



doi: <https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcrar.2019.709.003>

## **An Investigation in to the Practice of Teaching Listening Skill in Relation to Newly Designed Course: Gurumo Chachole Secondary School in Focus**

**Godana Menta Misebo\***

*Department of English Language and Literature, Wolaita Sodo University, Sodo, Ethiopia*

*\*Corresponding author*

### **Abstract**

In this study an attempt was made to investigate the classroom listening comprehension teaching practices of Grade 10 teachers in relation to the new course book. The required data for the study were collected using content analysis, questionnaires and classroom observation. The contents of all the fourteen listening sections of the course book were analyzed using a checklist. Twelve Grade 10 English teachers from Gurumu Secondary Schools completed the questionnaire. To cross check the information given by the teachers, a similar questionnaire was administered to 100 students, and ninety-two responded to the items fully. Among the twelve subject teachers six randomly taken teachers were observed (each four times) to see how they actually presented the listening lessons. The findings of the content analysis and the teachers' profile were used as background information for the further analysis of the findings of the study. Then, using frequency and percentage, descriptive analysis was employed to analyze the responses given to each item in the questionnaires and the findings of the classroom observation. The analysis revealed that there has been a mismatch between the teaching practices implemented by the teachers and the pedagogical procedures favored by the course designers for teaching the listening sections of the new course book. Though the teachers claimed that they have been using the Teacher's Book, the students' responses and the classroom observation results indicated lack of mismatch between what actually happened in the listening classes and what has been proposed in the Teacher's Book. Accordingly, lack of parallel awareness-raising in-service training with the syllabus revision and the introduction of the new course books, essential equipment for presenting the listening lessons, and motivation and commitment on the part of the teachers appeared to be the major causes for the teachers' failure to execute the suggested teaching approach and procedures. Finally, it has been recommended that in order to develop teachers' awareness of the newly introduced communicative language teaching approach, officials at the Ministry of Education, school administrators, department heads and the teachers themselves should take responsibilities to organize practice-based in-service professional development programmes. Besides, school libraries and audiovisual centers should be equipped with current reference materials on language teaching methodology and equipment that are useful for teaching listening comprehension.

### **Article Info**

*Accepted: 04 August 2019*

*Available Online: 20 September 2019*

### **Keywords**

Listening comprehension, Listening lesson content, Pre-teaching preparation and Teaching practices

### **Introduction**

Putting a new curriculum in place does not necessarily mean that a change in classroom behavior will occur.

This is because "innovation in the language teaching classrooms is often hindered by the lack of explicit illustration of good practice" (Haregewoin, 2012). The fact that language plays a key role in any aspect of life is

unquestionable, and without it, the world perhaps would not have been what is now.

Normally, behind innovations in syllabuses and teaching materials, there is an underlying desire for change in the teaching practices. The syllabus designers and materials writers expect, indeed assume that the 'new' ideas they present will have to be adapted by the teachers before they are used in particular teaching-learning situations. But, if the innovative process is not facilitated by in-service teacher training, the innovations by themselves cannot effect the desired changes in the classroom practices. Teachers need to be helped "to explore the implications that the innovations can bring to their previously-established classroom routines and behavior, and thus adapt them to their particular circumstances" (Palmer 2016: 166). Otherwise, even experienced teachers may face problems with well-established teaching styles, and perceptions of what is or is not possible in their classrooms when presented with 'new' ideas. In connection with this, Nunan (2014) explains that classroom teaching-learning experiences are more important than statements of intent in determining language-learning outcomes. Nunan's view is substantiated by Widdowson (2000: 129) who comments:

Changes in a syllabus as such need have no effect on learning whatever. They will only do so if they inspire the teacher to introduce methodological innovations in the classroom, which are consistent in some way with the conceptions of content and principles of ordering proposed in the new syllabuses.

Allwright and Bailey (2018: XV) also maintain the same idea and say:

No matter how much intellectual energy is put into the invention of new methods (or of new approaches to syllabus design and so on), what really matters is what happens when teachers and learners get together in the classroom.

These views imply that what teachers actually do in their classes plays a decisive role in the successfulness of a language-teaching programme. If teachers do not develop the right conceptions of the 'new' ideas in the syllabuses, they may not be able to introduce the required changes into their classrooms. In other words they may not execute the specified contents in line with the teaching procedures suggested. Then there could be a mismatch between what is planned and what is actually

done. Nunan (2014), for example, discusses such a frequent mismatch between the planned curriculum and the implemented curriculum (i.e. what actually occurs in the language classroom). Students thus may remain lacking the intended training in the language-teaching programme.

### **Issue of the Study**

Listening comprehension is a fundamental language skill in which students need to gain adequate proficiency. It allows them to understand the speech they hear and take part in any form of spoken communication successfully. It is also a critical means of language learning (Vandergrift, 2001; Rost, 2001).

In an educational setting where a foreign language serves as a medium of instruction, as is the case in Gurumo Chachole Secondary School, the role of listening comprehension skill is more significant than in the context where a native language is used.

This is because the classroom culture dictates the daily teaching-learning tasks to be achieved largely through talking and listening. As a result, effective listening becomes one of the determinants of the students' success or failure (Taron and Yule, 2017). Particularly, at the secondary level of learning, the ability to listen effectively is a necessity. At this level, students are expected to listen and understand different types of lectures, discussions, presentations, seminars and other academic spoken discourses. In addition, the academic tasks at the secondary level demand that students should be able to take important notes to produce summaries, reports, and other academic writing, and for their further studies.

However, when most students of Gurumu Chakole secondary school come to schools, their abilities to listen to lectures and take meaningful notes seem to be inadequate. For instance, the researcher of this study, working as an English instructor in a private college, has clearly observed this problem. Many students appear to be strange for listening and note-taking practices. So, the inspiration for the study arose mainly from the recognition of the problem.

In principle, students should develop these vital academic listening skills while they are at schools. They should be provided with varied listening comprehension practices and trained to employ effective listening strategies (Ur, 1984, Richards 1985, Harmer 2001, Vandergrift, 2001).

Local research findings also reinforce this idea. Abiy (1990), while studying communicative needs of secondary school students, noted that listening comprehension was a highly needed skill by the students. Berhanu (2003) and Mulugeta (2015), who studied listener strategies in collaborative discourse and motivation in listening classes respectively, have stressed the need for providing students with appropriate listening comprehension practices.

Moreover, the English language syllabuses have been revised with the intention of improving the learners' communicative abilities. On the basis of the revised syllabuses, new English courses were designed. Course books incorporating listening components were prepared and have been in use in all schools across the nation for the last six years.

The course writers claim that the newly designed English courses are more student oriented and communicative than their predecessors. The writers further explain that the Senior Secondary English Course is particularly designed to meet the requirements of the syllabus and to prepare the students for entrance into tertiary level institutions. The course employs a text-based integrative approach for English language teaching.

According to the writers, every opportunity has been taken to involve the students in meaningful and realistic communicative activities. It is also stated in the Teacher's Book that the course mainly aims to consolidate the work done up to that grade in developing the students' English language skills and to develop the study skills required for successful learning at schools. Above all, the listening comprehension activities are intended to train the students to listen efficiently to a variety of extended English speech. The listening exercises focus on developing the learners' academic listening skills such as prediction, listening for specific information, for details, for a general idea, inferring and note-taking skills. Nevertheless, the students' listening and note-taking abilities still seem to have fallen short of the expectation. And, this is likely to lead to the assumption that the innovations in the syllabuses and teaching materials do not effect the necessary methodological changes into the classroom teaching practices. There has also been a claim that most Ethiopian English teachers focus on the structure of the language and tend to implement the traditional methods instead of adapting the new approaches and procedures for teaching English. Pedagogical procedures that English language teachers should follow to teach the

listening sections are also suggested (Teacher's Book, Grade 10).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge no local studies have been carried out to investigate the actual teaching practices of listening in light of the listening materials and the pedagogical procedures incorporated in the new communicatively oriented course books. Whereas, such a study can be worthwhile to find out if the innovations bring the intended changes in the actual teaching practices for the attainment of the stated instructional objectives. In other words, a classroom research like this will be helpful to investigate whether the planned language-teaching programme has been put into practice accordingly. This study, therefore, attempts to investigate the actual teaching practices of listening in Grade 10 in relation to the introduction of the new course book.

The study tries to explore whether Grade 10 English teachers apply the teaching materials and the procedures prescribed for teaching listening comprehension.

In line with this, the study attempts to address the following specific questions:

1. Do teachers teach listening comprehension using the new course book?
2. If so, do they implement the teaching procedures proposed for teaching the listening lessons?
3. To what extent do teachers find the suggested procedures suitable to their classes?
4. What kind of pre-teaching preparation and supports do teachers provide to make the listening lessons more suitable to their students?

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Design of the study**

This research followed a descriptive research approach to depict people, situations, events, and conditions as they currently existed Mertler, Craig, and Charles (2005); Shields, Patricia, and Rangarajan (2013). The study is more qualitative in nature, but frequencies and percentages were used for quantitative parts. Different arguments put forward showed that descriptive research studies are designed to obtain pertinent data and, whenever possible, to draw valid general conclusions from the facts discovered. In this regard, percent and frequency counting was employed for the quantitative analysis, where as the data collected through interview,

video-recording, focus group discussion, observation results, and all open-ended data were analyzed qualitatively.

### **Participants and sampling technique**

The subjects of the study were school principals, English teachers, parents, grade 10 students, Wereda education officers, and supervisors from the selected school of Wolaita zone enrolled in 2018 academic year. The teachers' profile showed that all the subject teachers have got their BA degree in English; one also has MA in TEFL. They have stayed in the teaching profession for more than twenty years, out of which they taught English at the secondary level for a minimum of fifteen years. Particularly, they have been teaching the new Secondary English course for Grade 10 for the last two to six years.

However, the teachers' responses proved that they have not been given any considerable in-service training since they have left the universities with their degrees. Even when the English syllabuses were revised and the new course books were put into practice, no further strategies were implemented to explain the changes to the teachers and to train them in new techniques. So far, only a one week awareness raising workshop was organized for some representative teachers from each school. But no one could deny that teachers must have both subject knowledge and professional education/training for effective teaching to take place.

In each class, there were about 75-80 students, which could be taken as a very large class size. It is suggested that for descriptive studies, a common recommendation is to sample approximately 10-20% of the respondents or top achievers of the respondents Barry (2012).

In this regard, Twelve English teachers and ninety-two students of Grade 10 responded to the required data. 32 parent-teacher association members, 4 school principals, 16 woreda education officials, 16 supervisors and 40 focus group discussants were selected using availability sampling from the Gurumu Chakole Secondary School.

According to Creswell (2012: 145), "In availability sampling (i.e., the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient, and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study." In the other way, Gurumu Chakole Secondary School was purposefully selected as representative research setting (Smail Benmoussat, 2018).

### **Data collection tools**

So as to collect the required data for the study, three types of instruments: content analysis, questionnaire and classroom observation were used. Researchers such as Cohen and Manion (1994) and Seliger and Shohamy (1989) have proven these instruments to be more productive in generating information on language teaching-learning practices. First, questionnaire was prepared in English and translated into mother tongues, which are the languages of students and their parents in the study areas. Questionnaire is a popular means of collecting all kinds of data in research (Han, 2010; Mertler *et al.*, (2005). Koul (2005) further argued that questionnaire is widely used in educational research to obtain information about certain conditions and practices, and to inquire into opinions and attitudes of an individual or a group. To this end, both closed-ended and open ended questions in a Likert scale and YES/NO questionnaire items were used to gather information from the participants. The second data collection tool was interview to obtain deeper information, and it was employed to gather information from school principals, students' parents, English teachers, Wereda education officers and supervisors of the sample schools. In this case, semi-structured interview questions were employed to elicit the feelings of all interviewees who were participated in process of interviewing. In this regard, items translated into mother tongue were administered to parents and those in English were administered to principals, English teachers, Wereda education officers, and supervisors. Focus Group

Discussion (FGD) was also employed so as to depict students' perceptions and opinions about the EFL/ESL teaching learning process freely. Though the suggested size of focus group discussants varies, in this research, a minimum of eight (8) to twelve (12) students were participated. Focus group can reveal a wealth of detailed information and deep insight and allow students to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers. Video-recording was also used to support the data (Michale *et al.*, 2001).

### **Ethical issues and procedures**

In taking into account aforementioned information gathering tools, all possible means were used to communicate with different respondents in the selected school so as to get valid and reliable data. In this regard, positive and cooperative environment were created in the first round contact with all school principals and

adjustments were made to achieve getting actual data from desired participants-teachers, students, parents, principals, Wereda education officers and supervisors. Next, with the adjusted time interval, questionnaire was distributed to students; interview was held with parents, English teachers, principals, Wereda education officers and supervisors; focus group discussion was carried out with selected students. They all were informed about the confidentiality of data they had provided.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Contents analysis of the listening components**

The new Secondary English Course for Grade 10 incorporates fourteen Listening Sections in the fourteen units of the two course books seven sections in Book 1 and the rest seven sections in Book 2. These listening sections are organized based on topic-related texts. In the fourteen Listening Sections, twelve listening comprehension and seven dictation, altogether nineteen exercises are incorporated. And, for each of these exercises, the Teacher's Book provides a separate text, which is related to the unit topic. For instance, in Book 1, Unit One deals with 'People and Customs' as a topic. The two listening exercises are also based on two texts entitled "The Fire Walking Ceremony" and "Jumping the Bulls" both discussing cultural practices in the Fiji Islands and in Ethiopia respectively.

Listening texts on such related topics, according to Morley (1991), will help the students to be more familiar with the content of the unit. They are also used to recycle and reinforce the assimilation of vocabulary items and grammatical structures introduced earlier to the students. Moreover, though the students have opportunities to practice listening as part of the oral-communication activities, such specific texts would allow the teacher to handle listening as an important and separate component of the course.

This in turn increases the learners' awareness of the important role of listening in their learning (Vandergrift, 1999). In addition, it implies that listening has been given a considerable attention in the newly designed English courses.

Concerning the text types, almost all are specially constructed passages for loud-reading presentation. They appear to be more formal and academic in nature. As pointed out by the writers, this has been done purposefully to provide the learners with more practice

that enable them to develop the academic functions and study skills needed for the secondary level. In fact, in three of the listening sections, attempts have been made to simulate real-life, extended-listening situations. A two part radio broadcast and a traditional African story (in Book 2, Units One and Two) are used as texts for the listening activities. But, they have still been designed for loud-reading practice. Using audio-recording/radio broadcast is suggested as alternative input sources, whereas the course package does not consist of any type of recording. Thus, teachers may find it difficult to expose their students to recorded materials as an alternative source of language input. Based on those topic-related texts, varied listening comprehension and dictation activities are developed. In the listening comprehension activities, students are required to understand and respond to the presentation as a whole, and/or to extract information as in most of the sections. Each listening comprehension activity contains questions on the listening text, either to be asked by the teacher orally or written in the student's Books. The written question formats include multiple-choice, blank-filling, table and diagram completion, free response and sentence completion. Controlled and guided note-taking practices also form part of the listening activities.

The listening activities are intended to train the learners to employ various meta-cognitive and cognitive listening strategies, such as making predictions, guessing words from the context, inferring, asking for clarification and repetition, compensation, utilizing their prior knowledge, and so on. The types of the listening activities and the strategies to be used seem to be in line with the taxonomies provided by recent ELT writers mentioned in the preceding chapter. In order to make the listening activities less difficult, visual supports such as tables and pictures are included in five of the listening sections.

Moreover, the listening sections comprise seven dictation activities, which are also topic-based. They involve listening and writing, and they can be taken as good examples of how two important skills can be developed in an integrated way. The dictation activities are used to provide opportunities for the students to practice and develop a range of sub-skills, like transposing speech into writing, handwriting, punctuation, layout, paragraphing, spelling and capitalization. Like the texts for the comprehension activities, the passages for the dictation exercises are used to recycle and reinforce the lesson contents and language elements discussed in the other sections of the units.

### **The use and usefulness of the teacher's book for teaching the listening lessons**

The seven items in the second section of the teachers' questionnaire were devised to elicit information about the use and usefulness of the Teacher's book for presenting the listening lessons. The results obtained from the teachers' responses are indicated in Table 1.

Item 1 was intended to find out whether teachers taught the listening sections incorporated in the English course book for Grade 10. All the twelve teachers reported that they have been teaching the listening lessons. Similarly, focus group and classroom observation report shows 88 (95.7%) of the students were in support of their teachers' statements. But as to the extent to which teachers taught the listening lessons, there appeared to be a contradiction between the teachers' and students' responses. As can be seen from Table 1 almost all the teachers, (i.e. 11 teachers) claimed that they always or usually taught the listening lessons included in the course book. However, a large proportion of the students, i.e. 44 (50%) and 23 (26.1%) disclosed that their teachers taught them the listening lessons sometimes and rarely respectively.

Moreover, responding to the open-ended item 8, which asked the teachers to comment further on the teaching of the listening lessons, 8 of the teachers, noted that most students did not seem interested in learning listening. 5 teachers also mentioned that the students did not have experience in carrying out listening activities.

On the other hand, it can be seen from the students' argument that all the students believed that learning the listening lessons is important. Responding to interviews forwarded, all of the students said that learning the listening lessons is 'very important', while the rest few students indicated 'quite important' and 'important' respectively. Besides, during the classroom observation, most of the students were seen making attempts to listen attentively and elicit the required information in order to accomplish the listening exercises. They were also seen participating actively in the post-listening production of answers for the comprehension questions.

The students' responses suggest that the teachers teach the listening sections whenever they feel the lessons are interesting, or may be as a time filling activities. This in turn leads to the idea that teachers are reluctant to teach listening comprehension as an element of the language teaching process. Regarding item 3 which referred to the

usefulness of the Teacher's Book for teaching the listening lessons, 6 of the teachers stated that it is 'very useful', 4 teachers indicated 'quite useful', while the remaining 2 teachers said 'useful'. The teachers were also asked if they followed the pedagogical procedures suggested in the Teacher's Book (item 4). 11 of them reported that they followed the suggested procedures when they presented the listening lessons. In answering item 5, which was the extension of item 4, 8 teachers declared that they always or usually applied the suggested teaching procedures, while the rest 4 teachers sometimes or rarely used them. This shows that though all the teachers claimed that the Teacher's Book is important to teach the listening lessons, some of them did not employ the prescribed procedures in most of their listening sessions.

Moreover, as can be read from observation and interview results, teachers stated that the suggested procedures were suitable to teach the listening lessons, while few teachers were to the contrary. Here, again, the responses of the four teachers who said the procedures were not suitable, appeared to be in contradiction with what they responded to item 3. There, all the teachers reported that the Teacher's Book is useful for presenting the listening lessons. When it comes to the actual teaching practices, the classroom observation revealed that, mostly teachers were focusing on making the students answer comprehension questions. They normally asked the students to read or copy the questions. Then they read the text three times loudly. The students listened to the text and wrote down the answers for the comprehension questions. Finally, the teachers read out or wrote the answers on the blackboard for the students to make corrections. As pointed out by Sheerin (1987) and Holmes (2001) this is a conventional listening comprehension lesson. It simply adds another text to the learners' experience but contributes little to improve the effectiveness of their listening.

The procedures suggested in the Teacher's Book seem to correspond with the three phases of teaching listening identified by Underwood (1989) and Yagang (1993). But, even those teachers who agreed that the procedures were suitable for their classes were not seen implementing them in their actual classes when they taught listening. They tended to apply their own experiences and intuitions already developed from the old ENE text books instead of adapting the prescribed procedures in the new course book.

**Table.1** Teachers' responses concerning the use and usefulness of the teacher's book

No	Questionnaire Item	Responses in		
			No.	%
1	Do you teach the listening sections presented in the course book?	Yes	12	100
		No	-	-
		Total	12	100
2	How often do you teach the listening sections?	Always	3	25
		Usually	8	66.7
		Sometimes	1	8.3
		Rarely	-	-
		Total	12	100
3	How useful have you found the Teacher's Book to teach the listening sections?	Very useful	6	50
		Quite useful	4	33.3
		Useful	2	16.7
		Less useful	-	-
		Total	12	100
4	Do you follow the suggested procedures for presenting the listening lessons?	Yes	11	91.7
		No	1	8.3
		Total	12	100
5	If you follow the suggested procedures, how often do you follow them?	Always	3	27.3%
		Usually	2	18.2
		Sometimes	5	45.5
		Rarely	1	9.1
		Total	12	100
6	Do you think the suggested procedures are suitable for presenting the listening lessons in your particular classes?	Yes	8	66.7
		No	4	33.3
		Total	12	100
7	If you say the suggested procedures are suitable, to what extent are they suitable?	Very suitable	2	25
		Quite suitable	5	62.5
		Suitable	1	12.5
		Less suitable	-	-
		Total	8	100

**Table.2** Students’ responses about learning the listening lessons

No	Questionnaire Item	Responses in		
			No.	%
1	Does your teacher teach you the listening lessons included in your course book?	Yes	88	95.7
		No	4	4.3
		Total	92	100
2	If your teacher teaches you the listening lessons, how often does s/he do this?	Always	-	-
		Usually	21	23.9
		Sometimes	44	50
		Rarely	23	26.1
		Total	88	100
3	Do you believe that learning the listening lessons is important?	Yes	92	100
		No	-	-
		Total	92	100
4	If you believe that it is important to learn the listening lessons, to what extent is it important?	Very important	68	73.9
		Quite important	14	15.2
		Important	10	10.9
6	Does your teacher use audio-visual support to make the listening activities less difficult?	Yes	5	5.4
		No	87	94.6
		Total	92	100

The data implies that the teachers may not have the 'right' conceptions of the new ideas introduced in the teaching materials. They thought that they were using the Teacher’s Book and following the suggested procedures. But their teaching procedures seemed to be of traditional ones.

**Teaching practices in a listening session**

Listening teaching practices may vary at the pre-, while- and post-phases of a session. The same teaching practices can also be used at different stages. When we observe the data in the table 2, about 88 (95.7%) students argued that their teachers teach listening lessons included in their text book, while few respondents 4 (4.3%)

replied no and in this regard, about 21 (23.9%) respondent students believed their teachers to apply teaching listening usually, and 44 (50%) subjects relied for sometimes, few respondents 23 (26.1%) replied for the rare case. The teachers were also asked whether they set purposes for each listening activity so as to help the learners relate what they are doing in the lesson to things that happen in real life - outside the classroom. The responses to item 3 again showed that most of the teachers, (i.e. all of them) claimed that they always believe that listening is very important.

In addition, the classroom observation revealed that out of the twenty-four observed listening sessions, teachers were seen giving introduction to the listening texts and



activities only in 10 (41.7%) sessions. During the other sessions, they simply read out or wrote the title of the listening text on the blackboard, and then asked their students to read through the questions, tables, note outlines, etc. This means, though the teachers claimed that they always or usually gave brief introduction, the students' responses and the classroom observations showed that the practice was not utilized in the actual lessons as required.

Making the listening activity purposeful, as pointed out by Underwood (1989), should be one of the objectives of English language teachers. It makes the listeners feel that they would benefit something helpful to develop their abilities to listen effectively. But, the students' responses and the findings of the classroom observation indicated that the teachers explained the purpose(s) of the listening tasks sometimes or rarely. So, it appears that students have not been provided with adequate opportunities that would allow them to see the role of the listening lessons in developing their listening skills. This in turn may make the students lose interest in learning listening.

Though ELT scholars (e.g. Rost 1990, Harmer 2001) express that providing clear instruction enables students to handle the listening tasks easily, the practice seems missing in the actual listening classes of Grade 11. Because, the information obtained from the students and the classroom observation appeared to refute what the teachers claimed. At this point, the information elicited from the teachers seems to match with the students' responses and the results of the classroom observation. The teachers made better attempt to help the students exploit meaning of 'key' terms. This would enable the students to understand the listening text but it may not be enough to listen and comprehend the message well. Therefore, as can be inferred from the data, it is possible to conclude that there seems to be a gap between what is suggested in the Teacher's Book, as well as in the literature and what teachers actually practice in their listening classes.

It is concluded that an emphasis on listening skills and application of various listening strategies will help students to capitalize on the language input they receive. It also enables them to achieve success in their language learning and academic careers where a foreign language functions as a medium of instruction. However, enabling learners to develop these essential language skills demands not only revising syllabuses and designing new courses but also implementing suitable teaching methods/practices in the actual listening classes.

Listening skills require effective teaching that involves adequate pre-teaching preparation, and provision of all the necessary supports during the actual lesson presentation. Thus, this study was carried out with a view to investigating the actual listening lessons presentations in Grade 10 in relation to the newly designed course which has been claimed to be more communicative and student oriented.

The central intent of the study was to find out whether there is a match/mismatch between the English teachers' listening teaching practices and the prescribed pedagogical procedures in the Teacher's Book. The contents of the listening lessons were analyzed using a checklist adapted based on current views on listening texts and activities. Twelve English teachers and ninety-two students of Grade 10 responded to questionnaires. The researcher also collected data regarding the actual teaching practices through personal observation. The analysis and discussions of the findings are presented in the Use and Usefulness of the Teacher's Book, Teachers' Pre-teaching Preparation and Provision of Supports, and the Listening Teaching Practices at the pre-, while-, and post-listening stages. On the basis of the results obtained from the content analysis, the responses to the questionnaires and the classroom observation, the following conclusions have been drawn.

The content analysis of the listening lessons implies that the listening texts and activities are in line with the current ELT literature on listening materials and teaching methods. They appear to have been designed within the framework of communicative language teaching.

Almost all the listening texts are passages designed for loud reading (i.e. live listening). They are also topic related in order to make the students more familiar to the unit content and language elements introduced in the other sections. As they are specially constructed formal and academic texts they help the learners exploit various academic functions of the language. Moreover, the listening exercises mainly focus on developing study skills

(e.g. 'listening and understanding', 'listening and eliciting the message', note-taking and summarizing) needed by the students for successful learning at schools, and at the tertiary level. Especially, the practices that constitute the suggested procedures for teaching the listening sections in the Teacher's Book correspond to the well identified three stages in teaching listening by recent ELT scholars. The teachers have been told what

they should do at the pre-, while- and post listening phases. They are also encouraged to make the necessary changes and adaptations in order to present the lessons 'appropriately' in their particular teaching situations. Nevertheless, the extent to which the listening texts, activities and the suggested procedures are adequate and relevant enough needs further investigation.

The content analysis and the teachers' responses indicated that the Teacher's Book is vital for teaching the listening lessons. It provides the pedagogical procedures, further advice on how to implement the listening lessons, the listening texts and possible answers for the listening exercises.

Most of the teachers also thought that they usually teach the listening sections following the suggested procedures in the Teacher's Book.

Nevertheless, the data analyzed from the classroom observation results and the students' responses suggested that teachers were presenting the listening lessons using their own experience and intuition developed from the old textbooks. They inclined to teach listening in traditional ways i.e. teachers read the text loudly; the students listen and answer comprehension questions, rather than executing the suggested procedures.

Especially, as far as pre-teaching preparation and provision of visual supports are concerned, the data obtained from the research sources revealed that teachers did not make any considerable effort. Though all the teachers claimed that they identified text difficulties, practiced to read the texts loudly and made essential notes, they were not seen presenting the lessons accordingly.

Among the ten pre-listening practices that Grade 10 teachers were expected to carry out, they were found attempting to practice the three: drawing the students' attention to some 'key' lexical items used in the text, making the students read through and copy the questions, tables, note outlines, etc. before listening. In the other cases, the teachers appeared to be reluctant. For example, they claimed that they always/usually introduced the listening text and activities, set purpose for each activity and made the instruction clear to their students. But the analysis of the students' responses and the findings of the classroom observation disproved their claim. It seemed obvious that the practices were employed rarely or never.

In the same way, the while-listening lesson presentation was dominated by traditional practices. The data elicited

from the subjects showed that the teachers read the texts loudly and made the students listen and write down answers to the comprehension questions. It is possible to conclude that teachers were making the students focus on the content rather than practicing the intended listening skills such as listening for gist, listening for main points, word guessing, note-taking, and so on.

With regard to the post-listening phase, the data again indicated that teachers mostly failed to engage their students in the practices. They especially left aside the pair/group activities, which allow the students to compare, complete and discuss their work on the listening activities with friends. As mentioned previously, such activities are crucial for integrating the listening lessons with speaking and enhancing the learner's communicative skills. The analyzed data, however, disclosed that pair and group post-listening activities were never employed by the teachers. As it happened in the pre-, and while-listening stages, teachers dominantly used a sort of 'teacher talk' and 'students listen and answer' approach. The teachers' loud reading was immediately followed by the production of possible answers to the exercises usually by the teachers themselves or by individual students. This process of giving correction was considered by the teachers, as well as the students, as provision of 'appropriate' feed-back.

This again suggested that the teachers did not conceptualize the approach and procedures proposed by the course writers properly.

In general, from the whole analysis of the collected data it is possible to conclude that Grade 10 English teachers tend to test the listening abilities of the students, instead of teaching listening skills by adapting the communicative approach and procedures that have been suggested in the new syllabus and course book. The teachers thought that they have been implementing the teaching techniques provided in the course book. But what actually happened in their listening classes appeared to disregard their thought and claim. As a result, there was a gap or mismatch between the teachers' actual listening teaching practices and the pedagogical procedures suggested in the Teacher's Book, as well as in the current ELT literature.

Hence, it can be concluded that, though the syllabus has been revised with a new course book, including listening components, it cannot effect methodological changes in the actual lessons presentation. Teachers insist on presenting listening through traditional ways. This might

be due to the reason that the innovative process was not accompanied by in-service teacher development programmes as required.

The researcher of the present study feels that there could be likely conditions that contribute to the teacher's failure to execute the innovations made in the syllabus and course book. These are lack of:

1. Awareness and sensitization that would enable the teachers to explore the newly introduced ideas by the syllabus designers and materials writers.
2. Essential equipment (e.g. audiovisual recordings, tape recorders) that would allow the teachers to present the language input in different contexts).
3. Motivation and commitment on the part of the teachers to put the innovations into practice.
4. Professional assistance and encouragement from colleagues, department heads and school administrators (e.g. organizing experience sharing programmes).

These and other similar problems around the schools might hinder the teachers to make a paradigm shift from their traditionally established practices to the communicative language teaching procedures proposed by the writers of the course book.

Thus, based on the above conclusions the researcher would like to forward the following recommendations: Syllabuses might be revised and introduced with course books into an educational system by the Ministry of Education with little or no consultation with the ultimate users, the teachers and the students. But if the theory underlying the method represented in the textbooks is something that brings innovations to the users, problems can arise, like in our present case. Therefore, to help teachers explore the innovations and overcome the problems, further in-service teacher development programmes should be organized. The Ministry officials should organize practice based workshops, seminars and in-service training related to how to teach listening skills in line with the pedagogical approach and procedures suggested in the revised syllabuses and course books. The Ministry of Education should also make effort to provide resource centers, for example internet service, newsletters, journals, forums, etc. that diffuse information about research and teaching materials. These forms of dissemination are important for keeping teachers informed about developments and can frequently lead the teachers to new ideas subsequently being developed. In addition, the school libraries should be equipped with alternative teaching materials and

current reference books on language teaching methodology. Moreover, the provision of essential equipment such as TV set, tape recorders, cassettes etc. is the point that must receive considerable attention by the Ministry of Education, by school administrators.

## References

- Abiy Yizgaw. (1990). The Communicative Needs of the High Schools in Addis Ababa. Unpublished MA Thesis. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Allwright, D. and K. M. Bailey. (2018). Focus on Language Classroom: An Introduction of Classroom Research for Language Teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barry, W. J (2012) Challenging the Status Quo Meaning of Educational Quality: Introducing Transformational Quality (TQ) Theory Educational Journal of Living Theories, 4, 1-29.
- Berhanu Bogale (2003). Listener Strategies in Collaborative Discourse of AAU 4th Year Students. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Cohen, L. and L. Manion. (1994). Research Methods in Education. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Croon Helm.
- Creswell, J. W, and Clark, P (2007) Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research Thousand Oaks: CA:Sage.
- Han, L (2010) The advantages and the problems of multimedia-aided English reading instruction Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1, 320-323.
- Haregewoin Fantahun (2012). An Investigation Of Classroom Listening Comprehension Teaching Practices in Relation to the New English Course books: Grade 11 In Focus. AAU:AAUPP.
- Harmer, J. (2001). The Practice of English Language Teaching. (3rd ed.) Essex: Longman.
- Holmes, N. (2001). The Role of the Teacher and the Learners in the Development of Strategies and Sub-skills to Facilitate and Enhance Listening Comprehension. Developing Teachers Com. (A:/Nicola ~1).
- Koul, L (2005) Methodology of Educational Research (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD.
- Mertler, M, Craig A, and Charles. C (2005) Introduction to Educational Research Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Michale, B, Jane, F Michelle, T & Kate R (2001) Focus Group in Social Research London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Morley, J. (1991). Listening Comprehension in Second/Foreign Language Instruction. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.). Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (2nd ed.) Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- Mulugeta Teka. (2015). Motivation in Listening Classes of College English at Addis Ababa University. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Nunan, D. (2014). The Learner-centered Curriculum. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Palmer, C. (2016). Innovations and the Experienced Teacher. *ELT Journal*, Vol. 47/2:166- 171.
- Richards, J. C. (1985). The Context of Language Teaching. Cambridge: CUP.
- Rost, M. (1990). Listening in Language Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rost, M. (2001). Listening. In R. Carter and D. Nunan (eds.). The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Cambridge: CUP.
- Sheerin, S. (1987). Listening Comprehension: Teaching or Testing. *ELT Journal*, Vol. 41/2: 126-31.
- Seligher, H. and E. Shohamy. (1989). Second Language Research Methods. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shields, Patricia, and Rangarajan, N (2013) A playbook for Research methods: Integrating Conceptual Framework and Project Management Skillwater, OK: New Forums Press.
- Smail Benmoussat, Nabil Djawad Benmoussat (2018) The Teach-to-the-Test Approach: Doing Harm to the Lifelong Educational Paradigm of Algerian EFL Learners *English Language and Literature*, 3(1), 1-6.
- Tarone, E. and G. Yule. (2017). Focus on the Language Learner. Oxford: OUP.
- Underwood, M. (1989). Teaching Listening. London: Longman.
- Ur, P. (1984). Teaching Listening Comprehension. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vandergrift, L. (2001). Facilitating Second Language Listening Comprehension: Acquiring Successful Strategies. *ELT Journal*, Vol. 53/3: 168-75.
- Vandergrift. (1999). Facilitating Second Language Listening Comprehension: Acquiring Successful Strategies. *ELT Journal*, Vol. 53/3: 168-75.
- Widdowson, H. G. (2000). Aspects of Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yagang, F. (1994). Listening: Problems and Solutions. In Thomas Kral (ed.). Teacher Development: Making the Right Move. Washington, D.C.; English Language Programs Division United States Information Agency.

**How to cite this article:**

Godana Menta Misebo. 2019. An Investigation in to the Practice of Teaching Listening Skill in Relation to Newly Designed Course: Gurumo Chachole Secondary School in Focus. *Int.J.Curr.Res.Aca.Rev.* 7(9), 11-22.

**doi:** <https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcrar.2019.709.003>