

**Review**

# Exploring Challenges Teachers face in Practicing Teaching Listening Skills: Preparatory School EFL Teachers in Focus

**Minwuyelet Andualem Desta**

Debre Tabor University, College of Social Science and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature

Lecturer, in Department of English Language and Literature, Debre Tabor University, Ethiopia.

Email: minwuye2008@gmail.com. Tel: 251- 09 21 29 02 13.

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The main purpose of this study is to explore challenges teachers face in practicing teaching listening skills. In the study, qualitative research design was employed. Participants of the study were 5 teachers and 100 students at Damot secondary and preparatory school. Multiple instruments that included focus group discussion, interviews, document analysis, and observations were used to gather data. Data were analyzed qualitatively through narrative way and in an interpretative manner. The findings indicated that grade 11 EFL teachers were not teaching all listening lessons given in the text. They neglected half percent of the listening lessons given in the text book. Despite the fact that EFL teachers have known the importance of teaching the listening skills for language instructional process, they were not practicing it properly. Besides, there was a gap in teaching the listening skill is that, lack of students motivations, difficulty of the text book, large class size, shortage of time, and lack of teachers' materials and the like. Finally, it is recommended that, listening skills should be emphasized and taught equally with the other skills, the concerned bodies provide the availability of prepared materials, and the listening script /text should be avoided from the back of students' text book for its effective utilization in school.

**Key Terms:** Challenges; Practice; English Language Teaching; Practice; Listening Skill

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## INTRODUCTION

The fact that language plays a vital role in any aspect of life is unquestionable. Without language perhaps the world would not have been as it is now. In short, it is through language that the world communication and development is established. Learning international language helps people in the world at large. Since English is an international language, we are increasingly

living in a global world where the ability to communicate in English language cannot be just an added bonus rather a true necessity (Wharton, 2000 & Brown, 2001). It is because English language is becoming a language for international communication. But teaching and learning English language is not as simple as it is expected because when we teach and learn the language, we have

to teach or learn by incorporating the four language skills that are listening, speaking, reading & writing.

From those language skills, listening is by far the most important skill of language. Scholar who wrote in line with the importance of listening said that listening to a second language (L2) has been regarded as the most widely used language skills in normal daily life (Morley, 2001), (J Roost, 2001). It involves a complex process that allows us to understand and interpret spoken messages in real time by making use of variety of sources such as phonetic, semantic, pragmatic etc. (Uso Japan, Esther & Alacia Martinez Flora, 2006). Given the complexity that underlies this process of listening comprehension, it has been considered the most difficult skill to learn out of the four language skills.

In fact, research carried out over the last few decades on how this skill is learned has provided insights into why listening is traditionally regarded as an important skill in its own right (Morley, 2001). As a result of this progress, the primary of listening now a day is obvious and plays a key role in developing L2 learners. Communicative ability of language acquisition or language learning. However, Yinager, Cherie & Abdu (2006) noted that listening was forgotten skill in the past. That means, it is not specially taught since it was believed to be the first stage in a learner process of learning language items. That is first learners should learn listening, & speaking, then reading and then writing. Little attention is given for helping students in developing their listening skill.

Some researchers consider listening as a master key for successful language learning.

They argued that listening text should include items at least on a level a head of learners' present production ability, so that comprehension lead to learning (Krashen, 1988, & Rost 1990).

This modern interpretation leads to a better understanding of the real importance of listening in language learning. All in all, despite this unquestionable importance of listening skill, teachers of English language are still, giving less attention knowingly or unknowingly for this skill. From the researchers' experience, the listening lesson is inconsistently taught & most of the time it is untaught at school in particular by English language teachers. Therefore, the problems which can be obstacles of teaching listening should be identified.

Designing a good English language curriculum and offering available English language teaching materials is not as such enough to achieve the learners' proficiency. As it is known, in all grade level of primary and secondary schools, listening skill is incorporated in students' text book, enough time is allotted for this skill session in each unit the text, but it is not being put into practice appropriately (Nunan, 2002, Feyten, 1991). At high school level, where English is used as a medium of instruction, the academic environment requires teachers to prepare students to listen attentively & take notes

during lectures in the class room or in other academic settings (Long & Macian, 1994 cited in Seyoum, 2012).

There are various researchers conducted a study on listening skill at different time in different institutions; for instance, Berhanu (1993), Abdi (2005), Tesfay (2008), Semie (1989), & Seyoum, 2012). Muluken (2008) found that in his research that the practice of teaching listening is emphasized. However, as far as the knowledge of this researcher is concerned, none of the researchers addressed teachers' related problems in practicing teaching rather students' listening skill related problems. They wouldn't give any consideration to teachers' challenges in practicing teaching listening.

As Nunan (2002) said, listening is the first basic skill from those four skills of English language. However, from the researcher's experience, despite the fact that listening is the base and beginning of language acquisition, it seems still ignored in the teaching and learning process of English language at high schools by the English language teachers. Indeed the problem is serious. Since listening is one of the basic language skills, failing to teach this skill will be failing to teach English language; failing to teach the English language will be failing to teach the other subjects because English is a medium of instruction for all subjects in case of Ethiopia except Amharic language at the secondary and preparatory schools. That is why, the issue ignited the researcher to conduct this research. This research was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. Are English language teachers teaching each listening lessons given in the text?
2. How do EFL teachers' practice teaching the listening skill?
3. What are the challenges EFL teachers faces in the teaching listening skill?

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore the challenges EFL teachers face in practicing teaching the listening skill

### Specific Objectives

- To find out whether the EFL teachers are teaching listening lessons given in the text or not;
- To identify how EFL teachers are practicing teaching the listening skill;
- To find out challenges EFL teachers face in the teaching listening skill;

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

### **Research Design**

In this study, descriptive research design which applies qualitative methods of data collection (qualitative approach) and analysis was employed because it is applicable to obtain information about challenges EFL teachers face in teaching the listening skills. The major purpose of descriptive research design is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari, 2004). According to this scholar, the main characteristics of descriptive research design enable the researcher to come up with what has happened or what is happening (Ibid).

Also, descriptive design was used to conduct the study which enabled the researcher to describe events, and to define clearly teachers' problems in practicing teaching listening skill of grade eleven. And the rationally why qualitative approach was employed is that it enabled the researcher to see the issue under study from qualitative perspectives. And the nature of the problem and the research objectives invited the researcher to use this research method.

### **Population and Sampling Techniques**

In the Amhara National regional state particularly, in west Gojjam zone, there are 11 woreda. From those, Jabitehina woreda was selected purposively for its ease of accessibility of information for the researcher. There are three secondary and preparatory schools in Jabitehina woreda from which the researcher selected Damot secondary and preparatory school purposively to make the study more manageable and complete within the available time. There were five grade nine EFL teachers (four males & one female) at Damot secondary and preparatory school in this year. The total number of Grade 11 student population including EFL teachers in the selected school were 1005.

Based on this fact, five grade nine EFL teachers were taken for this study by comprehensive sampling as they are available in the school. Since a number of teachers in the school are manageable to take the sample as comprehensive. Regarding students' participation, there were 352 males and 653 females, totally 1005 students in the school in 16 sections in this year. Gay (2003) pointed out that, in a study the sample size should be selected 10-20% of the total population. Thus, Out of the total grade 9 students mentioned before, 10% that is 100 students were selected from all sections equally by considering males & females ratio through Lottery method, as they are in the same class under the same school curriculum. Because, each member of the sample had an equal chance of being selected as the study participants.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The instruments used to collect data for the study were interviews, document analysis study, classroom observation, and focus group discussions. These instruments were selected because of their suitability for gathering important data for the study. Each of these instruments is briefly described below.

#### **Interview**

To the current study, unstructured interviews was conducted by the researcher for five grade 11 EFL teachers who were teaching at Damot secondary and preparatory school. Because, unstructured interviews was more flexible to collect the data for the current study as needed. The interview questions were developed by the researcher through taking insights from the objectives of the study and literature concerning all the research questions listed out in chapter one. Moreover, the purpose of interview was to know challenges EFL teachers face in practicing of teaching listening skills. Thus, all the teachers were interviewed as well.

#### **Document Analysis**

As to Kahn (1993) and Kumar (1996), when document analysis is used as descriptive research, current documents and issues are the foci. In the current study, in addition to the information obtained from the respondents with regard to the challenges of teachers in practicing teaching listening skills. Thus, this instrument was designed to explore challenges EFL teachers face during the practice of teaching listening skills. So, the researcher developed criterion which helps to analyze the EFL teachers' documents at all.

#### **Observation**

Observations are important tool that can be employed in descriptive research and other qualitative research types for gathering genuine and pertinent data on teachers' and students' behaviors in the actual setting (Kumar, 1996). Thus, in this study, structured observation check list which was adapted from Harmer (2001); Yagang, 1993) was conducted. In the current study, the researcher used this data gathering tool as supplementary instrument to collect the available information for the study. Accordingly, the classrooms of the teachers were observed for three days each for 40 minutes to check/ to triangulate whether what the teachers' and students' responses to the questionnaires and interview questions match what they actually did in the class room while teaching listening skills.

### Focus Group Discussions

The researcher had 3 focus group discussion group composed of 10 grade 11 students who were selected from 16 sections using random sampling to get available data about challenges of teachers while practicing teaching listening lessons. The data obtained from focus group discussion were transcribed and coded after the discussions.

### Data Collection Procedure

In the course of collecting data for the study, all the necessary procedures were followed.

First, the researcher asked permission from the school principal and explained the purpose of the study before conducting those instruments. Accordingly, after getting permission from the school principal, the researcher observed teachers how they were practicing teaching listening skill. Then after holding the teachers' class room observations, the interview was held for all grade eleven English language teachers. All the teachers were interviewed one by one. Thirdly, next to the teachers' interview, the students' focus group discussion composed of 10 grade 11 students who were selected from 16 sections was held. Here, data taken from the focus group discussion were transcribed after the discussions. Finally, in addition to the information obtained from class room observation, interview, and focus group discussion, with reference to the teachers' challenges of while practicing teaching listening skills.

### Methods of Data Analysis

For the current study, the researcher employed qualitative method (data were analyzed through qualitative approach) to see the issue under study from qualitative perspective. The analysis was made by directly quoting the respondents. This is because Patton (1990) points out that direct quotation is the source of data in qualitative research. Thus, the analysis of the data collected using the interview, document analysis and observation, and focus group discussion items were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis through using narrative form and in an interpretive manner.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the data collected from subjects to seek answers for the basic research questions raised in the statement of the problem. The primary purpose of this study was to assess challenges teachers face in practicing teaching

listening skill among grade eleven EFL teachers. Accordingly, 100 grade 11 students responded to the interviews, and focus group discussions and the 5 EFL teachers responded to the interview, document analysis, and classroom observation as a sample were assumed to be adequate for the analysis. The analysis was made in terms of the basic research questions raised in the first chapter of the study.

### Whether Teachers Were Teaching All Listening Lessons Given in the Text or Not

As it was seen from data analysis, among 5 EFL teacher respondents from the interview, 4 teachers responded that they were not practicing all listening lessons given in the students' text book properly. From here, one can suggest that all most all teachers gave a negative response. In relation to this, they said that they have not taught each listening lessons given in the text.

In this regard, teachers were also asked to remind the total listening lessons that they have already taught. Consequently, the total taught listening lessons which were taught by these teachers were 48.57% in average from the total of 28 listening lessons given in the text. This indicate that 51.43 or more than half percent of the listening lessons were untaught or neglected by English language teachers. According to the data obtained from document analysis, the total listening lessons by grade 11<sup>th</sup> English language teachers were 33.57% in average. This means, the rest 66.43% which were more than half percent of the listening lessons have already been untaught by English language teachers.

With regard to this issue, the data obtained from the students' focus group discussion also supported the above finding. Concerning to the data obtained from the students' focus group discussion, it is possible to conclude that the total teachers' taught listening lessons were 51.67% in average. In line with this, Abdu (2006) wrote on his ELT methodology module that listening was a forgotten skill in the past. That means, it was not specially taught since it was believed the first stage in a longer process of learning language items. That is, first learners should learn listening then speaking, then reading and then writing.

However, little attention was given for helping students develop their listening skill. Similarly, according to the data obtained from the above three data sources, the researcher believed that listening has still been a forgotten language skill. In spite of the fact that there was a difference between the three data that were 48.57% from the teachers' interview, 33.57% from document analysis and 51.67% from students' focus group discussion, all the data together has shown us that more than half percent of the listening lessons given in the text book have not been taught by the grade 11<sup>th</sup> English language teachers.

## Teachers Practice of Teaching the Listening Skills

In this regard, English language teachers' practice of teaching listening lessons was discussed based on the data obtained from classroom observation, teachers' interview, document analysis and focus group discussion. As it was confirmed during classroom observation teachers' interview, all five English language teachers were aware of the three stages of teaching listening that is the pre listening, while listening and the post listening. However, they were not exploiting and practicing the listening activities required in each phase of listening one by one. For example, when we come to the practice of the pre listening activities, none of the teachers has observed setting their purpose or objective of the listening lessons. As Harmer (2001) explained setting the purpose or objective of the listening lessons is very important for students to make them ready and conscious about what they are going to do in each listening stages.

Nevertheless, grade 11 English language teachers missed this important pre listening activity. Moreover, most teachers that is four from five teachers never engaged their students in pairs or group discussion on pre listening tasks which is very important in extending into speaking activities to teach language skills integrative way. During the interview session, it was identified that teachers had short comings on practicing the above pre listening activities. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that English language teachers of grade 11 were not practicing the pre listening activities fully. With regard to the while listening activities, all most all teachers did not encourage their students with regard to active involvement guessing meanings of new words from the context which is very important for students to listen and understand the listening text further.

Based on the data obtained from class room observation, teachers' interview and students' focus group discussion, the practice of teaching the while listening activities was dominated by teachers loud reading of the listening text, students tried to listen and attempt to answer listening comprehension questions and then teachers tried to give feedback for students in the form of right or wrong answers. However, according to Holmes (2001), this kind of practice of teaching listening lessons tends to testing the listening skill rather than teaching the listening skill. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that these teachers were not practicing the while listening activity properly.

In relation to the teachers' practice of post listening activities, most teachers were observed missing some important post listening activities. For example, most teachers were never direct and help their students to work in groups or pairs in every class activities. Similarly, most teachers were never allowing their students to motivate /assist group leaders who facilitated the group discussion. Concerning this, it is possible to say that all

teachers were never asking their students to summarize the main points of the whole class discussion which deals about post listening activity that integrates listening with writing. To conclude, it is possible to say that, similar to the pre listening phase, the while listening phase and the post listening phase activities were dominated by the teachers themselves rather their students.

## Challenges of Teachers in Teaching the Listening Skills

As result of this data was indicated, there are so many challenges that affect EFL teachers while practicing teaching the listening skills. In line with this, all of the grade 11 EFL teachers, and the sample grade 11 students mentioned the challenges in the practice of teaching, and learning listening skills as needed and their response were presented accordingly.

## Lack of Students Motivation and Their Poor Background

At the interview, students responded that because of the entrance exam the students were not motivated to learn listening skill. Therefore, they insisted their teachers to teach other sections which were expected to be appeared in the entrance exam. For instance, some of the interviewees responded that they didn't have enough time to learn listening skill since they were preparing for the entrance exam. Thus, they were not motivated to learn listening skill. The students emphasized that their attention is only to succeed the entrance exam, and their teachers also know about this, and hence, they did not want to learn listening skill.

In addition, during students' focus group discussion most of the participants revealed that students were not motivated to learn listening. However, they put the blame on the teachers and other concerned bodies when they presented the reasons why they were not motivated to learn listening. They stated that students were not motivated because of teachers' method of teaching and their inability to motivate students. For example, one of these interviewee said, "teachers did not motivate students at all". Students also forwarded their blame on other concerned bodies for the students not to be motivated. They stated that students were not motivated because they were not motivated by other concerned bodies. Moreover, they added that since that was a governmental school, teachers and other concerned bodies did not pay attention to the teaching and learning process.

With regard to teachers' interview, they reported that because of the entrance exam students were not motivated to learn listening skills. The students were not motivated in learning listening rather they paid attention to their entrance exam. For instance, two interviewee

stated, "The students are not motivated and they do not have the awareness about the importance of learning listening skill. They focus only to score good grades in the entrance exam". They added that the students insisted their teachers to teach them the knowledge areas like grammar since listening skills were not given in the entrance examination. "Simply the students are exam oriented". Since teaching listening skills in grade 11 preparatory classes is a little bit difficult because most of the students were not interested since they focus on entrance exam, thus, they don't pay attention to learning listening skills."

They attempted also to show why the students were not interested. For example, one of these teachers tried to show that the students' background made them not to be motivated in learning listening. Other teachers also reported that students were not motivated to learn listening skills since they didn't have experience and opportunity in pervious grades.

The above mentioned challenge which is related to students' lack of motivation may be convincing since students' lack of motivation can hinder teachers in teaching listening skills. This is consistent with Carrols(1977) and Watson's and seltzers (1984) statement which highlight some challenges that can hinder teaching listening skill including the student degree of motivation to learn and the amount of interest in the topic, ability to perceive relations among the elements of the learning and ability to focus attention on the learning.

Also, students attempted to share how their background affected their interest in learning listening skill. They revealed that they were not interested in learning listening since it was difficult for them. For example, one of these participants (students FGD, group 2) explained, "the reason why students are not interested in learning listening skills is it's difficult for them since they didn't learn listening in previous grades"

Moreover, these students stated that all of the students came from schools where Amharic was used as the only medium of instruction they were unfamiliar and strange not only for listening but also for English at all. For instance, one of these participants (FGD, group 10) tried to state that the students were not interested in learning listening skills because of their poor background. She stated, "Almost all the students came from schools where Amharic is used as the only medium of communication in the teaching and learning process and less opportunity to use and practice English language. Thus, they will be unfamiliar with listening when they join preparatory classes."

Similarly, at the interview session, the teachers replied that students' background was one of the challenges that influence the teaching listening skills in grade 11 preparatory classes. For example, one of the teachers' interviewee responded that students' background in

learning listening skills affected their interest in learning listening and made them to be strange for learning listening skill. According to the interviewee, they did not have pre-requisite experience and opportunity to learn listening skill. Thus, they will be unfamiliar with learning listening in grade 11 preparatory classes.

### **Lack of Teachers Motivation**

In line with this, the students replied that their teachers were not motivated to teach listening skill because they knew that listening wouldn't be incorporated in the entrance exam. For instance, one the student from FGD group 4 said that since teachers know that listening will not be incorporated in the entrance exam, they are not motivated to teach listening and they skip over the listening sections and focus on topics whose contents are expected to be appeared in the entrance examination. Similarly other students from FGD group 3 replied that teachers didn't have sufficient time to cover these expected Contents, hence, they skipped over listening section with the aim of covering the expected contents; "teachers focus on other sections and they order us to see the listening sections by ourselves."

Similarly, from the interview, the teachers responded that they were not motivated to teach listening skill. This is because they presented for this case is the inconvenient situation to teach listening skills. Since the students were not interested to learn listening skill because the methodology teachers used are not motivated to teach listening skill. Instead, they focus on helping students to achieve the entrance exam by working exam papers and teaching grammar sections". The other teacher from the interview replied that teachers were not motivated to teach listening skills because they were unable to challenge student's pressure thus they were enforced to fulfill student's interests; "teachers are not strong enough to resist students' pressure and they are insisted by the students to neglect teaching listening". In addition, the teachers reported that due to lack of motivation to read aloud to teach listening they didn't teach listening skill.

### **Difficulty of the Text Book**

Difficulty of the text books for implementation includes the text books' less importance for grade 11 preparatory students to achieve the entrance exam and their weakness to catch students' interest. At the interview, most students replied that they hadn't the text book and they hadn't any idea about the text book since they assumed that the text book was not important for them to achieve the entrance examination. For instance, one of the student from FGD, group 8 responded, "I don't bother whether I have the text book or not since I don't find anything which helps me in the entrance examination.

Thus, I used other supplementary books to study English." From this response, it is possible to say that students didn't see what the text book look liked and they didn't know about the content of the text book.

Also, the other respondents said that the text book didn't contain anything which helped them to achieve the entrance examination. Therefore, they were not motivated from the beginning when the teacher started teaching from the text book. Similarly, the students also responded that learning the listening lessons of the text book was boring for the students since it was taught through teachers' loud reading. They stated that they were frustrated to learn listening through teachers loud-reading if teaching and learning listening assumed to be implemented (two students from FGD group 9). They also added that they couldn't get the message from the teacher's loud-reading and this led them to thoughts of giving up the listening task and engage with other activities like side talk. They also responded that they believed that most students were not interested to learn the listening lessons. Because they gave for this case is that learning the listening lessons of the text book was boring for the students since it was taught through teacher's loud reading.

In addition, they reported that learning listening was good if they listened to a speech through plasma. For instance, from focus group discussions group 6 two students responded, "whatever the stories of the listening lessons are interesting the students will not be interested because it is boring for the students to sit for a long time to listen teachers loud-reading and to answer questions." Moreover, they reported that it was boring for them to learn listening through teachers loud-reading rather they preferred to listen to tape-record. In line with the teachers' interview, they responded that the material was not clearly designed and there were no separate lessons and texts, thus, they were unable to teach listening skills in the class room.

### **Lack of Materials**

Lack of listening teaching materials includes unavailability of the already existing materials, lack of prepared listening teaching materials and absence of audio visual materials. In line with the unavailability of the existing materials, teachers responded that the existing materials were not available. For instance, one of the teacher from the interview replied that he didn't get the teachers' guide for the text book; "It's due to text resources, for example, we don't have teachers guide for grade 11". Now the question by the researcher is "do the teachers really tried their best to get the teachers' guide to teach listening skills?"

Also, the other two interviewees responded that they hadn't any experiences in teaching listening skills. They added that since they hadn't prepared materials and

teachers' guide, they didn't teach listening skills; "There are no materials for teaching listening skills, hence, there is no teaching and learning listening skills." Another teacher respondent replied that since there was no convenient situation to teach listening, he didn't teach listening not only on grade 11 preparatory classes but also in the other grades of high school. The reason the teacher presented for the case is teaching listening was not given as a section and there was no listening teaching material, therefore, there were no teaching and learning listening activities. From here, it is possible to conclude that teachers didn't teach listening skills because of lack of materials which include teachers guide prepared listening teaching materials and audiovisual materials.

### **Lack of Teachers and Students' Initiation**

Concerning this, from the students FGD, the students responded that the English department was weak in motivating teachers and students to participate in listening activities in the school. For instance, one of the student FGD group 7 replied that the English department was unable to create opportunities (like organizing English free talk and English days) to accustomed students and teachers to use English language in general and develop listening skills in particular. Similarly, from the interview, the teachers revealed that the school did not create initiative for teaching and learning listening skills and to practice listening skills. Based on the data gathered, therefore, the school seems to be reluctant in motivating students to engage in listening activities. Moreover engaging and motivating students to participate in listening activities outside the class room can help them to improve their listening skills all.

### **Large Class Size, and Insufficiency of Time**

Each of the interviewed teachers identified that numbers of learners per class were too big so that they were not able to practice the teaching the listening skills in the class room. Most of the teachers mentioned that class size was ranged from 75 to over 80 learners per class. As teacher "1" said, "there are round about 75 to 80." Almost all, the participated teachers mentioned the same numbers. Teacher 2 also mentioned that 70-75 in a section.

With reference to the mentioned number, most of the teachers indicated that the large numbers of learners made it difficult for them to give individual attention to learners. The third interviewed teacher in the interview responded that large number of students in took a long time to identify learners who had difficulty of understanding a particular section of the listening class.

And, the other interviewed teacher responded in the interview reveals that group work activities in the listening

classrooms were fraught with problems. He said that the large numbers of learners resulted in either too many groups or too many learners in a group (Teacher-3). Also, teacher- 4 in the interview said, “.....where the numbers of students in a class are very big and you have many groups, then the unmanageable control seems to slip. So, in a smaller environment, where students know that there is more control, then group work is more successful.”

In the same way, teacher 5 indicated that having large number of students in a class is very hard to control. He added as:

“..... One of the basic problems is the number of students in a listening class room. There are 70\_75 students in a class. This means that there are either many groups in a section or many students in one group in which you do not be able to assess each learner’s listening skills equally. The other problem is the time constraint. Look, I told you that there are 70 – 75 students in a section so, how can you assess these students within forty minutes? It is difficult to do this.”

Besides, lack of teachers training, and teachers guide lines are also impeded us as challenges to teach the listening skills in an effective manner.

As the above transcription implied that, the large number of learners gave birth for the constriction of time to assess the learners listening skills progress within a given period of time. Thus, large number of students per class and insufficiency of time was the major challenges to teach the listening skills.

From the above analysis in general, one can draw that large number of learners per class, and shortage of time were the major factors that hindered appropriate practice of teaching the listening skills. Consequently, for effective practice of teaching the listening skills, it is essential to find solution and take remedial action.

## DISCUSSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to explore challenges teachers face in practicing teaching the listening skills. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the practice of teaching listening skills is related with the challenges; the study explores the major challenges EFL teachers face in teaching listening skills. The results from the analysis of data from interview, document analysis, observations, and FGD are discussed in line with some empirical findings.

1. The first research question was examining the extent to which whether the EFL teachers are teaching listening lessons given in the text or not. This question was

designed to assess whether the listening lessons given in the text were taught by the EFL teachers or not. As mentioned earlier, the first issue that the researcher investigated that EFL teachers gave little attention towards teaching the listening lessons given in the text. In line with this, from the analysis obtained from all sources, one can understand that listening skill has still been a forgotten language skill. Since more than half percent of the listening lessons given in the text book have not been taught by the grade 11<sup>th</sup> English language teachers. As the results of the study revealed that teachers’ practice of teaching listening lessons given in the text is minimal. The finding of this study tends to agree/ consistent with the findings of Abdu (2006) that pointed out that there was the improper practice of teaching all listening lessons in the classroom.

2. The second research question was examining the extent how the EFL teachers practice teaching the listening skills in their own EFL classes. This question was designed to assess the EFL teachers practice of the pre listening phase, the while listening phase and the post listening phase activities in the class room. As the analysis of the data revealed that these activities were dominated by the teachers themselves rather their students. Also, teachers use traditional way of teaching listening skill in the EFL classes. For instance, when we come to the EFL teachers’ practice of the pre listening activities, none of the teachers has observed setting their purpose or objective of the listening lessons.

As Harmer (2001) explained setting the purpose or objective of the listening lessons is very important for students to make them ready and conscious about what they are going to do in each listening stages. As the results of the data gathered from both the FGD and interview illustrated that most of the grade eleven EFL teachers at Damot preparatory school did not provide effective practice of teaching the listening skills in the teaching and learning process. This revealed that there is the dominance of the traditional teaching the listening in the school.

3. The third research question was proposed to explore the main challenges that EFL teachers face in teaching the listening skills of the English language. In the investigation of the finding, the EFL teachers’ interview, students’ FGD, document analysis, and class room observation were utilized. The data gathered from interview showed that there were different problems that EFL teachers faced to practice teaching the listening skills in the school. Most of the problems were corporate/consistent with what Tadesse (2015) explained in that large class size, time constraints and shortage of materials as well as Marysless or and Kyriacou (2014) also found out that lack of materials, and absence of teachers and students initiation towards teaching and



learning the listening skills were the challenging problems to practice teaching the listening skills properly. Comparatively, the analysis disclosed that difficulty of the text book and students' motivation were identified as dominant challenges teachers confronted in the teaching & learning of listening skills.

With regard to the class size factor, Selingson (1998) also confirms one of the reasons teachers do not assess the learners' listening performance is due to large number of students in a single class and this unquestionably can take too much time to evaluate the learners' performance. Instead this point, as Cahen (cited in Cooper, 1989) explained that small class size allow teachers to involve their students in different skill activities and attention to all students, thereby holding them accountable for participation, rather than ignoring those who are passive. In addition, teachers lack of materials is another impending factor faced while teaching the listening skills. This is inconsistent with earlier studies, for example by Lissu (2009) which revealed that in Tanzania, the teachers' materials on how to teach language skills are sufficient.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to explore challenges teachers face in teaching the listening skills. The analysis of the data revealed that EFL teachers were not giving equal attention to the listening skill among the other language skills. As a result, they were not teaching all listening lessons given in the text. They neglected more than half percent of the listening lessons from the text. Despite the fact that English language teachers had good awareness about the three stages of teaching listening that are pre listening, while listening and post listening, they were not teaching all lessons in each stage properly in the class room. They were practicing the traditional way of teaching listening.

The difficulty of the text book, teachers and students lack of interest/motivation, lack of materials, lack of teachers and students initiation towards the teaching & learning listening skill, poor back ground of students in English language in general, the listening skill in particular, large class size, insufficiency of time, and the tiresomeness of the listening text for the teachers and the teachers' pedagogical problem of teaching the listening skill are challenges teachers face of teaching listening skill. Finally, it was recommended that the concerned bodies and EFL teachers should give equal weight for listening skill as the other language skills and EFL teachers should teach each listening lessons given in the text effectively. And the text book producers/writers should students' knowledge level when they prepared the teaching materials, and tried to avoid the ambiguous listening script from the students' textbook. Also, national

examination experts and EFL teachers should find a way to include the listening skill in the national and class room examinations in its separate section to minimize its wash back effect.

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## DECLARATIONS

The author declares that this research manuscript has been researched/studied by I myself and it has not been submitted elsewhere, and considered for publication. And the following issues are also declared:

### ➤ Funding

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### ➤ Availability of data and Materials

Here, the author declares that on the presented research conclusions and problems, the data and detailed information were available as long as they needed. Furthermore, the author would like to confirm that data sharing is applicable in this research article.

### ➤ Competing Interest

In this study, there is no financial and non-financial competing interest as it is a single author's work.

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