skills.
- It aims to provide the students’ ability for the English listening skills as it spoken by the native speaker.
- It will support the students with enough time for practising the skills, the strategies and the activities of the listening skills.
- It will provide the students with a wide background of listening and make them skilful listeners.
The Hypothesis of the Research:

- Using developing materials will help the students to improve their ability of listening skills.
- Students have to participate in choosing the course, the material and the syllabus designing according to their needs.
- Filling the gap between the previous teaching of listening and the recent technology and techniques of the modern teaching listening instructions.

CHAPTER TWO: It states the theory and review of the studies, which is related to this research. It starts with the teaching listening approaches, followed by the teaching listening goals and methods. Then comes the teaching of the listening skills, strategies and activities, and later deals with listening classroom techniques and exercise designing for listening comprehension. Referring to: Brown, G. (1977:168) provides the Goal of teaching listening comprehension as follows:

“The main aim in teaching students how to understand English as it is spoken by native English
speakers must be to make the students aware of what signals they can depend on hearing the stream of speech and to make them use these signals”.

CHAPTER THREE: Chapter Three sheds light on the research methodology of the study. It is based on two main experiments-the first one is conducted in the data description, the scheme of fieldwork and the steps that the researcher has performed in his empirical study. The second experiment is concerned with the teaching period of the model course for the experimental group and the results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group and the control group. Accordingly, this thesis is based on two main experiments. The first step in the experiment was to design a common tool in the form of two questionnaires - one for the students and one for the teachers. Each questionnaire consisted of four sections of the same type and number of questions. The second step was adjusting the questionnaires validity and reliability by a committee of expert doctors and professors in India and Yemen. The next step was to administer the questionnaire on five second year students as a sample to check if there are any difficulties or
incomprehensible ideas or questions and put a cross mark in these situations of difficulties.

Then it was administered on forty students of the English Department, Saber Education College, University of Aden, and at the same time, was distributed among twenty teachers in the same department and the English language centre of the same University. After that, the students’ and teachers’ responses were analyzed by the researcher and statistician throughout the use of SPSS program. Finally, all the analyzed items of the questionnaire were transferred into a syllabus of the model course. Further more, the first step of the second experiment is, after the preparations of the pre-test and the post-test that depended on their needs, answers, desires according to the questionnaire items, then it was validated by expert teachers in the English department, and after that it was administered to the experimental group which consisted of 30 students, and to the control group which consisted of the same number of students. The second step was the designing of the syllabus of the model course units. The model course units were designed and taught to the experimental group for four hours a week for one semester. Meanwhile those units were designed according
to the needs, answers and desires of the students. The third step taken by the researcher was to finalize his empirical study by a post-test for the same two groups and make a comparison between the first result of the pre-test and the result of the post-test. It was found that there was a very clear difference in the score, which proved that, the teaching of the model course was effective and improved the students’ levels at listening skills. In other words two of the hypotheses of the study were proved completely. So by this process those figures were translated into conclusions and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: It refers to the quantitative analysis of the work done by the researcher during the teaching period of the fieldwork. It includes the questionnaire analyses such as section one the respondents profile, section two the skills priority and techniques of teaching listening skills, and section three the needs interpretations of the linguistic items, the methods, the strategies and the activities. In other words all the preferred items were analyzed and interpreted in detail.
Samples of tables of the Questionnaire quantitative analysis:

Table No. 1: Respondents profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Medium of instruction in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second year girls</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Arabic-English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year boys</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Arabic-English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Different ages</td>
<td>Different medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 2: Skills priority and the techniques of teaching listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Question no.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Priority of the skills in teaching second / foreign language</td>
<td>- Speaking</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Listening</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Writing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Your feeling in studying / teaching listening skills.</td>
<td>- More comfortable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Comfortable</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Less comfortable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Boring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Question no.</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The difficulties in teaching listening skills</td>
<td>- Methods</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Strategies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Activities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Practicing the listening skills weekly</td>
<td>- Strongly agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Give students background about what they are going to listen to</td>
<td>- Strongly agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 out of 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 out of 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table no. 3: The descriptive statistics of the linguistic items, methods, strategies and activities used by SPSS program, see the end of chapter four.

**Chapter Five:** Chapter Five begins with the syllabus outline and discusses the purpose and the methods of all the model course units that were taught to the experimental group during the teaching period. At the same time it shows the sample units
of the model course with their activities and exercises, which were practised by the candidates in the listening classes. Also it contains the test analysis, the test validity and reliability and finalized by the test final draft that was done by SPSS program. Therefore, those results of the pre-test and post-test were translated into the major findings of this study. Consider the following statistical analysis of the pre-test and the post-test.

Table No. 5: The pre-test statistical analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>dF</th>
<th>Sig (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51.37</td>
<td>15.147</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.440</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>13.532</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 6: The post-test statistical analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>dF</th>
<th>Sig (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71.17</td>
<td>18.189</td>
<td>11.720</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.981</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>86.33</td>
<td>10.230</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER SIX: It concludes the pedagogical implications and the problems that were lacking in the Yemeni learners in learning English listening skills. It states the conclusions, the recommendations and the suggestions for further studies as follows:

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY:

From the descriptive analysis of the data, several conclusions can be obtained, and the following are the important ones:

1- The researcher found out that, the students’ in the experimental group did not perceive the pronunciation of some sounds at the end of the words such as /s/, /z/, /iz/ and /t/, /d/, /id/. Therefore, they need more practice in spoken English in this respect.

2- It was noticeable that the major problem of the Yemeni learners is the intonation and the stress patterns because they have poor background of the language and need more training and drilling.

3- One of the most acute and important difficulties was that the learners had problems about, the stressed and unstressed
syllables. So the researcher trained them with some exercises that belong to this aspect.

4-Contractions such as /He’s/ /They’ve/ /I’d/ were lacking and they confused the students in Listening comprehension.

Therefore, the researcher regarded this point and practiced more exercises and activities in the model course that was taught to the experimental group.

5-Political and business texts, especially in the shape of interview of the native speakers, caused incomprehensible listening for the beginner students. The reasons are the speed of the speech, the technical use of the language by the native speakers, and the unfamiliar vocabularies and sentences of the text.

6- One fact should be taken into consideration. The discrimination of the following English sounds /p/ and /b/ /f/ and /v/ are not included in Arabic language. Therefore, the Yemeni learners of English found difficulty in perceiving the initial differences in the pronunciation of the above mentioned phonemes.
7- During the teaching period of the model course, the researcher discovered that, a large number of the students in the class-room may lack the listening comprehension, because it cannot give all students a chance to practise well and participate in the listening lesson activities and exercises. Therefore, the researcher avoided over crowding the class and fixed 30 students in each group.

8- The researcher noticed that for effective and comprehensible listening lessons all the students should participate in the activities in the class. They should play role in choosing the course units, the materials and in the syllabus designing because it reflects their needs and interests in listening skills.

9- The most important elements in learning listening skills are the language-laboratory and enough time for practising which can improve the students abilities in listening. So the absence of the above mentioned elements in the College of Education Saber, caused weakness in the students’ levels and listening comprehension.

10- Eventually, the results of the post-test of the experimental group and the control group are addressed and they proved the
two hypotheses of the research that say, (1) The students have to participate in choosing the course units, the materials and in the syllabus designing according to their needs. (2) Filling the gap between the previous teaching listening methods and the recent teaching listening technology and techniques. The next hypothesis is rejected out of the three hypotheses, (3) Using developed materials will help the students to improve their abilities in listening. By this way, it can prove the effectiveness of the model course and the development of the students’ abilities for learning and comprehending foreign language by listening skills.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

We can recommend the following on the basis of the study:

1- The results of the pre-test of the experimental group and the control group proved the weakness of the students in listening skills because of the carelessness about listening skills in the syllabus and the nature of the programme and methods used in teaching listening. Therefore, this study recommends improving the methods, strategies and techniques
that were recently published and spread for teaching this important skill.

2- This study advises teachers of Listening to give students a chance for participating in and practising the different kinds of activities and skills in the classroom such as short conversations, short discussions and debates, language games….etc.

3- This study recommends that, the teacher should regard the students’ needs, interests, desires and choices. So this can help for better learning and better achieving the course objectives

4- This research advises the listening teachers to treat this skill in the mood of listening for teaching, not listening for testing. In other words how to make it interesting subject is better than teaching it for the test purpose.

5- This study recommends the listening teachers to avoid traditional methods, strategies and techniques of teaching listening skills, and try to insert the new techniques and technologies of teaching this skill, that means, to avoid repetition and bring the modern ways in teaching the listening units.
6--This study recommends that for effective listening the teachers should keep in mind, the students’ attention and concentration, how to make them listen with a purpose for their listening, how to make them able to comprehend the listening topic and how to make them imagine the speakers’ attitudes and the listening situations and to predict what follows.

7- This study advises the students to improve their listening abilities by using the different types of the recent aids such as television, radio, internet, computer C.D, video cassettes or at least charts, drawings and tape recorders.

8-This research recommends that teachers should use different types of the developed materials in the classroom and to refresh their methods and techniques according to the students’ needs and interest and according to the new techniques in teaching this skill.

9- This study recommends that the University should build modern classes that have to contain modern equipments, comfortable seats, and recent technology which can help in learning listening effectively.
10- This research advises the teacher to attend conferences, workshops, seminars that will help them to develop and improve their performance and solve their problems in teaching listening.

11- The study recommends that listening skills must be learnt not only in the university classes but also by self learning.

12- The research advises that during the listening lesson some conditions must be taken into consideration by the teacher such as the quietness inside and outside the class, the level of the sound, the neatness of the recordings, the speed of the speech and the level of the topic, also the passages, the vocabularies and the sentences should be familiar to them.

13- The present study arrives at some rules that should be regarded in learning and understanding the listening lesson of a foreign language such as loud reading of the listening topic by the teacher or recordings, the excitement and the attractiveness of the teacher's speech and style, the perfect pronunciation of the language which decreases the mistakes by the students, using some factors by the teacher for simplifying
the difficulties like movements, signals, gestures, translation where necessary.

14- The present study advises that the teacher should assess the listening course by objective tests depending on the following measurements. First the structures of the test have to suit the students’ level. Second, it should cover 70% of the syllabus. Third it must be easy and comprehensible for the students. Finally it should consist of different types of skills and activities.

15- The research recommends that the English Department should establish a library at the department containing the new textbooks and cassettes in listening in order to encourage the students for self-study.

16- The present research recommends that the teaching methods have their own effect on learning and developing the listening skills, therefore, the teacher has to choose and prepare the best and the suitable teaching listening methods which can achieve the course objectives
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Listening skill is one of the important skills in learning English as a foreign language and the Yemeni learners are facing many problems in learning this skill which are connected with the teaching methods and techniques, the syllabus designing and the use of the old technologies in teaching listening. So the present study suggests the following solutions for these problems as follows:

1. Designing a program for teaching and developing listening skills in private or general courses for the university stage learners.

2. Selecting the best methods and techniques for teaching this skill, which may have effect on the student’s ability for obtaining more knowledge in listening and other skills.

3. Preparing a listening syllabus that is suitable for the students’ level and needs and which may enable them to do enough practice and role participating.

4. Constructing objective tests to measure listening skill at the university stage and realize the students’ performance in these tests.
5. Continuing study and research for the recent techniques and technologies of teaching listening skills.

6. Providing the colleges with language laboratories and training the students to listen to the correct pronunciations in the laboratories.

7. Avoiding the students crowded classes and dividing them into small groups in order to enable them to practise-well and for effective participation in the lessons.

8. Supporting the teachers with the modern plans, techniques, guidebooks and textbooks of teaching listening skills in order to fill the gap between the previous listening teaching methods and the recent listening teaching technologies and techniques. By this way this point is fulfilled and it corresponds to the third hypothesis of the present study.

9. Guiding the students continuously for practising listening outside the classroom by listening to radio, television and other media.
10. Encouraging the students for communicative courses inside and outside the classroom in order to give them a chance to speak and listen effectively.

11. Definitely, there are many topics and problems in the field of English language teaching still to be studied and researched. Furthermore, the present study can serve as a platform for the other closely related studies as teaching English pronunciation, teaching English reading skills and teaching English listening in the secondary school that need to be investigated thoroughly.