

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE ADEQUACY OF  
TEACHING LISTENING SKILL: GRADE  
EIGHT IN FOCUS**



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**An Exploration of the Adequacy of  
Teaching Listening Skill: Grade Eight in  
Focus**



**By**

**Tigist Chegen**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**  
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**LITERATURE**



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## ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this study was to assess the adequacy of teaching listening in grade eight English lessons. To obtain the information required, the listening sections of the textbook for Grade eight were evaluated based on the criteria suggested by scholars. To elicit additional information, a questionnaire was administered for all Grade eight English language teachers in Mekdela, Sibste Negasi and Mekanisa Akababi primary schools. Besides, six classroom observations were conducted to get some insight on how the teaching of listening is implemented at classroom level and an interview was conducted with three teachers and twelve students to cross check the data that were collected through questionnaire and classroom observations.*

*The data obtained were analyzed through qualitative and quantitative means. A qualitative analysis was carried on the information obtained from the textbook analysis, the open-ended questionnaire for the teachers, classroom observations and the interview with teachers and students. A quantitative analysis was made on teachers' responses to the close-ended questionnaire items.*

*The analysis showed that there are no adequate listening texts and activities in Grade eight course books. In addition, teachers do not prepare their own listening texts and activities to help students become skillful listeners. The listening activities in the course book are suitable and require students to understand the main idea. Teachers encourage students to attempt the listening tasks without putting too much emphasis on the quality of their responses. Moreover, visual aids, and recorded materials are not used for teaching listening in classrooms. Accordingly, recommendations were forwarded to design appropriate teaching material that aimed at a balanced language skills as well as to create awareness upon teachers concerning the vitality of the teaching of listening in primary schools in general and in Grade eight in particular.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Listening is probably the most neglected of the four language skills. This neglect causes problems that frustrate, embarrass, and discourage the learner. (Kalivoda,1979:85). Traditionally, much classroom practice consisted of the teacher reading aloud a written text, one or more times and then asking a number of comprehension questions about it, without giving much attention to the skill of listening. (McDonough and Shaw 1993:141). This sort of teaching listening encourages a passive way of listening which doesn't demand active participation from the listener. However, listening is an active process that as people listen, they process what they hear and connect it to the information they already know as Nunan (2003) stated.

Currently, listening has become one of the components of school textbook as ENE (English for Ethiopian) is replaced by another set of books. However, teachers at some level complain that they still teach English with previous materials which do not integrate a balanced language skill. Thus, students are not able to grasp the general and specific points embedded in listening texts or lectures. One of the possible causes for this is the ineffective ways of teaching the skills.

The fact that listening comprehension is to be taught is that it plays a significant role in developing the students' ability in teaching-learning process where English is used as the medium of instruction. Students who use English as a medium instruction need to be good listeners of the language in order to be successful in their education.

In Ethiopian context, high school students are expected to listen to a plasma lessons in the subjects they are required to study. However, listening to Plasma lesson or a lecture could not be simple matter for the students unless they have prior experience in the skill of listening. Regarding this fact, Atkins et al (1995) state that "listeners use information from a wide variety of sources such as prior knowledge of sounds, grammar, vocabulary, topic, and situation, expectations about meaning allowing the data to interact and process it in meaningful chunks."

Listening to English language is the hardest skill for listeners. Rixon (1986) notes that from the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), listening will probably come top of the list in order of difficulty. Since listening is not a skill that students can master in a short period of time, its teaching needs continuous effort to develop it. Therefore, enough attention should be given to teaching listening in ELT program.

Local studies conducted on listening, though small in number have come up with some findings. For example, Adnew (2001), in his study of the relevance of grade ten listening comprehension texts and activities to the students' academic needs indicated that the language of listening texts seem to satisfy the needs and interests of the students to the overall language development. He added that the listening texts in general seem to be well selected and organized in a way that students understood them easily.

Abdi (2005), in his investigation of learning strategies employed by high school teachers and students to develop effective listening skills, found that the learners have greater problems in overall linguistic abilities. The learners were found to be using high frequency of Meta cognitive and cognitive strategies.

Hiwot (2006), in her exploration of the listening abilities of grade nine students with the listening level required of them in understanding their plasma lesson, found that there is a significance difference between the actual abilities of grade nine students and the listening level expected of them in understanding their plasma lesson.

These studies were conducted at high school level, while the current study was conducted at primary level. This is because the skill is one of the components of English courses currently in use at primary schools. There has not been any attempt made to investigate the adequacy of teaching listening in grade eight English lessons. Since listening is the key to successful learning or at least as primary source of language experience (Anderson and Lynch 1988), it is important to examine how far the teaching of listening is given due consideration. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the adequacy of teaching listening in grade eight levels.

## **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the adequacy of teaching listening with reference to grade eight English classrooms in government schools in Addis Ababa. This study then has the following specific objectives:

1. To examine whether or not adequate listening text and activities are incorporated in the main course book.
2. To assess how listening is taught in classroom.
3. To explore whether teachers' prepare their own listening texts and activities to help students develop the skills of listening.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

This study dealt with the assessment of teaching listening in grade eight English lessons. It is hoped that the study will have the following importance.

1. The finding of this study would help teachers to prepare their own listening texts and activities if they find materials that do not suit their students.
2. It would have some contribution to curriculum developer and textbook writers to design appropriate teaching material.
3. It can give an insight into the extent to which listening is thought effectively.
4. It may help others to do further investigation on similar issues.

### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

As already stated, the main objective of this study is to assess the adequacy of teaching listening in Grade eight English lessons. This means that an attempt was made to investigate whether enough attention is given to the teaching of listening in Grade eight. To achieve the objective, information was collected through textbook analysis, questionnaire for teachers, classroom observations and interview for both teachers and students.

The study was conducted with reference to Mekdela, Sibste Negasi and Mekanisa Akababi Primary Schools found in Nifassilk Lafto sub-city in Addis Ababa. The schools were randomly selected from the nine government schools found in the sub-city.

## **1.5. Organization of the Study**

The major objective of this study was to assess the adequacy of teaching listening in Grade eight English lessons. To this effect, chapter one deals with statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and the scope of the study.

In chapter two, an attempt was made to review what scholars have suggested on what listening is, the importance of teaching listening, factors that make listening difficult and ways of tackling them, important factors in facilitating the teaching of listening, listening skills, stages of a listening lesson and materials for teaching listening.

Chapter three deals with the research design. This means that an attempt was made to discuss on the schools selection, the subjects selection, the data collection instruments and methods of data analysis. In chapter four, an attempt was made to discuss on the results of the investigation obtained through textbook analysis, questionnaire, classroom observation and interview. In chapter five, conclusions and recommendations were drawn based on the analysis of the data that was collected through the above mentioned instruments.

## **1.6. Abbreviations Used in the study**

ENE= English for Ethiopia

ELT= English Language Teaching

EFL= English as a Foreign Language

L1= First Language

L2= Second Language

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In this chapter, an attempt was made to review what scholars have suggested on what listening is, the importance of teaching listening, factors that make listening to English difficult and ways of tackling them, important factors in facilitating the teaching of listening, listening skills, stages of a listening lesson and materials for teaching listening.

#### **2.1. What is listening?**

Different scholars define the term listening in different ways. For example, McDonough and Show (1993) say "listening is an internal processing mechanism, a cognitive device disembodied for everyday life." On the other hand, Underwood (1981:1) adds that listening is the activity of paying attention to get meaning from something we hear.

Traditionally, listening has been seen as a passive skill. However, this is misleading concept that as people listen, they process what they hear and connect it to the information they already know. The listeners are required to show more active involvement in order to understand the spoken language. They involve in guessing, anticipating, checking, interpreting, interacting and organizing so as to perceive message from the speakers. (Rivers 1997; Perrot 1982; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Richards, Gordon and Harper 1987).

As we hear a sound, our first reaction is to decide whether it is organized or not. In other words, before we understand the spoken language, we must perceive whether the sound coming to us is systematic or not. The next step is to impose some kind of structure on the stream of the sound. This means that we can break the sound into words and sentences if it is

language. Then, we circulate the sound in our mind selecting what we judge to be important. The selected information is recorded and then stored in the memory for future use as Nicholas (1984) discussed.

In making distinction between hearing something and listening to it, Rixon (1986) contends that hearing is simply the recognition of sounds, while listening implies conscious attention of understanding the spoken language. We can hear sounds but it is our mind that identifies and interprets what we hear. So, listening is a mental process comprehending message to bring about effective communication between the speaker and the listener while hearing is a physiological process simply recognizing sounds.

## **2.2. The Importance of Teaching Listening**

In the past, little attention was given to teaching listening; probably, it was the most neglected of the four language skills. McDonough and Shaw (1993) asserted that traditionally, much classroom practice consisted of the teacher reading aloud a written text one or more times, and then asking a number of comprehension questions about it. The skill itself was not given much attention. However, recent studies show that listening skill is the key to successful learning. Supporting this fact, O'Malley, Chamot and Kopper(1988) say that listening skill has become the keystone for many theories of second language acquisition. Furthermore, Byrene (1976) noted that listening is an integral part of oral communication without this skill communication will breakdown.

Regarding the importance of listening skills, Ellis (1990:36) compares that "L1 acquisition as a model of successful learning, L2 learning in the classroom could proceed in much the same way." When we realize the human language acquisition, for all children to acquire their mother tongue, firstly they need to listen to it. The speaking ability emerges after

enough competence has been developed by active listening. (Krashen 1987; Krashen and Terrd 1983). Thus, listening is the skill which human beings experience immediately after the birth and it is the first and the most important skill in human language acquisition.

Moreover, listening skill is very important especially in academic setting where English is the medium of instruction. Students need this skill so as to comprehend lectures and to take notes during their academic carrier. Therefore, enough consideration should be given to teaching listening skills due to its vital role in the educational process.

### **2.3. Factors that Make Listening to English Language Difficult and Ways Tackling Them**

Listening to English language is believed to be the most difficult skill for the students whose culture and background is different from native speakers. Zaytoun (1984) pointed out that many foreign language learners are not as competent as they think in their listening ability. Some of the problems that non-native learners encounter when listening to English language are briefly discussed in the following way.

#### **2.3.1. Pronunciation**

According to Rixon (1986), one of the most obvious causes of difficulty for foreign learners of English is the way in which it is pronounced. For example, many foreign learners of English fail to recognize some sounds because the written form of the words do not match with their spoken form. Another cause of problem related to pronunciation is that the changing of sounds when they occur in connected speech. Many words of English which are easy to recognize separately will lose their clarity when they heard in connected speech. (Rixon 1986: 37).

understand and has value as a sort of comprehensible input in the teaching of listening skills.

### **2.4.2. Visual Support**

Since listening is not simply an aural activity, it involves the exploration of all possible sources of useful information as Anderson and Lynch (1988) pointed out. In many situations, visual elements give important clues beyond the words used. Ur (1984) reported that these clues will usually be represented by different visuals such as pictures, sketches, photos, overhead projector and so on. The presence of such materials has a great value in contextualizing and bringing to life the lessons as well as aiding the language. Bowen (1982:1) elaborates the importance of visual as follows.

*Learning is a complex process and visual aids are a great help in stimulating the learning of a foreign language. The student must use his ears as well as his eyes but it is the eye that is the primary channel of learning. Good visual materials will help maintain the pace of the lessons and the students motivation as well learn most through visual stimulus the more interesting and varied these stimuli are the quicker and more effective our learning will be.*

Since-visual elements have a great value in contextualizing the listening lessons; it is a good idea to use them in aiding the language teaching. In addition to their motivational importance, the use of visual aids can minimize excessive use of lecture.(Baloto,1996)

### **2.4.3. Environmental Clues**

According to Ur (1980), a real-life listening is normally rich in environment clues such as facial expression, posture, eye direction, proximity, gesture, tone of voice, and other sense of stimuli which contribute the valuable background information about the situation, the speakers and general atmosphere of the spoken language.

When people speak, the sound uttered usually conveys only a certain percentage of the message. A good portion of the message is conveyed through visual clues which generally support the spoken words (Little wood 1988: 67; Nicolas, 1984) Thus, students will be benefited if they are engaged in using not only linguistic cues but also non-linguistic knowledge as they listen to a certain text.

### **2.4.4. Information organization**

The most widely investigated feature of information organization is the sequence of information in simple narrative texts as Anderson and Lynch (1988) proposed. The scholars further stated that when events are described in the order in which they occur, then the story is better understood and more accurately recalled than the events described out of chronological sequence. This means that any disruption or flashback seems to make the information more difficult to understand. Therefore, the language teachers should consider the way information is ordered when selecting or producing the listening text.

### **2.4.5. Variety of Tasks**

Students will be benefited from language learning if they get opportunity to listen to different texts and work with a variety of tasks. Supporting this fact, Pierce (1988) says that students need to be exposed to different listening activities using different materials such as textbooks, cassettes,

radio, television documentaries, films, pictures, magazines, video tapes, etc. Listening to different texts is very important in increasing the learners' experience and confidence in handling the spoken words. Besides, over using only one type of exercise makes students bored and stale. Therefore, it is advisable to practice variety of listening tasks when teaching the skills of listening.

#### **2.4.6. Authentic Texts**

Since a real-life listening experience is very complex and is unlikely to be transferred easily to classroom, students need to practice authentic texts so that they will be able to understand what English speakers are saying as Littewood, (1989) noted.

On the other hand, students who are working with non-authentic materials are led into false expectations about what will occur in ordinary spoken language; for this reason, there is now considerable support for using authentic materials as a significant part of the students' listening experience. Underwood (1989) further extends this point in the following manner.

*Authentic materials allows the students to hear a much more real act of communication with all the interact ional features which are normally not found in scripted materials. It gives them a true representation of real, spontaneous speech which will make them more able to cope with real life speech outside the learning situation (p:100)*

#### **2.4.7. Promoting Group Work among the Student**

Students can learn listening lessons individually or in groups. Anderson and Lynch (1988) revealed that many language teachers agree upon the advantage of group work in teaching listening skills. The scholars further discussed that group-based work is helpful for general pedagogic reasons such as increasing cooperation and cohesiveness among students. According to Underwood (1989) "Pair or group work helps to remove some of

the feelings of isolations and anxiety and makes listening to a more pleasure activity.”

Besides, educational researchers have offered an evidence that the positive role of group work in promoting a linguistic environment to assist foreign language learning. For example, when group work is combined with pre-listening activities designed to activate the listeners' knowledge of the topic, it leads students to better recall of the tasks and to better performances when they do a listening text (Anderson and Lynch 1988: 59).

#### **2.4.8. Understanding the Difference between Teaching and Testing Listening**

It is important to consider a problematic and a basic issue how the teaching of listening differs from testing of listening. The classroom method that most teachers think of as tool for teaching listening is a form of continuous testing rather than teaching. Heaton (1988) claims that it is useful to separate teaching and testing listening since it is possible to develop the listening ability much beyond the range of speaking and writing. In the same vein, Anderson and Lynch (1988) comment "Asking questions after listening task is a testing technique and not a teaching technique" (1988:60). Therefore, teachers are required to help students learn listening lessons instead of focusing on testing their current ability.

#### **2.4.9. Preventing Panic/Anxiety**

It is important to prevent students' anxiety when teaching listening. Students could not be effective listeners if they become so frustrated and worried when they listen to a text. Thus, it is important to encourage students not to worry if they do not understand every word in a listening lesson. Rixon (1988: 79) offers some advice how to prevent students' anxiety in the following way.

1. The idea of a lesson should be a training session; not a testing. Students should feel that a wrong answer is not a disaster.
2. If unknown words and phrases are explained, students can get a sense of autonomy and self reliance.
3. Face-to-face listening offers the chance to ask for clarification or repetition. Students should be trained not to be shy to ask for clarification when problems occur.
4. The teacher should illustrate how often speakers repeat themselves or say the same thing in different ways. This helps listeners to understand the spoken language.

## **2.5. Listening Skills**



In previous section, it has been discussed some important factors in facilitating the teaching of listening. Students should be encouraged to apply some strategies that will help them to achieve their purpose in listening. Some of useful strategies that students need to use when listening to English language are briefly discussed in the following manner.

### **2.5.1. Listening with a Purpose**

It is with a reason or a purpose when we listen to something in normal cases. Our reason for listen determines what to listen and what to ignore when we communicate with people (Atkins et al, 1995: 109). Thus, it is a good idea to give students some information about the content, situation, and the speakers before they start listening in a classroom.

Anderson and Lynch (1988) underlined that this strategy can be best achieved by providing tasks which are as realistic as possible. The students can relate what they are doing in a class to the things that happen in real life outside the classroom. Therefore, it is important to give students a purpose of listening when teaching the skills of listening. This can be done by giving students some tasks before listening to the lessons.

### **2.5.2. Understanding the Setting or Context**

Understanding the context here to mean that understanding the physical setting (home, office, school etc.) and the number of listeners, speakers, their roles and their relationship to each other as McDonough and Shaw (1993) put. Environmental clues are often more likely to provide information about situation, speakers and general atmosphere rather than the actual type of discourse. Supporting this fact, Ur (1984) noted that in real-life listening, we can see who is talking, where s/he is talking, why s/he is taking and so on. Thus, these features give us clues what the speakers will say and help us to understand the message easily. Therefore, teachers are supposed to help students by applying this strategy when teaching listening lessons in a classroom.

### **2.5.3. Understanding the Structural Organization of a Text**

Understanding the structural organization of a text can help listeners to recognize the listening text easily. Atkins et al (1995) write that students need to understand the way a talk or a lecture is organized to comprehend the listening lessons as they do in reading and writing skills. Students can be helped in understanding the structural organization of a text by training them to recognize cohesive devices such as "But... However... For example... Finally.... etc. Moreover, teachers are required to explain new structures and to prove that whether or not students understood them (Sangwa 1987).

### **2.5.4. Ignoring Unknown or Irrelevant Words or Details**

According to Cook (2001), we frequently understand only some portion of what the speakers mean, but we still continue to communicate with people in real-life situation. In order to understand what speakers mean, we should not necessarily know the meaning of all the words. In the same

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stream, Atkins et al (1995) argue that too much emphasis on vocabulary can hinder comprehension because learners will focus on what they cannot understand rather than what they can.

Instead of trying to grasp the total conversation and the meaning of every word, students should develop the ability to ignore unknown words and try to understand the text. Heaten confirms "it is not essential to understand every word in order to follow the gist of the talk" (1990:43)

### 2.5.5. Listening for Specific Information

The active nature of listening means to determine which parts of the spoken texts are the most important and to ignore irrelevant information as Littewood (1981) proposed. The scholar further stated that listening for specific information demands the use of the sound, vocabulary, the sense of what is being said, as well as the ability to select and combine the relevant information. This strategy helps students to seek out specific information and to let the other parts pass as they listen to a certain text.

### 2.5.6. Predicting What Will Follow

According to Ur (1984), in real-life listening, we can frequently predict what the completion of an individual utterance might be after listening only part of it. As a listener, we predict what will follow and then try to match what we actually hear with our prediction. Even if the match is not perfect, we will be generally at least in the right path and will have no problem in understanding the speech as Underwood (1983) pointed out.

Since prediction makes comprehension easier, applying such kind of strategy in a classroom is very important in teaching the skills of listening.

The most common way of doing this is to ask students what they will expect the speaker (s) to say about the topic.

### **2.5.7. Understanding the Central Idea**

Atkins et al (1995) stated that even though students may fail to understand many of the words and phrases in a text, they should be trained to understand the topic and the central idea. This strategy can be used with long listening texts where students are asked to restate the overall message of the listening passage as well as with short texts where they have to restate the central idea.

### **2.5.8. Using One's Own Previous Knowledge to a Text**

In-real life listening, a speaker assumes that the listener may have some previous knowledge of the topic as Atkins et al (1995) pointed out. The writers further stated that the greater the speaker's expectation of the listener's knowledge, the more difficult the listening text is likely to be. Since bringing one's own previous knowledge to a text helps to analyze the listening text easily, teachers are expected to activate their students by bringing what the students already know about the topic when teaching listening in a classroom.

### **2.5.9. Listening to the General Message**

According to Anderson and Lynch (1988), there is a difference between being able to use the information that is heard and to reproduce the message in words perfectly. The fact that we cannot remember something does not necessary mean that we do not understand it. One of the criticisms made regarding teaching listening is that it is inappropriate to expect listeners to remember everything they heard. In light of this, Rixon (1986: 34) argues, "Rather than remembering every word, the listener summarizes the sense of what he hears as he goes along."

There is a difference between being able to use the information that is heard and to reproduce the message in words perfectly. Heaton (1990) on his part noted that people remember the general meaning of a sentence rather than the actual words. Therefore, students should not be expected to remember the actual words after they have listened to a certain listening text. Cook (2009) claims that if students have to remember the content for any period longer than a handful of seconds, they are being tested on what they can remember rather than what they actually understood. Besides, several experiment showed that memory span in second language is shorter compared with native language. (Kalivoda 1979: 85)

#### **2.5.10. Asking for Clarification and Other Interactive Listening Strategies**

A successful program of foreign language teaching must include listening for information interactively in which students are encouraged to seek clarification of meaning when problems occur. Students need to develop abilities in inquiring, reformulating, and other ways of negotiating meanings (Atkins et al 1995: III; Gower, Phillips and Walter 1985: 89).

#### **2.6. Stages of a Listening Lesson**

In preceding section an attempt has been made to discuss some of useful strategies that student need to develop when listening to English language. This section further discusses stages of a listening lesson and activities that students should attempt at these stages.

There are various activities that students should attempt at different stages of listening lessons. According to Harmer (1991), Underwood (1989), Madson (1993), and McDonough and Shaw (1993), listening activities are classified into three major phases: pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. The principles behind each of these activities are discussed as follows.

### **2.6.1. Pre-listening Activities**

The purpose of pre-listening activities is to elicit the learners' background knowledge and prepare them for what they are going to listen. Pre-listening activities make possible for all students to share common background knowledge before listening. The things to be done at this stage are to help students get the most out of what they are going to listen. The teacher may ask students if they can predict what they are going to listen or s/he may explain difficult part of grammar and vocabulary as Littlewood(1981)puts. Some of pre-listening activities include: the teacher giving background information, the students reading something relevant, the teacher arising students' interest, the students looking at a picture, discussion of the topic/situation, a question and answer session, the students predicting content from the title, and the students reading questions/activities to be done in while-listening, etc.

### **2.6.2. While-listening Activities**

While-listening activities are what students are asked to do during the time they are listening the text. The purpose of while-listening activities is to help learners develop the skill of eliciting messages from the spoken language. Underwood (1984) suggested that students should not be worried too much about catching every word in while-listening activities. The aim at this stage is to help learners develop the ability to grasp message from the listening text. Besides, while listening activities should be things which most students can do. Some of while-listening activities include: carrying out actions, arranging items in patterns, putting pictures in order, following a route, drawing pictures, completing grids, marking items in pictures ,chart completion, labeling diagrams, spotting mistakes, seeking specific items of information, true/false questions, multiple-choice questions ,filling gaps, etc.

### **2.6.3. Post-listening Activities**

Post-listening activities include tasks which are to be done after a particular listening text is completed. The purpose of post-listening activities is to find out why some students have failed to understand the listening text as well as to extend activities based on the work done at the pre-listening and while-listening stages. Post-listening activities are much longer than while listening to activities because the students have time to think, to discuss and to write at this stage as Underwood (1989) comments. The following activities are some of the major ones: problem-solving ,role play, summary or essay writing ,interpreting, extending lists, using information, matching with a reading text, sequencing/grading ,using information from the listening text for problem, solving and decision making activities, identifying relationships between speakers, establishing the mood/attitude of the speaker, extending notes into written responses etc.

### **2.7. Materials for Teaching Listening**

Listening can be taught using recorded or live listening materials. Students can be benefited from both types of materials when learning listening lessons. Confirming the importance of both recorded and live listening materials, Rixon writes:

*A mixture of live and recorded listening materials is preferable on most courses because of the different listening skills they can help to develop. Exposure to different types of passage and the possibilities of interaction with the speaker is very important in increasing learners' experience of, and confidence in, handling the spoken word (1986: 75).*

As stated above, using both recorded and live listening materials is helpful in teaching of listening skills because each material has its own advantage in supporting the language teaching. Rixon (1986) proposed some advantages of both recorded and live listening materials in the following way:

**Advantages of Recorded Materials:**

- i. bring the voice of native speakers for non-native teachers and allow a variety of sound.
- ii. the teacher or the students can stop or pause sections and play the whole passage as necessary.
- iii. can be used by the students, either inside or outside the classroom.
- iv. give chance to listen several people talking at the same time

**Advantages of Live Listening Materials:**

- i. the listeners can see the speaker (s) and get verbal clues to guess what might be said.
- ii. the listeners can interact with the speaker (s) by showing their understanding or lack of it through expressions.
- iii. the teacher can adjust the level of the listening difficulty
- iv. there is no need to organize equipment in advance or to worry about the machines which do not work, or shortage of electricity.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.1. The Schools and the Subjects Selection**

##### **3.1.1. The Schools Selection**

Among the ten sub-cities found in Addis Ababa, the schools in Nifas Silk Lafto were selected to be the focus of this study. The sub-city was selected for two reasons; firstly, it is due to its proximity of the area to the researcher's work place and this has an advantage in terms of time and resource utilization. Secondly, the researcher knows the area very well and this would minimize difficulties during the actual data collecting process since the willingness of teachers is essential for the study.

There are nine government primary schools in the sub-city. From this, three schools were randomly selected for the study. The sample covers 33.3% from the number of government schools found in the sub-city. The schools selected were:

1. Mekdela primary school
2. Sibsta Negase primary school
3. Mekanisa Akababi primary school

##### **3.1.2. The Subjects Selection**

There are eight English language teachers in the three sample schools who teach in grade eight; three in Mekdela, three in Sibsta Negase, and two in Mekanisa Akababi. All of them were included in the study. The following table shows the teachers' respondents' background information.

**Table 1: The subjects' background information**



School		Sex	Qualification	Experience in years	Work shop/seminar attended	Year when workshop attended
Mekdeda	T <sub>1</sub>	M	Diploma	31	3	1999,2000,2001
	T <sub>2</sub>	F	Diploma	5	1	2004
	T <sub>3</sub>	M	Diploma	6	1	2005
Sibste	T <sub>1</sub>	M	Diploma	36	3	1999,2002
Negase	T <sub>2</sub>	M	Diploma	5	1	2005
	T <sub>3</sub>	M	Diploma	4	1	2005
Mekanisa	T <sub>1</sub>	F	Diploma	33	3	1999,2003,2004
Akababi	T <sub>2</sub>	M	Diploma	33	2	1999,2002

T= Teacher

The table illustrates the general picture of the teachers' respondents providing information about their gender, educational background, experience, workshop attended (if any), and the year when the workshop attended.

As the table depicts, the total number of respondents include two female and six male teachers. All the teachers have diploma qualification in English as well as attended at least one workshop or seminar. From the total number of the teachers, half of them have more than 30 years experience. The rest have from 4 -6 years. It is believed that the teachers would provide sufficient information concerning the listening lessons, since they are qualified and participated in different seminars and workshops.

Grade eight students in the three sample schools were also the subjects of the study. A total of twelve students (four from each school) were interviewed to elicit some information concerning the teaching of listening in grade eight English lessons.

### **3.2 Data Collection Instruments**

The data used in this study were collected through four kinds of instruments. These are textbook analysis, questionnaire, classroom observations and interview. As Moser and Kalton (1972) suggest, the use of different instruments for a study provides a powerful research strategy, as each method may have its own weaknesses and strengths. Thus, classroom observation was used as the major tool to collect this data.

#### **3.2.1 Textbook Analysis**

Since Course books provide the content of the course and control the teaching schedule, the listening sections of grade eight textbook were evaluated on the basis of the criteria suggested by the scholars to assess their effectiveness for the purpose they are intended.

The analysis includes assessing the number of the listening texts, the suitability of the listening texts and analysis of the listening activities.

#### **3.2.2 Questionnaire**

In order to cross check the information obtained from the textbook analysis, a questionnaire was administered for grade eight English language teachers. Some of the questionnaires were adapted from Adnew Tadesse (2001) M.A. Thesis, due to their relevance to answer the research questions concerning listening lessons. In addition, the researcher prepared some

questionnaires based on what scholars have written concerning listening skills to add some point to the items.

The questionnaire for teachers comprises four parts with open and close - ended items. (See Appendix A.) The first part of the questionnaire aimed at gathering background information about English language teachers in the sample schools. The second part which has eleven items was used to assess information if the listening texts are adequate in terms of variety and contain language at the right level of the students .The third part of the questionnaire comprises ten items which were used to explore information concerning the suitability of the listening activities to the students' needs and levels. The fourth part of the questionnaire was used to elicit information regarding the roles teachers play when they teach listening lessons.

Taking in to account the grade and maturity level of the students, a questionnaire was not administered for grade eight students.

### **3.2.3 Classroom Observation**

As classroom observation provides a clear picture of what the actual teaching-learning process looks like and allows the study of phenomena at close range (Seliger and Shonmy 1989) , six classroom observations have been made to get some insight on how the teaching of listening is implemented at the sample schools. The first observation was intended to familiarize the researcher with the classroom situation and the second was used to collect the data.

During the second observation, each listening lesson has been audio-recorded to provide extracts from the recorded lessons. The recording was made with volunteer teachers since the researcher was busy in filling the check list which comprises five items (See Appendix B).

### **3.2.4 Interview**

In order to consolidate the data gathered through questionnaire and classroom observations, interviews were held both with teachers and students. A total of three teachers (one from each school) and twelve students (four from each school) were involved in the interview. The students' interview was conducted in Amharic so that they could explain their ideas freely. Each of the interviews has been audio-recorded with the willingness of the interviewees after telling them the rationale for recording.

### **3.2.5 Methods of Data Analysis**

To analyze the data that was obtained through the above instrument, the following procedures have been implemented. First, the listening sections of the textbook for grade eight were evaluated and described on the basis of the criteria discussed in the literature. Next, the teachers responses to each item in the questionnaire were tallied. Then, the frequency and the percentage of each item was computed to show the relative inclination of the subjects. Finally, a qualitative analysis was carried out on the data gathered through the interview and classroom observation. On the basis of the results of the analysis, conclusions and recommendations have been drawn.

only units 1, 9, and 11 contain listening activities, while the other skills are presented in all of the twenty units. This shows that listening is not given the same weight as the other skills and components.

#### 4.1.2. The Suitability of the Listening Texts

In this section, an attempt was made to investigate the suitability of the listening texts to the level of the students. The following table is used to illustrate the listening texts in the course book.

**Table 3: The listening texts.**

Unit	Listening texts	Topics of texts
1	Advertising	advertising goods through media such as newspaper magazines, télévision, radio, etc.
9	The giraffe	physical description of the animal giraffe.
11	Safety rules in air craft	talking about some safety rules in air craft.

The table illustrates the listening texts and their topics in the course book. The topics deal with issues such as advertising goods through media, describing the animal giraffe and some safety rules in the aircraft. The listening texts seem to contain topics that are at the right level of the students. The students might get some information concerning these issues through television, films, and video and so on.

Students may face problems if words and grammar are not clear to them. The three listening texts in the course book do not seem to have problems in this regard. The following extracts are taken from the course book to show the language of the texts.

### Advertising (unit 1)

How often do you read advertisements in newspapers?

Advertising is a form of selling. It urges people to buy goods or services, or accept a point of view. Advertisers pay for advertising that tells people about the advantages of a product, a service or an idea.

### The Giraffe (unit 9)

The giraffe is the tallest animal in the world. It often reaches a height of 5.5 meters. The giraffe has long legs. Its head is small and narrow and the eyes are dark and soft. The ears of the giraffe are quite large.

### Safety Rules in Aircraft (unit 11)

Read the listening passage to the students aloud.

- He has smoked in the aircraft toilet. Smoking in the aircraft toilets may start fire.
- He has stored his hand luggage above his head. It can fall on his head.
- He has used a radio inside the aircraft. Therefore, the aircraft may not be able to send and receive messages properly.

As can be shown from the above extracts, the listening texts seem to have language (vocabulary and grammar) at the right level of the students.

One of the causes of problems in listening lessons is the length of the text. When the text is too long, it will be difficult for the students to listen attentively. The three listening texts in the course book do not seem to have problems in this regard. The first

listening text which is found in unit one has about two hundred words. The second and the third listening texts which are found in unit nine and eleven comprise about hundred words respectively. Therefore, the texts are not too long to cause problems for the students. (See Appendix E for the listening texts)

As competence in listening depends in part on the learner' active participation, the listening lessons should be treated as an opportunity for the students to enjoy learning English by minimizing their difficulties. One of the means of doing this is by supporting visual aids in listening texts to stimulate the language learning.

In the course book, the listening texts are supported with visual elements which can give additional clues to the students beyond the spoken words. The first listening text in unit one has four pictures which require students to match the pictures with the types of advertisement. The second text consists of a picture of the animal giraffe which shows its height. The third listening text contains five pictures that describe some safety rules in the aircraft.

In general, the listening texts in the course book seem to have appropriate and sufficient visual elements which give chance to the students to use their ears as well as their eyes to grasp message from the spoken language.(See Appendix E )

A story is better understood and recalled if it is described in chronological sequence. The listening texts in grade eight English textbook seem to be appropriate in terms of information organization as events are described in the order in which they occur. To put it in other words, the stories in the texts are narrated straight forward rather than disruption or flash back. The stories such as advertising goods

through media, describing the animal giraffe and safety rules in air craft are narrated in simple and clear way so that the students can grasp the message easily. Thus, the texts seem to be appropriate in terms of information organization.

In general, the listening texts incorporated in the course book seem to be appropriate although they are not adequate in amount to enable students effective listeners in the language.

#### **4.1.3. Analysis of the Listening Activities**

Students will be benefited from language learning if they get opportunity to listen to different texts and work with a variety of activities. The following table shows the listening lessons and the types of activities in the course book.

**Table 4: The listening lessons and the types of activities**

Unit	Listening lessons	Types of activities
1	Advertising	short answer questions, true /false questions
9	The giraffe	short answer questions ,filling gaps, true/false questions, ticking items
11	Safety rules in the air craft	short answer questions, filling gaps, true / false questions.

The table illustrates the listening lessons and the types of activities in each unit. The listening lessons contain pre-listening and while-listening activities without including post-listening tasks.

As the purpose of pre-listening activities is to elicit the learners' background knowledge and prepare them for what they are going to listen,

the listening lessons involve activities such as brainstorming questions, discussions and looking at pictures. The following pre-listening activities are extracted from unit one, nine and eleven to show this point.

#### Advertisement (unit 1)

##### A. Listening

##### Pre-listening

Before you listen to the passage discuss the following questions with your partner.

1. What is an advertisement?
2. In the newspapers, do you read advertisement?
3. Can you tell certain phrases used by advertisers? Tell the class.

#### The Giraffe (unit 9)

##### A. Listening

##### Pre-listening

Before you listen to the passage discuss these questions in groups.

1. What is the tallest animal in the world?
2. How tall do you think is the giraffe?
3. Describe the parts of the giraffe? (Ears, eyes, legs, neck)

#### Safety Rules in aircraft (unit 11)

##### A. Listening

##### Pre-listening discussions

Look at the pictures and discuss them with a partner. Discuss why some of the pictures are cross marked and why some are not. (See Appendix E)

As indicated in the extracts above, the pre-listening activities include brainstorming questions, discussions and looking at pictures.

In addition to the pre-listening activities, the lessons involve the while-listening tasks. The listening activities at this stage demand students to listen for specific information rather than understanding everything in the text. In other words, students are asked to restate the general message rather than detail information. Moreover, the activities are supported by visual aids to help students carry out the tasks successfully.

From various activities that students should attempt at this stage of listening, the types of the tasks include only true/ false questions, filling gaps, and ticking marks. Other activities that are discussed in the literature are not included in the lessons. The following extracts are taken from unit one, nine and eleven to show this point.

#### Advertising (unit 1)

##### Exercise 1

Say true or false according to the information given in the passage.

1. Advertising forces people the type of products they must always buy.
2. TV, radio and news papers are the media that are used for advertising.
3. The language advertisements used usually arouse the feelings of buyers.

#### The Giraffe (unit 9)

##### Exercise 2

a) Fill in the blanks.

1. The giraffe is about \_\_\_\_\_ meters tall.
2. Its tongue is \_\_\_\_\_ centimeters long.
3. It can gallop \_\_\_\_\_ miles an hour.

- b) Listen to the description carefully again and put a tick mark/✓/ under the correct adjective.

The giraffe's	long	small	large	soft	narrow	dark
1.legs						
2.head						
3.ear						
4.eyes						

As shown in the extracts, from various activities that students should attempt at while-listening stages, the types of the task include only true/false questions, filling gaps and ticking marks. Other activities are not included in the lessons. Moreover, the listening lessons do not comprise post-listening activities such as extending notes into written responses, dictation, summary writing, etc.

In general, the above discussion would seem to suggest that the course book does not have enough amounts of listening activities to help students become skillful listeners in the language.

#### **4.2. The Results of the Teachers' Responses to the Close-Ended Items**

As already stated in the methodology section, the questionnaire for teachers consists of open and close-ended items. The open-ended items were used to assess the teachers' respondents' background information under chapter three. The close-ended items were used to assess information regarding the listening texts, activities and the roles teachers play when teaching listening. The open-ended items were not used in this section because of the interview. The responses of the teachers for the close-ended items are

presented as follows.(See Appendix A for teachers' questionnaire.)

**Table 5: Teachers' responses on the adequacy of the listening texts**

No	Item	Responses											
		Strongly agree		Agree		No response		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	are adequate in terms of variety					1	12.5	5	62.5	2	25	8	100
9	cover topics which are relevant to the students' other academic subjects			2	25			4	50	2	25	8	100
10	contain language (vocabulary and grammar ) that are comprehensible for overall language development	3	37.5	4	50			1	12.5			8	100
11	contain language (vocabulary and grammar)at the right level above the present competence of the students	1	12.5	6	75	1	12.5					8	100

The table comprises four items which were used to elicit information on the adequacy of listening texts in grade eight English lessons. Item 1 and 9 were used to assess if the listening texts are adequate in terms of variety and cover topics which are relevant to the students' other academic subjects. As table 5 depicts, 87.5% and 75% of the respondents said that the listening texts are not adequate in terms of variety as well as do not cover topics which are relevant to the students' academic subjects.

Item 10 and 11 were used to assess information whether the texts contain language (vocabulary and grammar) that are comprehensive for overall language development and match with the level of the students, a little above the present competence. 87.5% of the teachers showed their agreement to these items.

The responses of the teachers to the above items as a whole seem to indicate that the listening texts do not seem adequate to help students to become skillful listeners of the language although they contain language which are comprehensible as well as at the right level of the students.

**Table 6: Teachers' reactions to the relevance and suitability of the listening texts**

No	Item The listening texts:	Responses											
		Strongly agree		Agree		No response		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2	contain topics that are at the right level of the students neither too difficult nor too simple	1	12.5	5	62.5	1	12.5	1	12.5			8	100
3	are familiar and related to the students' real life situation	3	37.5	4	50					1	12.5	8	100
4	are organized in a way that is clear and simple to follow for the students	2	25	4	50			2	25			8	100
5	are interesting and motivating for the students to listen	1	12.5	6	75			1	12.5			8	100
6	contain appropriate and sufficient visual support (pictures, diagrams tables etc.) for the students to carry out the task successfully.	2	25	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	25			8	100
7	are manageable length not too long and not too short			8	100							8	100
8	contain relevant and sufficient information for the students to follow.	2	25	4	50	1	12.5	1	12.5			8	100

The table consists of ~~seven~~ items which were used to assess information on the relevance and suitability of the listening texts in grade eight English lessons. Item 2 and 5 were used to explore if the listening texts contain topics that are neither too difficult nor too simple to students to listen attentively. Accordingly, 75% and 87.5% of the teachers showed their

information on the relevance and suitability of the listening activities in grade eight English lessons. Item 2, 3, and 10 were used to explore whether the listening activities are appropriate, suitable and do not require students to understand everything in the text. Accordingly, 75% of the teachers responded that the listening activities are appropriate to the grade level of the students. In addition, 62.5% of the teachers showed their agreement to the suitability of the listening activities to the students' proficiency level. On the other hand, 75% of the teachers said that the listening activities do not require students to understand everything in the text.

Item 4 and 6 were used to assess whether the listening activities are challenging enough neither too simple nor too difficult and require students to understand the main idea or to extract specific information. Accordingly, 75% and 87.5% of the respondents showed their agreement to these items respectively. This indicates that the listening activities seem to be appropriate as they require students to listen to the main idea rather than demanding to understand everything in the text. The actual nature of listening is to determine which part of the spoken texts are the most important and to ignore irrelevant information. (Littlewood, 1981)

Item 5 was used to elicit information if the listening activities are designed to promote cooperative work (pair or group) among the students. Only, 37.5% of the teachers agreed to this idea. In other words, the majority of the respondents (62.5%) replied that the activities are not designed to promote cooperative work among the students. As already stated in the text book analysis section, students are required to do the pre-listening activities in group, however, the while-listening activities are designed to be done individually as there are no post-listening activities in the course book. Item 7 was used to assess if the listening activities are presented in clear and simple way. 75% of the teachers showed their agreement to this item.



As majority of the items are taken into account in table 8, the listening activities seem to be relevant and suitable to the level of the students.

**Table 9: Teachers' responses concerning what they do when teaching listening**

No	Item When teaching listening you:	Responses												
		Strongly agree		Agree		No response		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	explain new words and structures before teaching listening	3	37.5	3	37.5				2	25			8	100
2	activate students' back ground knowledge	2	25	5	62.5	1	12.5						8	100
3	give some in formation about the topic before students start listening	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	1	12.5				8	100
4	encourage students to predict what they are going to listen	5	62.5	3	37.5								8	100
5	encourage students to read or write questions that will be done in while listening stages.	4	50	3	37.5	1	12.5						8	100
6	encourage students to listen for specific information	3	37.5	5	62.5								8	100
7	help students to ignore irrelevant words and details during the listening lessons	2	25	6	75								8	100
8	read texts in normal speed neither too fast nor too slow to help learners catch enough words	5	62.5	2	25	1	12.5						8	100
9	encourage students to understand the central idea of the text	2	25	6	75								8	100
10	encourage students to give answer on the general meaning rather than remembering every word in the text	2	25	5	62.5	1	12.5						8	100
11	prevent anxiety by encouraging students not to worry if they make mistakes	6	75	2	25								8	100
12	encourage students to ask for clarification of meaning when problems occur	2	25	5	62.5			1	12.5				8	100

The table contains twelve items which were used to explore information concerning what teachers do when teaching listening lessons. Items 1-5 comprise answers on what teachers do at pre-listening stages. Item 2 and 4 were used to assess whether teachers activate the students' background knowledge and encourage them to predict what they are going to listen to. 87.5% of the teachers responded that they activate the students' background knowledge before students listen to the text. In addition, all the respondents (100%) pointed out that they help students to predict what they are going to listen. However, there was mismatch with what teachers responded in item 4 in the questionnaire and what was obtained through classroom observations. The data collected through classroom observations revealed that the majority of the teachers do not encourage students to predict what they are going to listen before listening.

Item 1 and 3 were used to assess if teachers explain new words and give some information about the topic before students listen to the text. Accordingly, 75% of the respondents showed their agreement to these items. During classroom observations, the sample teachers were observed when they explain new words and give some background information about the topic before students listen to the text.

Item 5 was used to explore whether teachers encourage students to read or write questions or activities that will be done in while-listening stages. 87.5% of the respondents showed their agreement to this item. During the classroom observations, teachers were observed when they encourage students to read or write questions or activities in classrooms.

Items 6-15 were used to explore information concerning the roles teachers play in minimizing students' difficulties when they teach listening. Item 6 and 7 were used to examine if teachers encourage students to listen for

specific information and ignore irrelevant words. Accordingly, all the respondents (100%) replied that they encourage students to listen for specific information and ignore irrelevant words. During classroom observations, the sample teachers were observed when they encourage students to listen for specific information.

Item 8 was used to assess if teachers read the listening texts in normal speed neither too fast nor too slow. 87.5% of the teachers agreed to this item. The data that was collected through classroom observations also showed that teachers read the text in normal speed. This indicates that teachers seem to help students by controlling their speed and pausing at places where there is information that students need to complete the listening tasks.

Item 9 and 10 were concerned with eliciting information if teachers encourage students to understand the central idea of the text as well as to give answers on the general meaning. All of the teachers (100%) agreed to these items. Since there is a difference between being able to use the information that is heard and to reproduce the message in words perfectly, teachers seem to help students to listen to the general meaning rather than remembering every word in the text.

Item 11 and 12 were used to assess information whether teachers prevent anxiety by encouraging students not to worry if they make mistakes and ask for clarification when problems occur. Accordingly, all the respondents agreed to these points. However, there was mismatch with what teachers responded for item 12 and what was collected through classroom observations. During classroom observations, most of the sample teachers did not encourage students when they make mistakes in listening activities.

As majority of the items are taken into account in table 4, teachers seem to help students to attempt the listening tasks without putting too much

emphasis on the quality of their responses.

### 4.3. Data from Classroom Observations

As already stated in the research design section, classroom observations were made to get some insight on how the teaching of listening is implemented in the sample schools. The following table depicts the summary of the observed listening texts and activities.

**Table 10: The observed listening texts and activities**

Unit	Listening texts	Topics of the text	Activities of the text
1	Advertising	a story of advertising goods through media such as newspaper, magazines, television, radio, posters etc.	short answer questions, true / false questions
9	The giraffe	deals with the description of the animal giraffe	short answer questions, filling gaps, true / false questions, ticking marks
11	Safety rules in air craft	talking about some safety rules in air craft	short answer questions, filling gaps, true / false questions.

The table illustrates the observed listening texts and activities when the actual teaching-learning process took place in the sample schools. The report of the classroom observations is summarized as follows.

In all observed listening texts and activities, teachers began the lessons by introducing the work for the period. Then, they told the students to take out their textbooks on the page where the listening lesson was found. Teachers explained new words and gave some background information about the topic before the students listen to the text, however, they did not encourage students to predict what they were going to listen. Next, teachers told students to answer the pre-listening questions from the textbook. The

sample teachers were observed when they explain difficult questions to help students understand the central idea of the text. Teachers discussed the pre-listening activities with the students and gave feedback on each task. The following extracts show what teachers did before students listened<sup>to</sup> the passage.

#### Extract 1

Teacher: You have to follow me. The title that we are going to see here is about advertisement. I have some pre-listening activities or questions. Let me ask you questions. What is advertisement?

Student: About something telling information.

Teacher: It's something which tell about a material or something about an object. What is the purpose of advertisement?

Student: To give answer to industrial product.

Teacher: The purpose of advertisement as you heard from Sintayehu is to get customer or to get buyer. Can you tell me some of the famous people in advertisement? Tell me these people.

Student1: The famous person is Serawit Fikire.

Student2: Muluaem Tadesse.

Teacher: What else?

Student3: Shewaferaw Desalegn

Student4: Fantu Mandoye

Teacher: This much is enough.

### Extract 2

Teacher: Ok, before we read the listening passage, let us discuss the pre-listening. What is the tallest animal in the world?

Student: Giraffe.

Teacher: Yes, giraffe is the tallest animal in the world. How tall do you think is giraffe?

Students: No response.

Teacher: It is 5.5 meters. Describe the part of the giraffe.

Student1: Long leg.

Student2: Long neck.

Teacher: Where do you find this animal?

Student: In forest.

### Extract 3

Teacher: Today's lesson is listening. The listening topic is safety rules in aircraft. In your textbook, on page ninety five, in unit eleven, there are four pictures. There are 'X' marks on some pictures. To complete the blank spaces you have to listen the following rules.

.He has smoked in the aircraft toilet. Smoking in the aircraft toilets may start fire.

.He has stored his hand luggage above his head. It can fall on his head.

.He has used a radio inside the aircraft. Therefore, the aircraft may not be able to send and receive messages properly.

From the above extractions, it can be suggested that teachers help students by activating their background knowledge to prepare them for what they are going to listen.

In addition to the above activities, teachers told students to write or read the while-listening tasks for some minutes. Then, teachers told students to listen to the text attentively and give answers on the general meaning. After that, teachers read out the listening passage in normal speed. The following extract might give an insight how teachers read the text. "As far as I can, I will read it slowly; you try to listen carefully; do not write anything; you try to listen attentively." Teachers seem to help students by controlling their speed and pausing at places where there is information that students need to complete the listening tasks. Teachers read the listening text for the second time. Their speed seems a little bit faster than the first one. Teachers did not read the text for the third time unless students asked for it. Let us see this extraction from the class room observation:

Teacher: Shall we repeat it again?

Students: No!

Furthermore, teachers gave some minutes to the students to accomplish the tasks before they discuss each activity. The following extract illustrates how teachers gave feedback on while-listening activities.

Teacher: Are the statements true or false? The giraffe is the shortest animal. Ok, Abdul.

Student: False, the giraffe is tall.

Teacher: Yes, the answer is false. The giraffe is the tallest animal. It is not the shortest animal. Ok, number two; its ears are sensitive to the faintest sounds.

Student: False

Teacher: No, the answer is true.

Teacher: It has a keen sense of smell.

Student: True.

Teacher: The answer is true.

Each listening lesson came to an end after teachers gave corrections on each activity. In all observed listening lessons; teachers did not give post-listening activities based on the work done in pre-listening and while-listening stages. Most of the students were passive listeners during classroom observations. The reason might be the students may lack experience in listening to different kinds of texts and activities.

During classroom observations, teachers did not encourage students to work in pair or group even though they are suggested to do so in the textbook. As a result, students did not have opportunity to interact with each other and share ideas based on the listening text. Moreover, teachers did not use different materials for teaching listening such as visual aids, and recorded materials. The listening lessons were predominately conducted by means of lecture.

The observed listening activities require students to listen for specific information as well as to give answer on the general meaning. Moreover, the activities were supported by visual elements that provide additional clues to the students to carry our tasks successfully.

In general, the above description of the classroom observations would seem to indicate that teachers do not seem to prepare their own listening texts and activities to help students, except teaching the texts in the course book.

#### **4.4. Summary of Teachers' Responses for the Interview Questions**

As already pointed out in the research design section, interviews were conducted to the sample teachers to cross check the data that were collected through questionnaire and classroom observations. The teachers' responses for the interview questions are summarized as follows.

Most of the teachers in the interview explained that they do not often teach listening skills in classrooms as there are no enough listening texts and activities incorporated in grade eight English course books. The respondents said that they depend on the course book for teaching listening and other language skills.

The sample teachers in the interview also mentioned that they do not prepare their own listening texts and activities to help students develop the skills of listening. The reason for this, as some of the interviewees reported is that grade eight English textbook is too bulky and time consuming to cover its content in the allotted schedule. Focusing on language skills such as grammar, vocabulary and reading which help students to pass national examination is another reason that teachers reported in the interview not to prepare their own listening lessons. This suggest that teachers seem to give priority for covering the content of the text book as well as preparing students for national examination rather than aiming at a balanced development of language skills.

The interviewees also mentioned that they do not use visual support as a significant part of the students' experience to relate the lesson to the things that happen outside the classroom. Besides, the sample teachers explained that they read out the texts to the students as there are no recorded materials such as tape recorder in the schools.

The sample teachers reported that unavailability of appropriate materials

for teaching listening, lack of background knowledge of the students and shortage of time to cover the content of the textbook are some of the major problems that they encounter when teaching listening.

To sum up, the above discussion of teachers' responses for the interview questions seem to suggest that enough attention is not given to the teaching of listening in grade eight English lessons.

#### **4.5. Summary of Students' Reactions for the Interview Questions**

As already discussed in the methodology section, an interview was conducted to the sample students to find out some information regarding the adequacy of teaching listening in grade eight English lessons. The reactions of the students for the interview questions are summarized in the following way.

The sample students in the interview responded that they do not often learn listening lessons in classrooms compared with other language skills such as grammar, reading, vocabulary etc. The students further explained that grade eight English textbook does not integrate enough amount of listening texts and activities that help them practice the skills of listening. The respondents also pointed out that their teachers do not prepare their own listening texts and activities to help them develop the skills. Some of the respondents added that due consideration is not given to the teaching of listening skills in grade eight English lessons even though it is the key to successful communication.

The interviewees also reported that their teachers do not teach them using different materials such as pictures, photos, maps, tables, magazines, newspapers and so on. Besides, recorded materials such as tape recorder are not used for teaching listening in classrooms.



The students in the interview reported that lack of background knowledge, unavailability of recorded and live listening materials for teaching listening, and lack of effort from teachers for teaching listening are some of the problems that they encounter when learning listening.

As a whole, the students' reactions for the interview questions seem to show that students do not seem to listen to different texts that would help them become successful listeners of English language.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The main objective of this study was to assess if the teaching of listening is adequate in grade eight English lessons. In other words, an attempt was made to investigate whether enough attention is given to the teaching of listening in grade eight English lessons. The data required for the study were obtained through textbook analysis, questionnaire, classroom observations and interview. The analysis was made through qualitative and quantitative means.

#### **5.1. Conclusions**

Based on the analysis of the data that was collected through the above instruments, the following conclusions were drawn:

Grade eight English course book does not contain adequate listening lessons compared with other language skills such as speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. Thus, the listening texts and activities incorporated in the textbook do not seem adequate in contributing the students' success in mastery of the language that would enable them to achieve their goals in academic setting where English is used as a medium of instruction.

Teachers do not seem to prepare their own listening texts and activities to help students even if they are aware of the absence of adequate listening texts and activities in the course book. Lack of time to cover the content of the course book and giving priority to other language skills were some of the major reasons that teachers reported not to prepare their own listening lessons.

6. The listening texts incorporated in the course book seem to be familiar and related to the students' real life situation and contain topics at the right level of the students.

7. The listening activities seem to be appropriate, suitable and require students to understand the main idea or to extract specific information rather than demanding students to understand everything in the text.

8. Teachers seem to give background information about the topic and explain key words to the students before students listen to the text. They also encourage students to listen for specific information as well as to understand the central idea of the text instead of focusing on detail information.

9. Teachers do not seem to promote different class organizations such as pair or group among the students even though they are suggested to do so in the textbook. Thus, students do not have opportunity to interact with each other and share ideas based on the information obtained from the listening text.

10. Teachers do not seem to use different materials such as visual aids, and recorded materials for teaching listening. Hence, the listening lessons are predominately conducted by means of lecture in classrooms.

11. Teachers do not seem prevent anxiety by encouraging students not to worry when they make mistakes in listening classes.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the results obtained and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were forwarded:

1. It is important to design appropriate teaching material that aimed at a balanced language skills to help student become successful listeners in the setting where English is used as the medium of instruction.

2. Awareness should be created up on teachers concerning the vitality of teaching listening in language development. Teachers should treat the listening session as an opportunity for their students to enjoy doing in English. Teachers' enthusiasm will enhance the students' motivation and increase their confidence to become skilful listeners.

3. It is essential to help students by preparing texts that are interesting as well as suitable for the learners' level and needs. Giving learners a variety of tasks, as well as different types of listening helps them to become skilful listeners. To that end, knowledge of how to modify textbook tasks is important.

4. Awareness should be created upon teachers to help students to attempt to the listening tasks without putting too much emphasis on the quality of the presentation of their responses. It is important to accept that a listening task can often be answered by missing some of the words.

5. It is useful to encouraging students to listen to different texts using different materials such as cassette, radio, television, documentaries, films, video tapes, songs etc., outside the classroom. This can bring a considerable amount of improvement in the students' listening skill in the long run.

6. Awareness should be created up on teachers regarding the value of visual aids in stimulating the teaching of listening. Moreover, the listening lesson preferably is aided by recorded materials which could bring the voice of native speaker for non-native teachers and allow a variety of sound.

7. Various class organizations such as pair and group work should be implemented in the teaching of listening. This can help students to interact with each other and share ideas based on the information obtained from the text. "Pair or group work helps to remove some of the feelings of isolations and anxiety and makes listening a more pleasure activity."(Underwood, 1989)

8. Getting feedback from the students about the text, the task and any other problem can minimize the difficulties that students perceive and help them increase their confidence to become successful listeners. Teachers may also ask students how they would like to work a listening text next time.

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# **Appendix A**

## **1. Teachers' Questionnaire**

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Department of Foreign Language and Literature**

Questionnaire to be filled by Grade eight English language teachers

Dear teacher:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data concerning the adequacy of teaching listening in grade eight English lessons. Your honest response to each item in the questionnaire has a great value to this study. Note that your response will be used only for the purpose of research. Your cooperation is highly appreciated in advance.

**N.B** - You do not need to write your name

- As all the questions are related to teaching listening, all your responses should be related to this

## 2. Personal Information

1. Name of the school \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex:     Male      Female
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Teaching experience in years \_\_\_\_\_
5. Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Seminars, workshops attended:

How many: \_\_\_\_\_

Where:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

When:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Topic/title:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives of the seminar:

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**3.** The following items are concerned with the information about the listening texts that you are teaching. Please, rate each item according to the information given.

<b>No</b>	<b>The listening texts:</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1.	are adequate in terms of variety					
2.	contain topics that are at the right level of the students; neither too difficult nor too simple					
3.	are familiar and related to the students real life situation					
4.	are organized in a way that is clear and simple to follow for the students					
5.	are interesting and motivating for the students to listen					
6.	contain appropriate and sufficient visual support (pictures, diagrams, tables, etc), for the students to carry out the task successfully					
7.	Are at manageable length not too long and not too short					
8.	contain relevant and sufficient information for the students to follow					
9.	cover topics which are relevant to the students' other academic subjects					
10.	contain language (vocabulary and grammar) that are comprehensible for overall language development					
11.	contain language (vocabulary and grammar) at the right level, a little above the present competence of the students					

4. The following items are designed to gather information about the listening activities. Please, show your position by rating one from the given alternatives

No	The listening activities:	strongly agree	Agree	No response	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	are adequate in terms of variety					
2.	are appropriate to the grade level of the students					
3.	are suitable to the students proficiency level in developing listening skills					
4.	are challenging enough neither too simple nor too difficult					
5.	are designed to promote cooperative work (pair or group) among the students					
6.	require students to understand the main idea or to extract specific information					
7.	are presented in clear and simple way					
8.	are classified into pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stages					
9.	are designed in a way that integrate other skills perhaps speaking and writing					
10.	do not require students to understand everything in the text					



5. The following statements are intended to explore information about how you teach listening lessons in a classroom. Please, indicate your responses by ticking one item from the given alternatives

No	When teaching listening, you:	strongly agree	Agree	No response	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	explain new words and structures before teaching listening					
2.	activate students' back ground knowledge					
3.	give some information about the topic before students start listening					
4.	encourage students to predict what they are going to listen					
5.	encourage students to read or write questions that will be done in while-listening stages					
6.	encourage students to listen for specific information					
7.	help students to ignore irrelevant words and details during listening lessons					
8.	read texts in normal speed (neither too fast nor too slow) to help learners catch enough words					
9.	encourage students to understand the central idea of the text					
10.	encourage students to give answer on the general meaning rather than remembering every word					
11.	prevent anxiety by encouraging students not to worry if they make mistakes					
12.	encourage students to ask for clarification when problems occur					

## ADVERTISING

How often do you read advertisements in newspapers?

Advertising is a form of selling. It urges people to buy goods or services, or accept a point of view. Advertisers pay for advertising that tells people about the advantages of a product, a service or an idea. Advertising tells what products or services are on the market and how they can be obtained.

Advertising reaches people through mediums or media. The most important media include newspapers, magazines, television, radio, window displays in stores, and posters in buses and street cars.

Advertisers use different methods to arouse our feelings. They usually get well-known people to say that they like or do not like someone or something. If we admire and respect them we often feel inclined to buy what they recommend.

Advertisers of sports equipment, for example, often pay famous athletes for their testimonials and the use of their names on the equipment. Great tennis players tell us to switch to their rackets and sport clothes. Movie and TV stars reveal that they use certain brands of soap, skin cream, hair, treatment, and so on.

Advertising, good or bad, selfish or unselfish, stirs our feeling. We should not make decisions only on the basis of our feelings. We think and act more intelligently when we make our judgement on the facts and not because of our feelings.

This exercise practises listening to a text and filling in the blanks and tables and answering TRUE/FALSE questions.

- Give students enough time to discuss the pre-listening questions.
- After they have finished discussing the questions, tell students to read the exercises.
- Tell students to guess the answers before listening to the passage.
- Tell students to listen to the text carefully and attentively.
- Read the passage slowly and carefully once. See if students are trying to do some of the exercises.
- Read for the second time and let students do the exercises.
- If it is necessary, read for the third time. Let students compare their answers with other students.
- Discuss the answers with students.

#### **THE GIRAFFE**

The giraffe is the tallest animal in the world. It often reaches a height of 5.5 meters. The giraffe has long legs. Its head is small and narrow and the eyes are dark and soft. The ears of the giraffe are quite large. They are sensitive to the faintest sounds. The remarkable sense of hearing and keen sense of smell are very important to the giraffe in detecting danger.

The tongue of the giraffe is 46 centimeters long. The giraffe can use its tongue so skillfully that it can pick the smallest leaves off thorny plants without being pricked. The giraffe can gallop 30 miles an hour.

# UNIT 11

## TALKING ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE HAVE DONE

### Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, the students, should be able to:

- develop their silent reading skill
- grasp the contextual meanings of the new words.
- use the present perfect correctly

### A. LISTENING

#### Safety rules in Aircraft

Read the listening passage to the students aloud.

- He has smoked in the aircraft toilet. Smoking in the aircraft toilets may start fire.
- He has stored his hand luggage above his head. It can fall on his head.
- He has used a radio inside the aircraft. Therefore, the aircraft may not be able to send and receive messages properly.
- He has fastened his seat-belt on take off and landing. He is not thrown out of his seat.
- He has blown his life jacket inside to aircraft. He may not get out of the aircraft quickly enough.
- He has known where the exits are. It's easy for him to get out through the exits.

#### Teaching suggestions

- Have students discuss the pictures.
- Have them read the instructions and questions in their books.
- Go over key words.
- Read the listening passages and let students listen once without writing.
- Read the rules again. This time get them answer the questions. If they have difficulty, read the rules as many times as needed.

# UNIT 1

## A. LISTENING

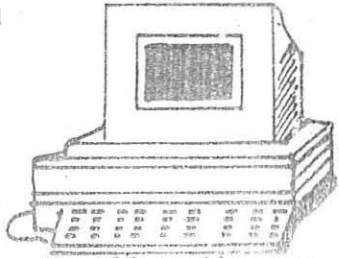
### Pre-Listening

Before you listen to the passage discuss the following questions with your partner.

1. What is an advertisement?
2. In the newspapers do you read advertisements?
3. Can you tell certain phrases used by advertisers? Tell the class.
4. Make a list of famous people who recommend products in advertisements.
5. Apart from news, we usually read advertisements in daily newspapers. Match the pictures and extracts with types of advertisement.

- A Hotel
- B Hair replacement
- C Car for sale
- D Surveyor
- E Cars for rent
- F Computer training
- G House for rent

1



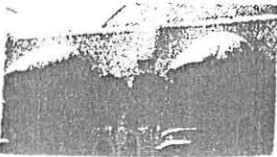
We offer all courses  
Make up your mind our  
institute

Urgently Required with very good  2  
experience. Not less than 5 years in the  
construction field.

3



4

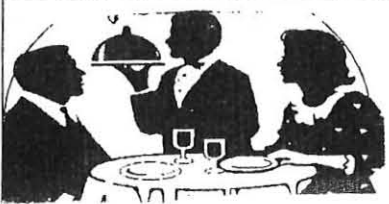


Address: Woreda, 17  
Keble 38, Price 1500 Birr 4  
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furniture

See yourself  
your choice  
before taking any  
chances!

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Vehicles, available with or  
without drivers contact...

Fully automatic, 6  
67,000 Kms.  
Excellent condition.



7  
Special Buffet Dinner- Every Sunday  
Tel: 000000

Now listen to your teacher and answer the questions.

### Exercise 1

Say True or False according to the information given in the passage

1. Advertising forces people the type of products they must always buy.
2. Tv, radio, and news papers are the media that are used for advertising.
3. The language advertisements used usually arouse the feelings of buyers.
4. Advertisers pay film stars or famous athletes a large amount of money if they always buy the same products from the same factory.
5. The last part of the passage tells us that advertising is always bad and selfish.
6. In the passage we are advised that we shouldn't make decisions only on the basis of our feelings as far as advertisements are concerned.
7. Posters are used in advertising.

# UNIT 9

## ASKING ABOUT AND DESCRIBING ANIMALS

### A LISTENING

Before you listen to the passage discuss these questions in groups

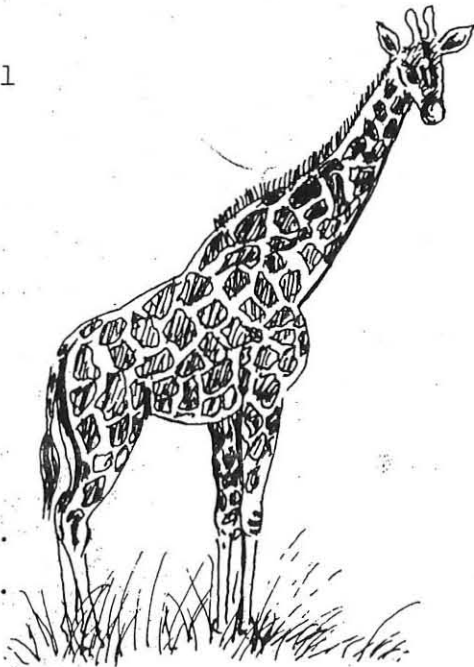
1. What is the tallest animal in the world?
2. How tall do you think is the giraffe?
3. Describe the parts of the giraffe? (ears, eyes, legs, neck)
4. Where do you find these animals?

## THE GIRAFFE

### Exercise 1

After listening to the text answer the following questions. Are these statements True or False?

1. The giraffe is the shortest animal
2. Its ears are sensitive to the faintest sounds
3. It has a keen sense of smell.



### Exercise 2

a) Fill in the blanks

1. The giraffe is about    meters tall.
2. Its tongue is    centimetres long.
3. It can gallop    miles an hour.

b) Listen to the description carefully again and put a tick mark (✓) under the correct adjective.

The giraffe's	long	small	large	soft	narrow	dark
1. legs	yes	No	yes	no	no	no
2. head	yes	yes	No	no	yes	no
3. ear	yes	no	yes	no	no	no
4. eyes	no	no	yes	yes	no	no

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Tigist Chegen

Signature



Advisor D.r. Girma Gezahegn

Signature



Place: Institute of Language Studies: Addis Ababa  
University

Date of Submission: June, 2009.