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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of using the interactional approach for developing 1st year secondary school students' listening comprehension skills. The participants included (60) students enrolled at Shubra-Bukhum Secondary School for Girls. They were assigned into two groups; the experimental group (N=30) that was taught using the interactional approach and the control group (N=30) that was taught using the regular method. To prepare an EFL listening comprehension skills test, a checklist of EFL listening comprehension skills was prepared. The EFL listening comprehension skills test was applied to the two groups to make sure that the two groups were equivalent in their EFL listening comprehension skills and identify the level of the experimental group students before implementing the treatment. After the intervention, the EFL listening comprehension skills test was applied again to the two groups. Findings of the study revealed that the experimental group students' EFL listening comprehension skills were higher than those of the control group students as a result of using the interactional approach. Therefore, it can be concluded that the interactional approach was effective in developing listening comprehension skills.

Keywords: The interactional approach, listening comprehension skills.

Introduction

Language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening is an active process, and that good listeners are just as active when listening as speakers are when speaking. Active listening is also an interpretive process. Listening used to be thought of as the exact decoding of the message but, in fact, listening involves subtle interpretation. In order to handle a simple conversation, an individual must have a much broader competency in listening comprehension than in speaking. Therefore, listening comprehension of a foreign language should be developed, and development of linguistic competence is facilitated when training in oral production is not attempted until considerable fluency in aural comprehension has been developed (Xu, 2011, p. 163).

Listening comprehension is based on the assumption that the main function of listening in second/ foreign language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse. Listening comprehension requires language processing to be almost automatic. As the speech rate gets faster, students pay more attention to lexical and grammatical processing and less attention to the interpretation of the meaning (Buck, 2001 & Richards, 2008).

There are various studies that were conducted to develop listening comprehension skills among different groups of learners. Al-Yami (2008) investigated the effectiveness of scaffolding interactive activities in developing the English listening comprehension skills of sixth grade elementary school girls in Jeddah. Gad (2012) used the total physical response method to develop the listening comprehension

of the EFL primary stage pupils with attention deficit disorders. Results of the study supported the effectiveness of TPRS in developing listening comprehension for the participants.

Abo El Kassem (2009) investigated the effectiveness of using the storytelling technique in developing listening skills in English language for pupils of the preparatory stage. Results showed that using the storytelling approach was effective in developing the experimental group's listening skills. Selim (2011) used performance assessment for developing the English listening and speaking skills of preparatory pupils. Idrees (2013) investigated the effect of using some instructional strategies on developing second year preparatory school pupils' EFL listening skills. Study findings showed that the program based on the suggested strategies had a great impact on developing second year preparatory school pupils' EFL listening skills.

Malkawi (2010) analyzed listening comprehension of English language skills for tenth grade students at Tabaria High School in the city of Irbid in Jordan. Radwan (2010) used the dictogloss strategy for developing some EFL listening comprehension skills among secondary school students. Al-Hammadi (2011) measured the effectiveness of multi-media software for developing some listening skills among EFL Saudi secondary school students. Findings of the research revealed that the software was effective in the development of specific listening skills. Genaidy (2011) developed the listening comprehension skills necessary for 1st year secondary school students through using students' journals. Yusuf (2015) identified the effect of using reciprocal teaching strategies for developing EFL 1st year

secondary stage students' listening comprehension skills. Results of the study showed that the reciprocal teaching strategies were effective in developing listening comprehension skills among 1st year secondary stage students.

Ali (2010) used a self- efficacy based program for developing EFL oral communication skills among prospective teachers. Haffor (2011) proposed a multiple intelligence –based program to enhance listening comprehension skills of English department students at faculty of education. Hassan (2011) showed the effect of an aural-oral E-learning program on developing faculty of education first year/English Major's oral communication skills. Abu Mwaism (2017) examined the effect of an instructional program based on integrating the four language skills on Jordanian undergraduate EFL students' listening comprehension skills. The study revealed that the instructional program proved to be effective for the students of the experimental group.

In the light of the findings of the previous studies, the following conclusions can be derived:

- 1- Using various strategies such as some instructional strategies, a proposed strategy based on task-based approach, an explicit language learning strategy-based instruction were effective in developing students' EFL listening comprehension skills.
- 2- Few studies were conducted on teachers. Consequently, there is a bad need for more studies for developing teachers' listening performance.

- 3- Results of studies on the secondary stage students revealed the effectiveness of different interventions such as Radwan (2010), Al-Hammadi (2011), Genaidy (2011) and Yusuf (2015).
- 4- Al-Yami (2008), and Idrees (2013) were conducted on prep stage students, whereas Gad (2012) was conducted on primary stage students, and Abu Mwaism (2017) was conducted on university students.

Listening process involves both bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing refers to using the incoming input as the basis for understanding the message. Comprehension is viewed as a process of decoding. The listener's lexical and grammatical competence in a language provides the basis for bottom up processing (Richards, 2008, p. 4).

Listeners use 'top-down' processes when they use prior knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Prior knowledge can be knowledge of the topic, the listening context, the text-type, the culture or other information stored in long-term memory as schemata (typical sequences or common situations around which world knowledge is organized) (Mohammed, 2014, p. 50).

According to Shrum and Glisan (1994, p.116), there are some variables that affect listening comprehension: (1) background knowledge of the learner, (2) strategies that learners use in the comprehension task, (3) purpose for listening to the nature of the task, (4) length of the text, (5) type of text and (6) treatment of the new vocabulary. Table (1) presents Shrum and Glisan's (1994) model for teaching listening using the interactional approach:

Table (1): A model for teaching listening using the interactive approach (Adopted from Shrum & Glisan, 1994, P. 120)

Stages	Listener use of text meaning
▪ Pre-listening	Student preview the text, establish a purpose for listening to the text, predict meaning.
▪ Identifying main elements	Students identify main ideas, settings, and events.
▪ Identifying details	Students listen and connect main concepts to details.
▪ Organizing/ revising main ideas/ details	Students revise their charts of main ideas and supporting details.
▪ Recreating text	Students reconstruct textual information.
▪ Reacting to text/ exploring intertextuality	Students give opinions and reactions to text and relate other texts to it.

Neither bottom-up nor top-down approaches is a proper characterization of the listening process. Listening instruction must be based on both bottom-up word recognition skills and top-down interpretation strategies. One approach should not be seen as a substitute for the other, because effective listening requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies to work together in tandem and interactively. While the top-down model places emphasis on high cognitive skills and the bottom-up model pre-sets language decoding, the interactive model strives for a balanced approach (Alderson, 2000, p. 18).

The interactive approach is a teaching approach, which provides questions and time for students to think and discuss, and cultivates a supportive classroom atmosphere to promote interactions between students and the teacher, and amongst peers. It was found to be crucial to promote learners' intellectual engagement in class (Chang, Jones & Kunemeyer, 2002, p. 2).

Some studies were conducted on the interactive approach and interaction: e.g., Dadour (2004), Roth (2009), Abd El-Maksoud (2012) and Abdel-Haq and Amin (2013).

Dadour (2004) investigated the effectiveness of a proposed interactive-reading program on developing the reading skills and the empathetic feelings of prospective teachers of English. Findings of the study revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the means of the scores of the experimental subjects and those of the control subjects in the post test, regarding both reading skills and empathetic feelings, in favour of the former. Roth (2009) used the interactive writing approach to develop writing skills commensurate with literacy standards. The participants included six teachers and 101 first graders. Findings of the study showed that interactive writing is a promising approach for instructing and engaging young writers. Abd El-Maksoud (2012) investigated the effectiveness of using the interactive approach in developing some EFL listening comprehension skills. Results of the study showed that the interactive approach was effective in developing some listening comprehension skills. Abdel-Haq and Amin (2013) enhanced secondary school students' EFL interaction and fluency skills through the use of a suggested self-efficacy based program. Findings of the study showed that the suggested program was effective in developing the experimental group students' speaking self-efficacy and interaction.

In the light of the findings of the previous studies, the following conclusions can be derived:

- 1- The interactive approach was used for developing the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- 2- It was used among both students at the secondary stage and university and teachers.

- 3- The interactive approach successfully promote interaction and learning outcome; concentration, discussion and thinking.
- 4- The interactive approach is effective in developing psychological variables (e.g. empathetic feelings) among prospective teachers of English.

Context of the problem

Students' lack of listening comprehension may contribute to their silence in oral classroom discussion. A further problem that listeners often address in the rapid disappearance of the content of what they listen to. Many language learners claim that as they listen, they can follow the speakers with some ease, but when it comes to remembering it sometime later, they can find themselves in a tight corner (Hayati, & Jalilifar, 2009, p. 101).

From a ten-year experience as a teacher, the students find it difficult to recognize and understand the accents of the native speakers' accent due to the limited exposure to it. When native speakers speak; they usually speak at a normal speed. It is too fast for students to follow. While listening, the students do not have the opportunity to choose a comfortable listening speed. They have to keep pace with the speaker's thinking process. Sometimes they have not even got the meaning of the first sentence before the second sentence has already passed. Therefore, they have missed the whole passage. The researcher also asked EFL teachers for the reason for the lack of listening comprehension skills among students. It has been

found out that both teachers and students neglected the listening comprehension skills as listening is neglected in tests.

To document the problem, a pilot study was conducted to investigate the problems of listening comprehension skills among EFL (No=25)1st year secondary school students at Shubra-Bukhum Secondary School for Girls on Sunday March, 23rd, 2014. The test was adopted from Kisslinger (2003). Results of the pilot study revealed that students had a lack in some EFL listening comprehension skills. They have a lack in listening for specific information, listening for gist and following oral instructions.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the study lies mainly in first year secondary school students' poor level in some EFL listening comprehension skills and their lack of understanding the spoken language. To investigate this problem, the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the EFL listening comprehension skills required for secondary school students?
- 2- What are the features of the interactional approach to be used for developing EFL listening comprehension skills required for secondary school students?
- 3- What is the effect of the interactional approach in developing the first year secondary stage students' listening comprehension skills?

Hypotheses of the study

In the light of the previous literature and related studies, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test in overall listening comprehension skills and in listening comprehension main skills (literal, inferential and critical) in favour of the posttest.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and the posttest in listening comprehension sub-skills in favour of the posttest.
- 3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the posttest in listening comprehension main skills (literal, inferential and critical) in favour of the experimental group.
- 4- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the posttest in listening comprehension sub-skills in favour of the experimental group.

Scope of the study

- 1- Participants of first year secondary stage students (n= 60): 30 students for the experimental group and 30 for the control group.
- 2- Some EFL listening comprehension skills required for first year secondary stage students.

Methodology of the study

Design of the study

This study adopted the quasi-experimental design which is known as the Pre-Posttest Experimental and Control Group Design. The experimental group was taught the listening comprehension skills using the interactional approach, while the control group was taught via the traditional method. The experiment lasted for four weeks.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were (60) students from first year secondary school students at Shubra-Bukhum Secondary School for Girls, Qwesna Administration, Menoufia Governorate. They were distributed to two groups; an experimental group (n=30) and a control group (n=30). The experiment was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2017/2018.

Instrument of the study

- A pre- post EFL listening comprehension skills test; the pre-test was used to assess the present level of students EFL listening comprehension skills and the posttest was used to evaluate the students listening comprehension skills after the treatment compared to their level before it.

Description of the EFL listening comprehension skills test

The final checklist consisted of three main levels: literal, inferential and critical. The literal level consisted of six sub-skills. The inferential level consisted of four sub-skills. The critical level consisted of two sub-skills. These skills have been determined according to literature review, related studies, and the directives of the Ministry of Education for secondary stages. Each sub-skill was measured by two test items, except the sub-skill of identifying the relationships between ideas (e.g. causes/ effects, organization, problem/ solution, addition, time order). It was measured by five test items because it included five relationships. The final test consisted of 27 items of questions which are all in the form of multiple-choice. Five passages were used to cover assessing the 12 sub- skills.

For validity purposes, the test was submitted to a panel of jury members of EFL staff members in curriculum and instruction, in

addition to some supervisors and teachers of English language (n=20). They were requested to read the test items and give their opinions concerning the suitability of the listening passages for the level of the students in terms of language and length, clarity of instructions and items and suitability of the test to the students' linguistic level. According to the jury members' modifications concerning rephrasing, some test items were modified. In addition, two test items were omitted.

For reliability purposes, the test was piloted to a group of (30) first year secondary school students, other than the study sample, on Feb. 5th, 2018 at Shobra - Bokhom Secondary School for Girls. Then, it was administered again after 15 days to the same group of students on Feb. 19th, 2018. In order to calculate the reliability of the test, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, v. 18) software was used. The reliability of the test was measured using the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha Method.

Table (2): The correlation coefficient between the test and retest administration

Main Skill	Literal level	Inferential level	Critical level	The overall test
Coefficient of correlation	.767**	.861**	.478**	.768**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table (2) shows that the correlation coefficients of the literal level, inferential level, critical level and the overall test between the two administrations were (.76), (.86), (0.47) and (0.76) respectively. These values are significant at the 0.01 level. Besides, Cronbach's Alpha reached (0.72). This means that EFL listening comprehension skills test is reliable.

The Experimental Treatment

Before implementing the interactional approach, the pre-EFL listening comprehension skills test was administered to the study sample on February, 22nd in the second term of the academic year 2017-2018.

A teacher's guide, prepared by the researcher, was used to teach the experimental group (n=30 students) using the interactional approach. The experimentation was implemented in the second term of the academic year 2017-2018. It lasted for four weeks and consisted of nine sessions. Every session took 90 minutes. At the beginning of the first session, the researcher explained the importance of developing listening comprehension skills. Then the researcher explained how students can implement the stages, strategies and activities included. After that, the researcher administered the instructional sessions.

After finishing the implementing process, the post test was administered again on March, 25th, 2018.

Findings of the study □

The findings of the study are presented in the light of the hypotheses of the study. Data of the present study was statistically treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings are as follows:

Table (3): "t" test between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and posttest in overall listening comprehension skills

The overall test	Measure-ment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	DF	Sig	α Sig	η^2
	Pre	30	9.6000	3.31	13.47	29	Significant	.000	.004
	Post	30	20.133	4.26					

As shown in table (3), there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and posttest in overall listening comprehension skills test in favour of the posttest, where the t- value is (13.47) which is significant at the (0.000) level of significance.

Table (4): "t" test between the mean scores between the experimental and control groups of the overall listening comprehension skills

The overall test	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	DF	α Sig	η^2
	Experimental	30	20.13	4.26	9.67	58	0.000	.617
	Control	30	10.56	3.33925				

As shown in table (4), there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the overall listening comprehension skills test in favour of the experimental group, where the t- value is (9.674) which is significant at the (0.000) level of significance.

Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using the interactional approach on developing listening comprehension skills. In the pre-test, students' level was low. In the post test, scores of the experimental group were better than those of the control group. This may be done due to the following reasons: using the interactional approach, the students brainstormed new ideas and opinions to achieve the tasks and discussed opinions and ideas with their classmates. Their prior knowledge was activated. They identified main ideas and details. They listened and connected main concepts to details. They made tables of main ideas and supporting details related to what they listened to and revised their tables with each other. They reconstructed the text on their own using their tables in pairs or groups. They gave opinions and reactions to text and related other

texts to it in new situations. In all these situations, the students were active, and each task was, selectively, assigned to develop their listening comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the treatment included varied types of evaluation questions which made students, all the time, aware of their progress, and encouraged them for more progress. Evaluation questions were chosen so that they address the listening comprehension skills of different levels of difficulty.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the interactional approach was effective in developing listening comprehension skills among first year secondary school students.

Recommendations of the study

Based on the results of the study, the following are some recommendations:

- The interactional approach should be used by teachers to develop listening comprehension skills.
- Teachers should encourage students to interact with each other, either in pairs or groups.
- Teachers should help students to manipulate tasks using both bottom- up and top-down approaches.
- Curriculum designers should take into consideration developing listening comprehension skills. These skills should be given more attention during designing the English courses for secondary stage students.
- English language teachers should focus on teaching listening comprehension skills among students especially in pre-university stage.

Suggestions for further research

Based on the results of the present study, the following are some suggestions for further research:

- Using the interactional approach for developing listening comprehension skills among other groups of learners: Elementary, prep and college.
- Using the interactional approach for developing other skills such as reading and writing.
- Designing a training program for developing teachers' use of the interactional approach.

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ملخص الدراسة باللغة العربية

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد فاعلية استخدام المدخل التفاعلي لتطوير مهارات الفهم الاستماعي لدى طلاب الصف الأول الثانوي. وشملت عينة الدراسة ستون طالبةً وتم تعيينهم في مجموعتين؛ بحيث تكونت المجموعة التجريبية من ثلاثون طالبةً التي تلقت المعالجة باستخدام المدخل التفاعلي، وكذلك المجموعة الضابطة التي تلقت معالجتها بالطريقة المعتادة. ولإعداد اختبار الفهم الاستماعي كأداة الدراسة تم إعداد بطاقة ملاحظة بمهارات الفهم الاستماعي. وتم تطبيق اختبار مهارات الفهم الاستماعي على المجموعتين للتأكد من أن المجموعتين متساويتين في مهارات الفهم الاستماعي ولتحديد مستوى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية قبل تنفيذ المعالجة. بعد تطبيق المعالجة على المجموعتين تم تطبيق اختبار مهارات الفهم الاستماعي مرة أخرى على المجموعتين. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن مهارات الفهم الاستماعي لدى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية كانت أعلى منها لدى طلاب المجموعة الضابطة كنتيجة لاستخدام المدخل التفاعلي. مما سبق يستنتج أن المدخل التفاعلي أكثر فاعلية في تطوير مهارات الفهم الاستماعي لدى طلاب الصف الأول الثانوي.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المدخل التفاعلي، مهارات الفهم الاستماعي.