

**LECTURERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS TO ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS
AT THREE ETHIOPIAN UNIVERSITIES**

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that this study, **Lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching listening skills to English foreign language students at three Ethiopian universities** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



10 JUNE 2016

Signature

(Edaso Mulu Genu)

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research was to explore lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching listening skills to English foreign language (EFL) students at three Ethiopian universities with the purpose of proposing guidelines and recommendations for effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills. The research was prompted by a number of research projects which indicated that listening skills and the teaching of listening in the Ethiopian context were not effective resulting in students who are ill equipped for listening effectively.

A mixed method approach was followed as a design for the empirical research study. A pragmatic research paradigm, using both quantitative and qualitative methods and then blending the two methods was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 72 lecturers and 158 students at three Ethiopian universities by means of close-ended questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale instrument. For the qualitative phase of the study data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students. Observations of listening lessons presented in the classroom and in the language laboratory were done by means of completing an observation checklist and note-taking. These were used to triangulate data. The analysis of the data obtained by means of the questionnaires and the observation checklist were done using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data obtained by means of unstructured interviews (which were transcribed verbatim) were coded and divided into themes.

The research findings indicated that the lecturers' perceptions of the activities used during the pre-, while- and post-listening phases and the use of listening material were more positive than those of students and that females perceived the effectiveness less positive than males. The data obtained by means of interview questions confirmed what was found in the quantitative part of the study. Observations carried out in the three universities showed that the teaching of listening skills was mostly poorly done and that the listening material used was not suitable and did not interest students. The use of bottom-up and top-down strategies were found to be used inadequately in the teaching of EFL listening skills. The teaching methods and strategies used, as well as activities provided during each

listening phase were found to be generally poor. A model for teaching EFL listening in the classroom was proposed in this study.

Lecturers and students expressed their challenges in teaching and learning EFL listening skills and also made recommendations for best practices on how to improve the teaching and learning of EFL listening. These challenges and recommendations for best practices mostly centred around lecturer-related, student-related and institutional-related factors. This study has suggested recommendations pertaining to the lecturers, students, institutions of higher education, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and schools.

KEY CONCEPTS:

Listening; listening skills; teaching listening; pre-listening; while-listening; post-listening; listening material; English foreign language listening; bottom-up processing, top-down processing

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L2	Second Language
Mol	Ministry of Information
SNNPRG	South Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional Government
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Because of modern day mass communication via media such as television and computers, human beings' communication has become much more visually-orientated. Effective listening is, however, an important language skill that needs to be developed in learners since it plays a crucial role in communication in general (Hedge, 2000:227-253) and, according to Haregu (2008:3), in learning in particular. In this study the important role of listening in the learning process will be investigated. Special attention will be given to listening in English as a foreign language in higher education.

1.1.1 The role of listening in communication

The fact that the listening skill plays a decisive role in our day-to-day communication is clearly explained by Rivers (1981:18) who indicates that adults spend approximately 40-50% of their communication time on listening, 25-30% on speaking, 11-16% on reading and approximately 9% on writing. Hedge (2000:227-253) found that up to 45% of one's communication time is spent on listening activities, while Chen (2011:68) estimates that 50% of an adult's communication consists of listening. The advent of mobile phone technologies and the emergence of new social media websites created new modes for our communications. According to Shah and Lohar (2016:136) social media influenced our language and the way we communicate and listen. It is thus clear that one spends much more time on listening communication activities than on the rest of the language skills (i.e., reading, writing and speaking). The fact that people spend so much time on listening, however, does not imply that they are 'good' listeners. It is rather an indication of how important it is that their listening skills should be developed and that time should be spent on the teaching of this important communication skill to ensure effective communication. Winn (1988:145) also notes in this regard that students do not need to listen **more**; rather, they need to listen **better**.

According to Hedge (2000:227-253) listening is fundamental for everyday life communication. It is critical in our day to day activities. Lindsay and Knight (2006:11)

state for that we inter alia listen to what someone says during a conversation - face to face or on the telephone, announcements giving information, the weather forecast on the radio, a play on the radio, music, a lecture or professional advice.

Concerning the importance of listening, Nadig (2007:24) writes, "Expressing our wants, feelings, thoughts and opinions clearly and effectively is only half of the communication process needed for interpersonal effectiveness. The other half is listening and understanding what others communicate to us." Nadig's (2007) explanation seems to imply that the effectiveness of our communication is judged not only by how much we speak but also by how much of what we speak is understood by listeners. Hence, it may be argued that no matter how good a speaker may be at speaking, he/she may find it hard to make an impression if those receiving the message are not effective listeners.

Effective listening skills are, however, not only important in everyday communication but also in the learning process in general. Listening is the first language skill that a baby acquires (Guo & Wills, 2005:8). In the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language, the important role of listening is also in particular recognised. Vandergrift and Goh (2012:4) refer to the importance of listening when interacting with language input and also point out that listening facilitates the development of other language skills. Not only does listening play a key role in the early stages of language learning (White, 2008:215), but the development of competence in a foreign language at later stages of learning also depends to a great extent on the ability to listen effectively in this foreign language (Vandergrift, 2003:427). Teachers and lecturers do a lot of talking while teaching English as a foreign language, which means that students have to be able to listen to them attentively to acquire new vocabulary, understand lectures, take notes and take part in communicative activities in English.

1.1.2 Listening in a foreign language

The role that listening plays in the acquisition of a second or foreign language started to gain attention when the Communicative Language Teaching methodology, which emphasised the need of teaching listening for effective oral communication (Goh,

2008:189), became popular in language teaching in the 1970s. Although much ground-breaking work on the teaching of listening in second and foreign languages has been done, it is still one of the skills that receives little attention in many classes which is a challenge for learners in the classroom and beyond (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012:xiii).

The importance of good second and foreign language listening skills can clearly be seen from Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan's (2006:29) statement that listening to a second language is regarded as the most widely used language skill in many people's normal daily life. The ultimate goal of teaching any language is to enable the learners to use the target language and communicate their opinions, thoughts and feelings (Krashen & Terrell, 1983:16-17). In this regard listening plays an important role as it is a fundamental language skill which students need in order to gain adequate proficiency in the target language. Listening allows them to understand the speech they hear and take part in any form of spoken communication successfully. It is also a critical means of language learning (Vandergrift, 1999:170; Rost, 2001:7).

Various scholars contributed ideas about the role and importance of listening skills in language learning and teaching. Vandergrift (2003:427) refers to the "key role" that listening plays in current theories of second language acquisition. According to Guo and Wills (2005:11) language learning mainly depends on listening since it provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Moreover, it is believed that listening provides the foundation for all aspects of language learning and in this sense it plays a lifelong role in the process of communication.

As far as second language acquisition theory is concerned, Guo and Wills (2005:12) explain that language input is the essential condition for the acquisition of a second language. As an input skill, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching, it is vital for language instructors to help students become effective listeners. Kristiani (2008:1) discusses the importance of listening skills when learning English and emphasises the fact that everyone who wants to learn English well should be able to master the listening skill as the most basic skill necessary for mastering the other

skills. According to him listening is a prerequisite for understanding spoken messages and therefore the teaching of listening skills should not be neglected during English instruction (Kristiani, 2008:1). Vandergift and Tafaghodtari (2010:470) refer to the relative ease with which native (first) language speakers acquire the complex skill of listening comprehension, whereas second and foreign language learners struggle to do so. This observation emphasises the need for supporting second and foreign language learners' listening comprehension skills.

1.1.3 Listening: The Cinderella skill in language teaching and research

In spite of the important role of listening and the fact that listening is the communication skill that is used most, a thorough literature search revealed that more research has been done on the teaching of reading, speaking and writing than on the teaching of listening. This observation is confirmed by Klapper (2006:325) and McNaughton, Hamlin, McCarthy, Head-Reeves and Schreiner (2007:224) who emphasise the fact that there is only limited research on the teaching of effective listening skills to education professionals, and by White (2008:209) who pleads for more research on the development of effective listening materials, equipment and teaching methodology. Hamouda (2013:113) refers to the “relatively little research” that has been done on listening in spite of the fact that it is an important skill in foreign language learning.

In addition to the scarcity of research done on the teaching of listening skills, Mendelsohn (2006:75) remarks that much of what is traditionally called “teaching listening” should actually be called “testing listening”. Here, Mendelsohn (2006:76) says that most traditional listening classes consist of having listeners listen and answer questions, without teaching them how to listen effectively, “...i.e. testing their listening rather than teaching them how to listen”. Goh (2008:189) reports that traditional listening teaching techniques such as merely expecting learners to answer comprehension questions based on a listening passage, are still common practice in many classrooms and that this practice of language teaching may cause students to become anxious. This is confirmed by Vandergrift and Goh (2012:4) who state that, although learners are exposed to more listening activities than in the past, “...

learners are still left to develop their listening abilities on their own with little direct support from the teacher.”

Boyd (2001:60) indicates that the important concept of teaching listening skills is sometimes overlooked, while Nunan (2002:239) writes that teaching listening skills is not considered by English language teachers to be taught with (i.e. integrated with) the teaching of writing, speaking and reading. Therefore, he calls listening skills “[t]he Cinderella skill in second language learning” and argues that proficiency in a second language has tended to be viewed in terms of the ability to speak and write the language in question, with listening relegated to the second position.

According to Thompson, Leintz, Nevers and Witkowski (2004:228-229), there are a number of misconceptions about teaching listening skills, namely:

- Hearing and listening are synonymous.
- Listening is primarily a passive activity.
- Listening competency develops naturally.
- Listening ability is largely dependent on intelligence.

When taking the above common misconceptions into consideration, it explains why instruction for effective listening “has largely been neglected” (Thompson, *et al.*, 2004:229).

According to Wallace, Stariha and Walberg (2004:13) teaching listening skills is essential for learning because it enables students to acquire insights and information and also to achieve success in communicating with others. Hamouda (2013:113) refers to the importance of receiving input when learning a foreign language and points out that this input is received by means of the listening skill. He explains the close relationship between listening and language learning as follows, “... language acquisition is achieved mainly through understandable input and listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input” (Hamouda, 2013:113). White (2008:210) refers to the important role which listening plays in language development in general and Klapper (2006:321) states that listening plays

a major role in all language use, whether it is in the mother tongue or a second language, and claims that listening is a more demanding skill than reading. Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006:29) also regard listening in a foreign language as a complex process and the most difficult of the four language skills to learn.

It can therefore be concluded that the teaching of listening skills is a critical element in language learning and communication – especially second and foreign language learning and communication – since it is the base or key to acquiring the skills of speaking, reading and writing. In spite of this it seems that it is the least considered skill in the process of language teaching and learning.

1.2 EXPLORATION OF THE PROBLEM OF LISTENING IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE ETHIOPIAN CONTEXT

Ethiopia is a multilingual country where more than eighty-five languages are spoken. In section 3.5 of the Ethiopian National Education Policy (Ministry of Education, 1994:10-11) it is clearly indicated that the rights and equality of all languages is respected in all aspects. The current policy gives equal consideration to all nationalities and languages.

The total population of Ethiopia according to the national census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) is 87.953 million (CSA 2014). Some of the languages spoken by the Ethiopian nation include Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, Guragigna, Kembatigna, Hadiyigna, Wolaitigna, Sidamigna, Kafigna, Yemigna, Angnuwak, Somaigna, Konsigna, Harari, Gamogna, Dawroigna, Agewigna, Gumuz, Siltigna, Agnuakigna and Nuur, each of which function as majority languages within different regional states of the country. According to the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy document (Ministry of Education, 1994:10-11) it is desirable that children learn in their mother tongue in their respective regional states. The norms and standards with regard to language policy in Ethiopia aim to protect, promote, fulfil and extend the individual's language rights and means of communication in education (Ministry of Education, 1994:14). Although the language rights of all individuals are acknowledged in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian government has, like in many other countries all over the world, responded to the increasingly important role

that English plays in the global world by adopting English as the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education in all regions.

According to the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy document (Ministry of Education, 1994:10-11 section 3.5), teaching students in their own mother tongue at primary level is believed to have considerable pedagogical advantages like ensuring the rights of nationalities in promoting their cultures and languages. Primary education is being given in mother tongue or indigenous languages from grade one up to grade four all over the country, except in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, and other major towns, where different ethnic languages are spoken, and where Amharic is used as the medium of instruction from grade one up to grade four.

The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy document states that English must be used as medium of instruction from grade 5 up to grade 12 and in higher education institutions. Besides, English is taught as a subject starting from grade one up to grade 12 (Ministry of Education, 1994:11).

Section 6.3 of the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (Ministry of Education, 1994:10-11) stipulates that English is taught as a “foreign language” in Ethiopian schools, colleges and universities. Although there is currently no consensus on the exact difference between a second and a foreign language (refer to Griffiths, 2008:4-5) the distinction between a second language and a foreign language has traditionally been made based on the exposure to the target language outside of the classroom in the wider community. A second language would then be used to describe a language being taught in an environment where the language is spoken by the wider community or is an official language. An example would be Somalis learning English in America. A foreign language, on the other hand, usually describes a language being studied in a country where the target language is not spoken (Griffiths, 2008:4), for example English as it is taught in China or Ethiopia. Griffiths (2008:4) also argues that some scholars use the ESL/EFL terms with more or less the same meaning, while others see them as quite different from each other. Since English is not widely used in Ethiopia and the official Ethiopian Education and Training Policy regards English as a foreign language, the term ‘English foreign

language' (EFL) is preferred in this study. The study will, however, draw from English second language (ESL) as well as EFL theory.

Very few Ethiopian university students choose English as a major subject because of their poor English background. It should also be mentioned that in almost all higher institutions it is highly unlikely to find mother tongue English speakers teaching students majoring in English.

When it comes to the practice of teaching EFL listening skills, it seems that the teaching of listening skills in particular is neglected in Ethiopian schools and higher education institutions. Studies done on listening skills and teaching of listening in the Ethiopian context revealed that students are ill equipped for listening effectively (Seime, 1989:21; Berhanu, 1993:25). In Ethiopia, Seime (1989:21) conducted research to investigate the listening abilities of Bahir Dar teachers' college students. In his study, he indicated that the students were not able to adequately listen to what their instructors were saying.

In addition to Seime's study, Berhanu (1993:25) carried out research to investigate the listening strategies used by fourth year Addis Ababa University students majoring in English. Since Berhanu's (1993:25) study was basically intended to investigate the listening strategies actually used by students, he did not indicate whether listening was actively taught in the university. What Berhanu (1993:25) found was that learners' listening skills were not properly developed and that there was a need to provide students with appropriate listening comprehension skills. Girma (1999:33) did research to determine the extent to which high school teachers in Ethiopian schools taught the listening skills with special reference to the newly designed grade nine textbook. He concludes that the majority of language teachers rarely taught listening skills. Likewise, Haregewoin (2003) conducted an investigation in which he focused on grade eleven students to investigate the classroom listening comprehension teaching practices in relation to the new English textbooks. In her study she found that teachers did not show any significant efforts to give pre-listening tasks or to provide students with visual support. Furthermore, it was found that the materials used to teach listening skills are inadequate in the sense that they do not express the real life of the learners. The materials in the language

laboratories in higher institutions are, for example, regarded as irrelevant to the contemporary conditions of teaching listening skills, and they do not appeal to the interest of Ethiopian students (Obeidat & Abu-Melhim, 2008:37).

From my many years of teaching experience as a lecturer in English as a foreign language at tertiary level, and based on the preceding information, I have realised that the teaching of listening skills is very difficult and challenging. This is because of the fact that listening needs considerable efforts to coordinate one's knowledge of contextual aspects in order to understand and interpret the meaning conveyed. This observation emphasises the importance of ensuring that Ethiopian students' listening skills are well developed, especially at university level, because most students who study English as a foreign language at university level are not able to listen effectively in English. It is therefore necessary to do research on current listening practices in order to provide guidelines for improvement. It also provides a rationale for this study as will be explained in the following section.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

From the above-mentioned local studies it seems that Ethiopian EFL learners have underdeveloped listening skills. It can be concluded that the teaching of English foreign language listening skills in Ethiopia is not as effective as it should be – neither in school, nor at the higher education level. In spite of this worrying factor, poor performance in English listening skills does not seem to be a topic that is widely researched in the Ethiopian higher education landscape. Most research done in Ethiopia on listening in EFL was done in schools. Research done on EFL listening in higher education institutions in Ethiopia can be regarded as outdated as these studies date back as far as 1993 and 2008, for example, Berhanu (1993), and Obeidat and Abu-Melhim (2008). The development of good EFL listening skills in those students who intend to major in English is crucial at university level, because, as has already been indicated, good EFL listening skills are a prerequisite for the effective acquisition of a foreign language. Some of those students majoring in English Foreign Language as a subject will become teachers and will teach English to primary and secondary school learners. It is therefore important that these students' EFL listening skills are well developed as this will have an influence on

their command of English and their ability to teach English. This will in turn influence the English proficiency of the learners they will teach.

Based on the above argument that listening plays a significant role in becoming proficient in EFL but that this skill is neglected in the Ethiopian context, as a concerned instructor of English language, I am planning to contribute towards efforts to improve the teaching of EFL listening skills. Teaching English for the last 29 years in high schools, colleges and universities, I have observed that the practice of teaching listening skills has been mostly overlooked and neglected. If one takes into consideration that students' communicative competence can be successfully developed through the listening skill (Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2006:40) and that learners who are skilled listeners usually make more progress in language development generally than the less skilled ones (Feyten, 1991:173), the importance of research done on the teaching of EFL listening skills in higher education institutions in Ethiopia becomes clear.

I further believe that effective listening is acquired and not inherited and that it can be developed to a much higher level than is currently the case. Being visually impaired myself and having had to rely on my listening skills to learn a foreign language, I realise the potential any person has for developing good listening skills. I personally became aware of the role that good listening skills play in acquiring a second and a foreign language. All the above important points motivated me to conduct research on the teaching of EFL listening skills so as to close a gap in the body of knowledge on the teaching of listening skills in Ethiopian universities and also to contribute by means of recommendations based on my findings to improving the teaching of listening skills in EFL in Ethiopian higher education.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ethiopia is one of the countries where English is used as a medium of instruction at high schools, colleges and universities, even though English is not the students' mother-tongue. Students, especially those in universities, have to listen to lectures and take their own notes. They have to be able to listen, understand and respond in debates, dialogues, or oral presentations. Therefore, it follows that developing

students' listening skills is a fundamental component of language teaching. If students are not capable of listening successfully, they may find it difficult to perform academically. From Girma's (1999:33) and Haregwoin's (2003) studies (refer to section 1.2) it seems that listening is not adequately addressed in Ethiopian high schools. If listening is not adequately addressed in high schools, it can be reasoned that colleges and universities will have to pay special attention to ensure that this aspect of language teaching is properly addressed.

In relation to this, Moges (2003:2) writes the following: "In a foreign language context, particularly in contexts like Ethiopia where English is a medium of instruction, the listening abilities of learners could influence learners' achievement in other disciplines." Berhanu (1993:19) also writes, "More importantly, at the higher institutions of Ethiopia where students are expected to comprehend and take notes from lectures, one's listening ability has a crucial influence on achievement." Getachew (2002:1) refers to complaints from different quarters about Ethiopian students' poor listening abilities. Moreover, Getachew (2002:1) claims that listening remains to be the most difficult skill for Ethiopian students. On the other hand, he argues that in many cases listening is not taught because many teachers have the assumption that it is quite easy to listen.

Consequently, the scholars' ideas explained above seem to make it clear that there is a significant need to teach specific listening techniques which enable university students to listen and understand what they hear. However, listening should not be a means to an end, but should rather be an end in itself (White, 2008:112). In the universities where this study took place, students are often heard complaining about the inadequacy of the teaching of listening skills. Berhanu's study (1993:35) suggests that there is a need to provide students with appropriate listening comprehension practices. The question is how effective the teaching EFL listening skills are and whether students are being provided with appropriate listening comprehension practices.

In view of the preceding discussion regarding the importance of listening when communicating in a second or foreign language and for learning in a higher education institution on the one hand and the lack of proper listening instruction on

the other hand, it is evident that there is a need to investigate the teaching of listening skills to English foreign language students at Ethiopian universities and to determine how they can best be taught to listen effectively.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question was:

What are lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching listening skills to EFL students at three Ethiopian universities?

The followings sub-questions guided the study:

- What is the role of listening in the effective learning of a foreign language?
- What are the best practices to teach and learn listening skills for foreign language acquisition?
- What are the current practices in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in selected Ethiopian universities?
- How effective do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive the teaching of EFL listening skills to be?
- What do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive as challenges in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills?
- What evidence-based recommendations can be made on the effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in Ethiopian universities?

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The basic concern (main aim) of the research was to determine what are lecturers' and students' in three Ethiopian universities perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching listening to EFL learners and to establish how these perceptions can be used to improve the teaching of listening in Ethiopian universities. Addressing these concerns could shed light on the reasons for the poor listening skills of EFL students and also contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in Ethiopia.

The research objectives that emanated from the research aim were to ...

- explain the listening process and provide a detailed discussion of the role that listening plays in the effective learning of EFL;
- describe the best practices for teaching and learning listening skills for foreign language acquisition as portrayed in current literature;
- establish the current practices of EFL listening teaching and learning in three selected Ethiopian universities;
- determine how effective lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive the teaching of EFL listening skills to be;
- explore the challenges when teaching and learning EFL listening as perceived by lecturers and students in EFL listening classrooms in selected universities in Ethiopia; and
- make evidence-based recommendations on the effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in Ethiopian universities.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study as it sought to explore EFL listening teaching practices in three Ethiopian universities and to determine how effective is the teaching of EFL listening as perceived by Ethiopian lecturers' and students. According to Creswell (2007:39-40), mixed methods research include the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data in one study. Data may be collected concurrently or sequentially (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:143). According to Scott and Morrison (2006:158) some of the advantages of using a mixed methods approach is that the two approaches can be used to facilitate each other; the combination of qualitative and quantitative research gives a more comprehensive picture because it facilitates both 'outsider' and 'insider' perspectives, and it ensures triangulation (see section .

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry undertaken in many different academic disciplines in the social sciences. Researchers who use this method aim to gather deep understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such

behaviour. The qualitative research method investigates the why and how of a phenomenon, not just the what, where and when (which is associated with quantitative research) (Creswell, 2007:39). Creswell (2007:39-40) goes on saying that qualitative research is conducted when a problem or an issue needs to be explored in depth. In this study it was necessary to explore various aspects related to the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in depth.

Quantitative research, however, refers to the systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships (Leedy & Ormrod, 1985:107). Quantitative research makes use of numbers and statistics and can be experimental or non-experimental in nature. Non-experimental research can be descriptive, comparative, correlational, a survey, *ex post facto* or secondary data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:21). In this study the quantitative part of the study was non-experimental and descriptive in nature.

Responses obtained from the mixed method study were interpreted both in numerical and descriptive manner. The mixed method approach was further used to substantiate quantitative data with qualitative data (Scott & Morrison, 2006:158; Creswell, 2014:231). Quantitative data and qualitative data were collected concurrently.

The research design in this study could be regarded as a multiple case study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:25) where students and lecturers from three universities in the South Nation Nationality People Regional Government (SNNPRG) formed part of the study.

1.7.1 A pragmatist orientation

A philosophical framework or paradigm provides principles that can act as a guide for the research undertaking and thesis writing (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2006:115) and researchers should be conscious of the underlying paradigm and methodologies when doing research. Methodology, which is described by McGregor and Murnane (2010:419) as “assumptions about knowledge, values, reality and logic”, should not be confused with methods used to collect data. Whereas the positivist/post positivist

paradigm is associated with the quantitative approach to research and most qualitatively orientated researchers subscribe to constructivism as a worldview, the philosophical orientation mostly associated with mixed-methods research design is pragmatism (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:4-7).

Pragmatism is a relatively new paradigm in social science research that is used as a basis for supporting mixed methods research (Morgan 2007:48). This philosophical paradigm focuses on identifying what works (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006:9). A pragmatic approach, according to Morgan (2007:72), believes that there is a single 'real world' and everybody has his or her own unique interpretations of that world. He goes on by saying that the pragmatists argue that knowledge is created when a group of people accomplish certain activities or projects together. According to Creswell (2007:22), researchers who hold this worldview depend on the knowledge of the outcome and determine what works in a particular situation.

A pragmatist orientation allows the researcher to obtain a relationship between what is known and actions that provide the possibility of refining the problem (Biesta & Burbules, 2003:107). The basic belief of pragmatism is that truth is not based on reality independent of the mind, but rather on what works at the time (Creswell, 2007:23). Therefore, pragmatism provides opportunities for the researcher to think from different perspectives about the way theory and practices are related. This research was intended to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching listening skills to English foreign language students as perceived by students and lecturers and the use of a mixed method research design underpinned by a pragmatist philosophical orientation was deemed to be appropriate.

1.7.2 Population and sampling procedures

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:399) it is acceptable to use a convenience or available sample for the quantitative part of the study and purposive random sampling for the qualitative part of the study when a mixed method approach is followed.

For the purposes of this study three Ethiopian universities in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional Government (SNNPRG) were selected conveniently because of their proximity and my financial and physical constraints (I am visually impaired). Purposive sampling implies that I have "hand-picked" (Denscombe, 2007:17) the sample for the research. The target population of the quantitative part of the study was all first and second year students from language streams of 2013/14 academic year and all the English language lecturers of the three selected universities in Ethiopia. Third-year language students were not included in the study because English language courses that contain the listening skills as one of the course components of the syllabi are offered at first and second year level only. For the qualitative phase of the study six students from each sampled university with different levels of academic achievement (Cumulative Grade Point Average, CGPA), that is two top achievers, two average achievers and two underachievers from second year students (that is 18 students in total) and two lecturers from each university (that is six in total) were purposively selected to take part in the semi-structured interviews. A total of 24 participants thus formed part of the qualitative phase of this research project. Two listening teaching sessions in each university were attended and observed. The selection of the lessons for observation purposes was done purposively (to include listening lessons taking place in both the laboratory and the classroom) and included lecturers who were involved in the interview sessions. Observation was done to get a holistic and in depth view of the phenomenon of EFL listening teaching in Ethiopian universities and for triangulation purposes.

1.7.3 Data collecting instruments and data analysis

In this study, a number of instruments were used to gather data.

1.7.3.1 Questionnaires

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:489) define a questionnaire as "a written set of questions or statements that are used to assess attitudes opinions, beliefs and biographical information". To gather data from lecturers and the sampled students, structured questionnaires were developed and distributed. In this research

questionnaires were used to gather information related to the biographical backgrounds of the respondents (lecturers and students), and how lecturers and students perceived the effectiveness of teaching and learning of listening skills in EFL. The focus was in particular on the use of pre-listening activities, while-listening activities, and the material used to teach listening.

1.7.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect additional information on lecturers' and students' perceptions of the teaching of EFL listening. According to Clark-Carter (2004:7-8), semi structured interviews allow the researcher to introduce and clarify specific questions when the opportunity arises. Semi-structured interviews should be prompts and probes to enable the interviewer to clarify the questions and to ask participants to add, elaborate and provide detailed information or to qualify their responses (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:278). In order to elicit additional information from the study subjects and fill in the gaps in the questionnaires, semi-structured interview questions were developed for the lecturers and students.

1.7.3.3 Lesson observations

Data were also collected by observing lessons. According to Cohen, *et al.* (2000:188) observation helps the researchers distinguish the on-going behaviour as it occurs in the classroom and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features. To assess what actually happened in the classroom during the teaching of listening and to determine what practices were followed, classroom observations were conducted. A checklist, using a 5 point Likert scale, and providing for the capturing of comments as well, was developed to record observations during the classroom observations. As the focus of the research was on listening teaching practices in EFL classrooms, the observations were done by observing (listening to) what teachers and students did. Classroom observations were done with the assistance of a research assistant.

1.7.3.4 Data analysis

The data gathered through questionnaires, interviews and lesson observations were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively concurrently. Questionnaire data was analysed using descriptive measures. The data that was collected by means of questionnaires was tallied and organised in tables and figures. It was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics, frequency counts, percentages and mean scores were used, whereas in the inferential statistics a t-test was employed in order to test the difference between the mean score of academic staff and the students' response (Kothari, 2004:196). The data gathered by means of interviews were transcribed verbatim. Some of the interview data were used for triangulation purposes and were discussed after analysing the data obtained by means of questionnaires. Data obtained by means of interviews about the EFL listening challenges experienced by students and teachers and the best practices for teaching listening in EFL were transcribed verbatim and then broken into units of analysis. The units were then coded and categorised into themes and sub-themes as advised by Denscombe (2005:271) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010:37-377).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research as a profession has its own ethics (Creswell, 2014:92). This research project was in line with ethical guidelines of the University of South Africa (UNISA). The researcher got ethical clearance (Denscombe, 2007:147) from the College of Education's ethical clearance committee (Appendix G). As advised by Creswell (2014:96; 97) and Denscombe (2007:145-146; 150) informed consent was obtained from participants. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from participating in the study without being penalised in any way. Confidentiality was ensured by not revealing the actual names of participants in the study.

1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

1.9.1 Validity

According to Cohen, *et al.* (2000:105), validity is important to ensure effective research. If a piece of research does not have validity, it is considered to be worthless. In this manner, validity is one of the major requirements for both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In this research validity for the quantitative approach was checked by reviewing data collection instruments in terms of clarity, wording and sequence of questions. To check the content validity of the instruments used in this research, it was sent to a statistician as well as the supervisor for their input. In addition to that, from the pilot test it was found that the instrument was demonstrated by fair and comprehensive coverage of the items that it is supposed to cover.

1.9.2 Reliability

Reliability is essentially a synonym with consistency and is concerned with consistency over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. This means the ideas presented in the research should be consistently treated concerning time, instruments and groups of participants. This supports the idea of Cohen, *et al.* (2002:105-119) which relates to accuracy and precision. In this study, a pilot test for the questionnaire was pre-tested at Woliata Sodo University and reliability was computed using the Cronbach alpha test of reliability (see details in chapter four).

1.9.3 Trustworthiness

Special attention was given to ensure trustworthiness in the research. Trustworthiness is used to check the validity issues of qualitative data. Trustworthiness is defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:26) as a process where the researcher convinces his or her research participants that the research findings are very important to improve the existing practices. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002:5) note that

trustworthiness in qualitative research is described in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Besides, Morse, *et al* (2002:9) propose the use of standards that ensure trustworthiness or rigor of the study. In this study, some of the standards included were: keeping meticulous record of all data, using of mixed methods, purposive selection of the sample, consultation with advisor during questionnaire constructing to ensure internal validity, pilot testing of the questionnaire where modifications were made based on the results, doing member checks when coding and triangulation of data during data analysis (see chapter four section 4.3.4.2 for a more detailed discussion).

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

It is necessary to clarify certain important concepts that recur in this study. This discussion serves as an introductory clarification of concepts. These concepts will be discussed in more detail in the text of the thesis.

1.10.1 Language skills

According to Harmer (2001:172) there are four main language skills, namely listening, reading, writing and speaking. They are essential for the development of communicative aspects of people. They need to be taught in an integrated manner so as to give significant attention to them. Listening and reading are receptive (receiving language) skills whereas writing and speaking are productive (producing language) skills (Helgesen, 2003:24).

1.10.2 Listening and hearing

Listening is defined as “an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear” (Helgesen, 2003:24) and is as such an action of paying attention to something and trying to understand what we hear. It is a goal-oriented activity (Rost, 1991:4-7) and is more than merely hearing. **Hearing** is simply receiving sounds, which is the first stage of listening without paying particular attention (Galvin & Cooper, 1999:58). Ahuja and Ahuja (1990:18) give a comprehensive definition for listening by indicating all the components that the process of listening incorporates. According to them,

listening is hearing plus attending plus understanding plus concentrating plus remembering plus continually grasping and processing information.

1.10.3 SNNPRG

SNNPRG stands for Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional Government. This abbreviation is given to one of the nine Ethiopian regional states located in the southern part of the country.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION

The first chapter deals with the background to the problem. Current problems in the teaching of listening skills to EFL learners are discussed and these problems are situated in the Ethiopian context. The rationale for the study as well as the problem statement, research methodology and research aims and objectives, the research questions and data collection instruments are introduced.

In the second chapter the theoretical background of the study is discussed in detail.

Chapter three presents the teaching of listening skills in a foreign language within the framework of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching. Aspects such as teaching methods, teaching approaches and best practices for teaching listening are discussed.

The fourth chapter focuses on the research design, methodology, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection tools and procedures and method of data analysis.

The fifth chapter deals with the analysis of results based on the information gathered by means of the questionnaire, interviews and lesson observation. The final chapter (chapter 6) deals with the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendation of the study.

1.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the problem was contextualised by providing background to the teaching of EFL and in particular EFL listening in Ethiopian educational institutions. The research questions as well as the research design were discussed. Introductory comments were made on how trustworthiness, validity and reliability were ensured and ethical measures taken were explained. A few important concepts were clarified and an explanation of how the study was divided into different chapters was given. The next chapter provides a critical review of listening comprehension.

CHAPTER 2

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter provided background information pertaining to listening skills and a discussion of the problems in the Ethiopian context. In addition the first chapter explained the statement of the problem and objectives. This chapter presents the theoretical basis for listening comprehension.

Scholarly research work mostly relies on the work and insights of other scholars in the field (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2006:558). In support of this idea O'Leary (2004:66) explains that, "...the production of new knowledge is fundamentally dependent on past knowledge." According to Struwig and Stead (2001:38) the purpose of reviewing literature is to get insight into the topic under study, while Trafford and Leshem (2008:67) explain that literature provides researchers with a justification for their research. With these objectives in mind, an analysis of the related literature helps to summarise and critically analyse past research. It also provides chances to review a wide variety of relevant sources and to get insight into concepts, principles, theories and perspectives related to the topic. The aim of this chapter is to provide a critical review of listening comprehension based on the work and insights of other scholars in the field. Different sources were consulted to deal with the following main topics: definitions of listening, the listening process, models (theories) of listening comprehension, listening strategies, good listening, listening situations, and difficulties experienced by second language learners in the listening process. It also provides an overview of recent empirical studies that were done on listening comprehension.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF LISTENING

People often confuse listening and hearing. This confusion, according to Bentley (2000:130), might lead people to believe that listening is an instinctive behaviour and does not have to be taught. Galvin and Cooper (1999:58) point out that there is a clear difference between hearing and listening. People may hear, but not necessarily

listen. Whereas hearing simply means that the eardrums vibrate as the result of sound waves, listening is much more than becoming aware of sounds; it is an active cognitive process which implies receiving the sound waves, interpreting them mentally and assigning meaning to them. Most of the definitions of listening provided by scholars address common issues.

Saricoban (1999:1) defines listening as the “ability to identify and understand what others are saying.” This involves understanding a speaker’s accent or pronunciation, his grammar, vocabulary, and grasping the meaning. A competent listener is able to do these four things simultaneously. For Ahuja and Ahuja (1990:18) listening is the sum of hearing, attending, understanding, concentrating remembering, continually grasping and processing information. Vandergrift (2005:70) defines listening as an action of paying attention to and trying to make sense of something we hear while Rost (1991:4) emphasises that listening is “a thinking process” and a mental process of constructing meaning from spoken input. In other words listeners do more than simply decoding what is heard; they think about the meaning of what is said. This view is echoed by Fox (2001:9) who defines listening as a two way communication process in which the learners use listening for effective information processing and for creating their own mental pictures. It is thus clear that good listening skills play an important role in making meaning and keeping a discussion going when communicating with other people. It is important to keep this in mind when teaching listening to English foreign language learners in Ethiopia as research has shown that the listening skills of Ethiopian students’ leave much to be desired (refer to section 1.2).

Bentley (2000:130) and Helgesen (2003:23) note that listening has often been seen as a passive activity, mostly because it is a receptive skill (and not a productive skill like speaking and writing) that requires a person to receive and understand incoming information. This perception is, however, incorrect. On the contrary, listening is an active process (Bozorgian & Pillay, 2013:106) in which the listener must discriminate among sounds, understand words and grammar, interpret intonation and other prosodic clues, and retain information gathered long enough to interpret it in the context or setting in which the exchange takes place. For this reason, Helgesen (2003:24) defines listening as an active, purposeful process of making sense of what

we hear, while Bentley (2000:130) defines it as a “complex activity which requires substantial mental effort.” According to Imhof (1998:82), this mental process places “a high mental workload on the listener.” Tyagi (2013:1) also emphasises the “active” part of listening when stating that listening involves active involvement of an individual; hence, it is a psychological process of receiving, attending to constructing meaning from and responding to spoken/verbal messages. In this regard Renandya and Farrell (2010:52) note that listening involves not only correctly interpreting incoming speech, but the learner must respond appropriately to the speaker, especially in face-to-face conversations where learners (e.g., second language learners) must orally contribute to the discourse.

Richards (2008:3) considers listening in a second language from two different perspectives, namely listening as comprehension and listening as language acquisition. According to Richards, listening as comprehension is the traditional way of thinking about the nature of listening. The researcher points out that listening and listening comprehension are seen as synonymous in most methodology manuals (Richards, 2008:3). This view of listening is based on the assumption that the main function of listening in second and foreign language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse. Richards (2008:3), however, points out that listening as acquisition focuses on how listening can provide input that triggers further development of second language proficiency. Second language learners will not learn and understand from what they hear (input), unless they notice (intake) something from the input which would help them in language development (Richards, 2008:15). These triggers are held in memory and are helpful in the initial stages of the listening process where learners try out and experiment with the newly noticed language forms.

From the definitions of listening discussed above, it is clear that listening is an active, mental (cognitive) process in which listeners receive and process information, construct meaning and are expected to respond to what they have listened to when communicating with others. As such, listening plays an important role in acquiring a second and foreign language and Ethiopian students and lecturers need to be aware of the importance of effective teaching of EFL listening skills.

2.3 THE LISTENING PROCESS

The listening process is complex and very hard to explore, in particular in the field of foreign language acquisition as it is a covert activity (Ghoneim, 2013:101). In language acquisition, learners have to obtain proficiency in listening comprehension. This facilitates their understanding of the speech they hear and also in the turn-taking part in communication. Rueda, Rodríguez, Pinzòn and Rodríguez (2009:10) state that listening is interactive and requires certain steps to be successful.

Brown (2000:249) points out that the listening process is made up of eight important mental processes. These processes are:

1. In the short term memory the listener holds information after processing incoming data which could be phrases, clauses, intonation and stress patterns.
2. The type of speech is determined by the listener, whether it is a conversation, a radio broadcast or a speech.
3. The objective of the speaker depends on the type of speech the listener infers.
4. The listener recalls important background information.
5. The literal meaning of the utterances are assigned by the listener. This process involves both semantic interpretations of literal and intended meanings.
6. The listener decides what information to store in short and long term memory depending on the context (i.e. a lecture or a conversation).
7. The listener deletes the original form of the message and retains information in conceptual form.

According to Tyagi (2013:1), the listening process takes place in five stages; that is, learners hear, understand, remember, evaluate, and respond to the speaker (refer to Figure 2.1). Tyagi's interpretation of the listening process is similar to the HURIER Behavioural Model developed by Bronwell in 1985 in which listening is defined as comprising of six interrelated components, namely hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating and responding (Bronwell, 1994:20).

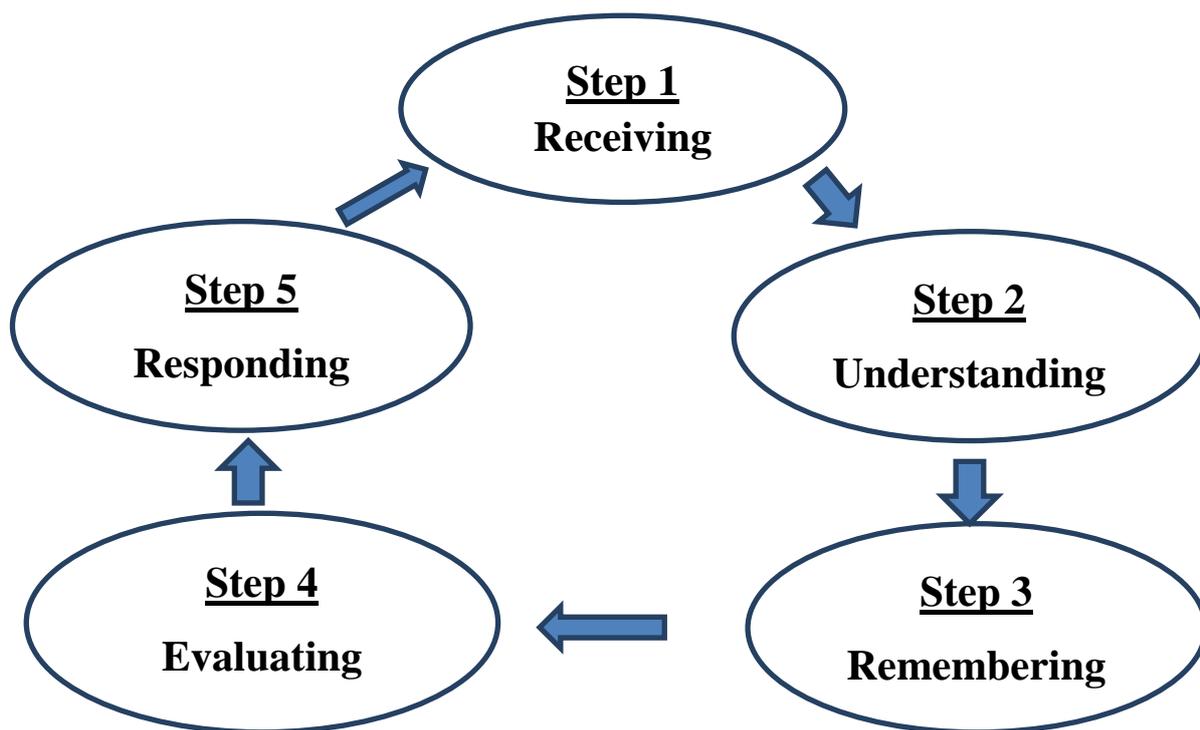


Figure 2.1: The Listening Process

Source: The listening process as discussed in Tyagi (2013)

The first step in both Tyagi's (Tyagi, 2013:2) and Bronwell's models (Bronwell, 1994:20-21) involves hearing, in other words perceiving the sound waves and the learner concentrates on attending to the message. Tyagi (2013:2) notes that one needs to hear in order to listen; however, listening requires a person to pay attention in order to hear. The brain receives and screens the stimuli, and only pays attention to some selected stimuli.

Step two, according to Tyagi (2013:2), requires understanding of the symbols that a person sees or hears from the incoming data. The listener tries to comprehend the real meaning of the message (Brownwell 1994:20); that is, a person must analyse the meaning of symbolic stimuli that are perceived. At this stage, effective listening occurs when the learner understands the intended meaning of the incoming data (Tyagi, 2013:2).

Step three involves remembering or recalling the message (Tyagi 2013:2; Brownell (1994:20-21). At this stage, the learner's ability to recall the message is an indication that not only did he or she receive and interpret the message, but what the person heard was also added in his or her memory bank. Tyagi (2013:2) mentions that "... what is remembered might be quite different from what was originally seen or heard."

Whereas Tyagi (2013:2) sees the fourth step as evaluating, Brownell (1994:21) includes an extra stage in the HURIER model after recalling, namely interpreting. This stage involves learner's sensitivity to the non-verbal and contextual aspects of the message (Brownell, 1994:21).

According to Tyagi (2013:2) step four, which involves evaluation, is more complex, and only active listeners participate at this stage in the listening process. Tyagi (2013:2) states that "... the active listener weighs evidence, sorts facts from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message." Brownell (1994:21) explains that the listener weighs up the value of the message during this phase of her model.

The final stage or step five involves responding or providing feedback to the sender (Tyagi, 2013:1-2). This stage requires a verbal and/or non-verbal feedback on the part of the receiver (e.g. EFL students in the case of this study) to assure the sender that the message has been received. According to Tyagi, this stage is the only means by which the degree of success in the communication, especially for EFL learners, can be determined.

The listening process as explained by Tyagi (2013) and Brownell (1994) is similar to work presented by Thompson, *et al.* (2004:233-235) on the integrative listening process model. Thompson, *et al.* (2004:233) distinguish five components in the listening model, namely: listeners receive, comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and respond. According to Thompson, *et al.* (2004) the five components of the model work together to some degree in every listening situation, but listeners place emphasis on one to two components based on the situation and purpose. Giving examples, Thompson, *et al.* (2004:235) state that in a classroom, listeners may rely heavily on the ability to comprehend information in order to learn new ideas, and to

enable them to compare and contrast the incoming information based on what they know. However, while conversing with friends, listeners may also opt to suspend judgment in order to pay attention.

Worthy of note is that the listening process discussed by Tyagi (2013) and Thompson, *et al.* (2004: 235) is cyclic for effective listeners; meaning, they must follow through all the stages and respond or give feedback to the speaker. The listening process discussed by these researchers is critical for EFL learners in communicative language learning (refer to chapter three). For instance, learners must pay attention, give and get feedback from peers and instructors, and do individual self-assessment. This process helps them to establish new goals and keep growing as listeners, and in turn assists them to refine their listening process. When teaching EFL to Ethiopian students, these stages should be kept in mind and in this study it is *inter alia* be determined whether lecturers and students regard communication (in other words responding and giving feedback) as effective when developing EFL listening skills.

While the listeners are going through all these processes, they apply cognitive strategies to find the meanings for what they hear. This could be understood better by looking at different models or theories of processing information (refer to section 2.5 and 2.6).

2.4 TYPES OF LISTENING

According to Imhof (1998:83) different types of listening situations need to be taken into consideration and the listener is expected to perform systematically different activities. Listening involves selecting, segregating, and integrating information quickly, hence it expects challenging mental performance from the listener (Imhof, 1998:82). Galvin and Cooper (1999:58) argue that students should be able to determine the purpose of the listening activity in any given listening situation. They identify five types of listening based on the purpose of the listening: informative listening, critical listening, creative listening, discriminative listening, and emphatic listening. The purpose with which listeners listen, as described by Galvin and Cooper (1999), correlates with the four types of listening situations described by Imhof

(2008:83-84). He bases his description on work done by Rost (1990) to indicate how incoming information is systematically handled, namely transactional, interactional, critical, and recreational listening.

2.4.1 Informative listening

Informative listening involves listening with the goal of comprehending and retaining the information, hence the main purpose is to concentrate on the message being presented (Watson, Barker & Weaver, 1995). This type of listening may involve the content of a lesson, directions, instructions or explanations and news broadcasts. When students listen for information, they should be encouraged to take notes. There are lots of situations when listening for information is a must, such as when the teacher gives assignments, radio and sport broadcasts, weather reports, and news events, (Galvin & Cooper, 1999:62). According to Galvin and Cooper informational listening is the basis for the other types of listening. Unless listeners understand a message accurately, they cannot analyse another person's ideas or respond to another person's feelings. Students are expected to listen and extract as much information as possible; hence it seems quite reasonable to provide students with tasks that demand information extraction.

Informational listening corresponds with *transactional* listening situations as identified by Imhof (2008:83). In transactional listening situations listening is concerned with learning of new information. Ma (2010:465) states that the transactional function as a listening goal is basically concerned with transfer of information. The transactional process according to Tompkins (2009:67) promotes the listener's attentiveness to the relational connections of communication. According to Imhof (2008:83-84), the listener has limited options to interfere or collaborate with the speaker so as to negotiate the meaning of the incoming message while Xiaoxian and Yan (2010:18) see transactional situations as message-oriented with the aim of conveying information in a clear and precise way.

Transactional listening is characterised by the information gap between the speaker and the listener, the degree of formality, the social distance between the speaker and listener and the time span of the message (Imhof, 1998:85). The listener for

example could have limited options to interact with the speaker and to negotiate meaning if the situation is highly formalised. That is, the exchange of the information could be constrained by social conventions. When a learner listens to an instructor, it is reasonable to assume that there exists a high degree of social distance between the two. This situation is different if we consider a situation where a listener listens to peers' conversations. In transactional listening, the learner is required to maintain concentration for a long stretch of time and therefore the use of self-regulation strategies are highly demanded especially while-listening in a classroom setting (Imhof, 1998:84).

2.4.2 Critical listening

Critical listening is a listening skill which comprises listening for basic understanding, for inferring and listening for rhetorical structural understanding (Boyd, 2005:231). The listener tries to weigh-up the logic and credibility of the message. Boyd (2005:231) goes on saying that in critical listening the learner's role is to understand the incoming input of information in relation to its social and cultural context.

In critical listening, listeners examine an informative or a persuasive message and make decisions about the issue they listen to (Galvin & Cooper, 1999:62). In critical listening, the listening goal is to analyse or evaluate a message based on information presented verbally and information that can be inferred from context. According to Watson, *et al.* (1995), a critical listener evaluates the message, accepts or rejects it or he or she may decide to withhold judgment and seek more information. Galvin and Cooper (1999:62) state that listeners critically attend to the reasons the speaker presents, they ask questions for gathering further information, and also try to distinguish the facts from opinions and examine the source of the information. Once listeners have listened, they are expected to respond actively.

According to Imhof (2008:84), in critical listening, the listener is more concerned with evaluating the reasoning as well as the value of the evidence provided by the speaker. Wolvin and Coakley (1994:154) recommend the integration of both transactional and critical listening to ensure listening comprehension.

2.4.3 Creative listening

Creative listening (Galvin & Cooper, 1999:62) is similar to what Imhof (2008:84) refers to as 'recreational' listening. In creative listening listeners use their active imagination as they interpret a message. For instance, if the listener is listening to music or a narration, he or she may create pictures or stories to go in harmony with the music or narration. When a story teller narrates a story, listeners may create mental pictures. Creative listening is particularly important when students (listeners) do role-playing because they should know how carefully they are supposed to listen to respond to the other people in the scene (Galvin & Cooper, 1999:62).

2.4.4 Discriminative listening

In discriminative learning, the goal of the learner is to understand exactly the speaker's meaning (Verderber, Verderber & Sellnow, 2009:89). Discriminative listening therefore involves 'listening between the lines' for meaning conveyed in different ways rather than in words (Verderber, *et al.*, 2009:89). The basic function according to the researchers is to pay attention not only to the words, but also to non-verbal cues, such as the pitch, voice quality, speed, inflection, and gesture. Discriminative listening allows the listener to recognise stimuli and nuances in the speaker's message, for example, a sigh, a raised eyebrow in the course of conversation or an instructor's vocal emphasis (Thompson, *et al.*, 2004:231).

2.4.5 Emphatic listening

Emphatic listening also refers to active listening or reflective listening (Salem 2003). This type of listening is important for dialogue and helps to maintain interpersonal relationships; however, it is the most challenging form of listening (Watson, *et al.*, 1995). Emphatic listening according to Salem (2003) requires listening and responding to another person; in turn, it improves their mutual understanding and trust, that is, listeners pay attention and share others' feelings. According to Salem (2003) emphatic listening enables the listener to receive and interpret the speaker's message accurately and as well provide an appropriate response. Galvin and

Cooper (1999:62) state that listeners must make eye contact, show head movement, and keep in touch with the speaker to clearly understand his or her feelings.

Speakers with strong feelings want listeners to show that they care about them (speakers); hence it demands patience. Listening to negative feelings may at times be very offensive; meaning, listeners must patiently listen to what the speakers say and show sympathy. To show concern about the issue, listeners may even interrupt the speaker and ask questions. Emphatic listening, therefore, entails that the listener listens very carefully (Ahuja & Ahuja, 1990:18; Galvin & Cooper, 1999:62).

According to Galvin and Cooper (1992:62), emphatic listening is similar to *interactional* listening as explained by Imhof (2008:84), where the listener pays attention more explicitly to the personal component of the message and where the situation requires explicit cooperation between the listener and speaker (Imhof, 2008:84). The interactional function in speech is to maintain social relationships (Ma, 2010:465). However, Vandergrift (2002) argues that the core of interactional listening is not maintaining social relationships, but that "...interactional listening is highly contextualized and two-way, involving interaction with a speaker." Context is important because the listener needs to understand not only the verbal message but also the context in which it occurs (Xiaoxian & Yan, 2010:18).

In general, good listening according to Imhof (1998:84) can be distinguished based on the Mannheim situational model for speech production which has four critical dimensions along which speaker-listener interactions can be illustrated. These are: *degree of formality* (high or low formalised), *social distance* (high or low social distance), *hierarchical structure* (superiority versus equality), and *listening goal* (to provide information versus entertainment and/or conversation).

In day-to-day life situations, listeners are sure to encounter most or even all of the above listening types. Therefore, teachers and lecturers need to try to help students practice every kind of listening to help them develop their listening skills in every possible situation. This should also be kept in mind when teaching EFL listening to Ethiopian students as they will need to be able to listen in different ways in different

situations. EFL listening lessons should not only involve memory tests to see whether students can remember information.

2.5 LISTENING COMPREHENSION: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

Several theories have been developed with respect to listening. For instance, focusing on listening comprehension, Vandergrift (2013:2) notes that the cognitive model developed by Anderson (1995) provides a useful insight on how listeners construct meaning based on bottom-up and top-down processing. The listening cognitive framework presented by Anderson has three interconnected phases: *perceptual processing*, *parsing* and *utilisation* (see also Graham & Macaro, 2008:748).

Graham and Macaro (2008:748) note that in *perceptual processing*, listeners pay attention mainly to the text, and phonemes are segmented from the speech stream; in turn, these are held in the echoic memory. In phase one, Vandergrift (2011:456) explains that “listeners recognize sound categories of the language, pauses, and acoustic emphasis in the speech they hear and hold these briefly in working memory.” *Perceptual processing* primarily involves bottom-up processing.

In stage two or *parsing*, meaningful mental representations (schemas or schemata) (Cook, 1997:86) are created from words and phrases where listeners match them with linguistic information stored in the long-term memory. When reading, readers have the luxury of spacing to help them recognise words. When listening, listeners must parse the sound stream into meaningful units (Vandergrift, 2011:457). The parsing phase is, according to Vandergrift (2011:457), bottom-up processing that can be influenced by top-down processes. Vandergrift states that at this stage listeners segment what is kept in the working memory as they begin to activate potential word candidates. As learners’ language proficiency develops, listeners are able to activate successful word candidates (for the context) more quickly and also have the ability to hold meaning in increasingly larger chunks of information (Vandergrift, 2011:457-458).

In the final stage or *utilisation* phase, information collected in the previous two phases (Vandergrift, 2013:2; Graham & Macaro, 2008:748) or prior knowledge is used to assist in comprehension and recalling (Vandergrift, 2003:467). According to Vandergrift (2003:467), listeners at this stage engage in effective self-questioning, and they relate what they hear to their prior knowledge as well as personal experiences.

Graham and Macaro (2008:748), however, criticise this framework and argue that listening is presented as a linear process where utilisation is the final product of the processes involved. They argue that understanding spoken discourse requires an understanding of both bottom-up and top-down processing of information.

2.6 MODELS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

According to constructivism, which is currently a widely accepted philosophical explanation about the nature of learning (Schunk, 2012:230), learners don't just absorb information, they actively try to make sense of it and, in the process, construct meaning and understanding (Ormrod, 2014:161). The teacher acts as a facilitator and guide (Jin, 2011:13). This means that learning is an active process where a learner is given a chance to construct his or her own knowledge and understanding. In the same way meaningful listening, in other words listening comprehension, is an active process of constructing meaning by means of attending to and processing aural input (Buck, 2001:31). Buck (2001:29) explains this as follows: "Meaning is not something in the text that the listener has to extract, but is constructed by the listener in an active process of inferencing and hypothesis building."

When considering how the language comprehension system functions, one has to keep in mind that both linguistic and non-linguistic types of knowledge are involved. Linguistic knowledge involves phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics and discourse structure, whereas non-linguistic knowledge which plays a role in understanding is knowledge about the topic, knowledge about the context and general knowledge about the world and its workings (Buck, 2001:1-2).

When trying to understand how these two types of knowledge are applied to incoming sound (Buck, 2001:2), in other words how learners make sense of what they hear and how they process input when constructing meaning, a distinction is made between bottom-up, top-down and interactive (or integrative) information processing theories (Helgesen, 2003:26-29). Although these theories were initially associated with reading comprehension, they relate to listening as well (Buck 2001:1) and are also used to describe the cognitive processes of foreign language listening comprehension as explained by Tsui and Fullilove (1998:432-434) and Rahimi (2012:550).

The terms 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' refer to the order in which the different types of knowledge are applied or processed during listening comprehension (Buck, 2001:2). According to Rahimi (2012:551) one needs to understand these two processes and their "... relative contribution to comprehension in different contexts and at different levels of language proficiency..." as this is vital to a theoretically grounded pedagogy of L2 listening comprehension.

2.6.1 Bottom-up processing

Bottom-up processing is used when a listener builds meaning from the sounds he or she hears. The listener converts the sounds into words, then into grammatical relationships, and upwards until he or she arrives at a meaning (Nunan, 1998:25). Bottom-up processing therefore requires knowledge of vocabulary and grammar (Helgesen, 2003:26). According to Vandergrift (2003:477), the approach hinders the "development of a conceptual framework and efficient construction of meaning." Learners who interpret what they hear in a bottom up manner only shallowly engage with the text and have little construction of meaning because they rarely make an effort to tie comprehension of one segment to another (Vandergrift, 2003:483).

Bottom-up processing is the term used in the application of linguistic knowledge in comprehension, whereby the sounds, words, clauses and sentences of a passage are decoded in a fairly linear fashion to elicit meaning (Buck, 2001:2; Rost, 2002:36; Graham & Macaro, 2008:748). Doing so requires "... processing of all the linguistic structures of the target language" as the listener tries "... to match the initial sounds

of a new word to his familiar lexicon to guess what a word may be” (Rahimi, 2012:550). This implies that language comprehension is seen as a process of moving through consecutive stages where the output of each stage becomes the input for the next higher stage (Buck, 2001:2). In bottom-up processing, schemata (i.e. ideas or concepts – see 2.6.2) are hierarchically formed based on the new incoming data, starting at the bottom with the most specific to the most general at the top (Fang 2008:23). According to Fang meaning is arrived at as the last step in the process.

As bottom-up processing is a strategy in which the listener depends on the message of the language, that is, the learner creates meanings to understand the message sequentially from sound to words and from words to grammatical relation (Vandergrift, 1997:387), the listener’s grammatical competence in a language provides the bases for bottom-up processing. The input is scanned for familiar words and grammatical knowledge is used to work out the relationship between elements of sentences (Feyten, 1991:174). Richards (2008:4) explains in this regard that listeners use the incoming input as the foundation for understanding a message, therefore, listeners’ lexical grammatical competence in a language provides the foundation for language processing. Richards (2008:4-5) points out that to understand utterances from speakers using bottom-up processing, one needs to mentally break down the message into its components; a process he refers to as ‘chunking’. Richards notes that chunking helps the listener to understand the underlying core meaning of the expressed message. The ‘chunks’ or units of meaning are what the listeners remember, and not the form in which the message was heard. In this regard Vandergrift (2013:1) explains that bottom-up processing comprises “segmenting” the sound stream into meaningful units.

As bottom-up processing involves decoding where words are segmented out of the stream of speech, this approach requires identification of words and activation of lexical knowledge which is linked to the recognised words (Batova, 2013:187). Yeldham and Gruba (2014:35) argue that the bottom-up approach relates to developing the learners’ lower-level listening skills. The idea behind this approach is that individuals have limited working memory and they cannot consciously attend to the rapid, complex and simultaneous processes that are involved in language

comprehension. This is one of the criticisms against relying on the bottom-up approach to comprehension as listeners find it difficult to keep up with the sound stream (Vandergrift, 2013:18).

On the other hand, Batova (2013:187) argues that bottom-up processing could positively influence the ability of second or foreign language listeners' understanding of a given spoken text, particularly if the characteristic patterns of the first language do not match that of the target language.

2.6.2 Top-down processing

Top-down processing, also known as knowledge-based processing (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998:433), means that learners start with their background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. This could be previous knowledge about a topic of discourse, situational knowledge, or knowledge in the form of schemata as well as plans related to the overall structure of the events and their relationships (Richards, 2008:7). They use what they already know to create expectations of what they can expect to hear and to interpret what they have heard (Helgesen, 2003:26). In top-down processing, the listeners' knowledge of the topic (prior knowledge), their general knowledge of the world and of how texts generally 'work', interacts with the linguistic knowledge to create an interpretation of the text (Buck, 2001:29).

According to Rahimi (2012:550) and Buck (2001:18) inferencing plays an important role and Rahimi (2012:550) explains that the inferred meaning may or may not be the correct interpretation of the spoken text. This makes sense if one takes into consideration that Buck (2001:29-30) says that listening is an individual and personal process that takes place within the mind of the listener and that listeners make different inferences and interpret the texts they hear differently.

It is at this stage necessary to explain the concept 'schema' as this is important in understanding the top-down theory of information processing. A schema represents our knowledge about concepts; that is, "those underlying objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions and sequences of actions" (Fang, 2008:23) and is defined as a mental representation of a typical instance (Cook, 1997:86), while

schemata (plural) is defined as “complex mental structures that group all knowledge concerning a concept” (Vandergrift, 2013:18). Cook (1997:86) goes on by saying that schema theorists suggests that listeners understand new inputs (experience) by stimulating relevant schemata in their minds. Schematic processing allows people to interpret new experiences quickly and economically, making intelligent guesses as to what is likely, even before they have explicit evidence. Evidence suggests that second language listeners tend to construct a schema relating to the topic of a listening text and to use this to guide their processing of incomplete bottom-up information (Cook, 1997:86; Field, 2004:369). According to Rost (2002) schemata are updated on a regular basis and in the process provide the listener with new ideas and foundations for interpreting text.

Background knowledge used by listeners to process information could either be content schema or textual schema. Content schema refers to the individual’s life experiences. Textual schema refers to the type of text that one listens to and knowledge about the conventions of such a text (Long, 1989:33). Long (1989:33) explains the concept of textual schema in a listening situation by referring to an operator-assisted long-distance call, where the caller expects to be asked certain information.

Top-down processing thus involves the application of context and prior knowledge to build a conceptual framework to interpret the meaning of what is understood, that is, listeners use context and prior knowledge of concepts such as topic, genre, culture, and other schema knowledge in their long-term memory to create meaning (Yeldham & Gruba, 2014:34; Vandergrift, 2013:1; Vandergrift, 2004:4). According to Yeldham and Gruba (2014:34), top-down processing “facilitates interpretation by contextualizing, guiding and enriching the incoming linguistic input”.

Vandergrift (2013:4) explains that top-down processing involves the application of not only prior knowledge (for example of the world, linguistic, textual, pragmatic, and cultural knowledge) but also meta-cognitive knowledge about listening to the comprehension process. In addition, the background knowledge may also include contextual knowledge. Vandergrift (2013:4) points out that if second language learners are provided with a context, they can activate their prior knowledge and

develop a conceptual framework for constructing meaning of what they don't understand. According to Field (2004:365), information from top-down processing is critical in the final interpretation for second language listeners where such information supports the weaker as well as more advanced listeners.

Various studies in listening comprehension have been done in order to determine which of the two processes are used by skilled and less skilled listeners (refer to Tsui & Fullilove, 1998:435). Different researchers indicate that learners with limited second language competence depend heavily upon perceptual data (bottom-up processing) (Rost, 2002:79; Field, 2004:366). For example, Hansen and Jensen (1994:265) tested 235 learners for both detailed and global understanding of academic materials. Their study concluded that low proficiency students rely heavily on bottom-up processing skills.

According to Field (2004:364) there is a considerable degree of interdependence between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' processing and Vandergrift (2012:19) explains that one process is not more important than the other. In a real world both bottom-up and top-down processing generally occur together when listening. Successful listening comprehension involves a constant interplay between the two processes and the extent to which listeners prefer one process to the other depends on the purpose with which listeners listen, language proficiency and the context of the listening event (Vandergrift, 2011:456), listener's familiarities with the topic and content of a text, the density of information in a text and the text type (Chien & Wei, 1998:68; Vandergrift, 1998:373; Graham & Macaro, 2008:748). If someone needs to know specific detail such as the price of an item, he or she may engage more in bottom-up processing. If the purpose is, however, to get an overview of what happened at an event, the listener will apply top-down processing. It is therefore important that learners learn how to use both processes to their advantage. They need to know that the type of processing would depend on the purpose for listening, their own language proficiency and the context of the listening event (Vandergrift 2013:19). Vandergrift (2004:3) argues that when these processes interact, the extent to which one process is used over another depends on the purpose for listening. He suggests that students need to "learn to listen" so as to better "listen to learn".

2.6.3 Interactive (integrative) processing

As has been explained in the previous section, top-down and bottom-up processing seldom occur in isolation and therefore this calls for an integration of bottom-up and top-down processing (Helgesen, 2003:29), a notion which Peterson (2001) calls “interactive processing”. An interactive model between top-down and bottom-up processing is presented by Graham and Macaro (2008:748-9) who note that in top-down processing the listener’s background knowledge (e.g. the topic or how the texts “work”) interacts with the linguistic knowledge which is drawn upon bottom-up processing to help create an interpretation of the text. Graham and Macaro (2008:748-9) point out that in this model a listener may initially activate his or her schemata based on his or her own understanding of the topic of the text; consequently, the listener recognises and creates meaningful mental representations from the incoming data, and (mis)matches it with the elaborations previously activated. According to Helgesen (2003:29) pre-listening activities can ensure this integration of bottom-up and top-down processing. Before listening exercise learners can, for example, brainstorm vocabulary related to the topic in the listening text or write a short dialogue on functions such as giving directions or shopping. By using their knowledge of everyday life (top-down processing) they generate vocabulary and sentences (bottom-up processing). Helgesen (2003:29) states that pre-listening activities should on the one hand provide a context for interpretation and on the other hand activate pre-knowledge which will help with interpretation. The integrative approach lays the foundation for integrating the teaching of listening with the teaching of reading, writing and speaking. It is therefore important to determine whether Ethiopian lecturers and students regard the integration of listening with other language skills as effective.

Yeldham and Gruba (2014a:36) add that the integrative approach which combines both bottom-up and top-down skills (also see Graham & Macaro 2008:748; Richards 2008:10; Thompson, *et al.*, 2004:229) advocate the continued use of listening strategies in second language instruction based on the idea that lower-level learners need strategic abilities while more proficient listeners often need both top-down and bottom-up approaches. According to Yeldham and Gruba (2014:37) less-proficient listeners rely largely on bottom-up processing or on compensatory top-down

processing while more proficient listeners often utilise an interactive approach. Graham (2006:166) states that an interactive approach of top-down and bottom-up processing allows the more skilled listeners to pay more attention in deploying more meta-cognitive strategies. It is for this reason that Mendelsohn (2006:83) and Vandergrift (2004:4) suggest that second language listeners need to learn how to use both processes to their advantage. This is important especially in the Ethiopian context where students' listening skills are not up to standard (refer to section 1.2) and where support with both bottom-up and top-down strategies is needed.

2.7 THE USE OF STRATEGIES

2.7.1 Learning strategies

According to Woolfolk (2001:302) learning strategies are plans for approaching learning tasks and achieving learning goals. It involves specific techniques or tactics such as skimming work first, using mnemonics to remember key terms or writing answers to possible questions. Klapper (2006:92) refers to Oxford's (1993:175) definition of learning strategies as follows: "Specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that students employ – often consciously – to improve their own progress in internalising, storing, retrieving and using the [second language]."

Learners should be helped to develop effective learning strategies and tactics "... that focus attention and effort, process information deeply, and monitor understanding" (Woolfolk, 2001:302), because according to Rahimi (2012:551) learning strategies assist learners to become independent and competent learners. Ormrod (2014:370-384) explains that learning strategies are the *intentional* use of cognitive processes and mentions meaningful learning, elaboration and organisation as strategies for storing information in the long-term memory and note-taking, identifying important information, summarising, comprehension monitoring and mnemonics as additional strategies often used by learners. *Meaningful learning* implies that new material is related to information already stored in the long-term memory. *Elaboration* is when learners use prior knowledge to expand on newly acquired knowledge. *Organisation* involves activities such as outlining major topics

and ideas, making mind maps, flow charts or concept maps in order to help organising information. *Note-taking* ensures that students' attention is kept and assists with encoding of material. *Identifying important information* implies that learners consciously distinguish between more and less important information. *Summarising* requires learners to condense the information, develop abstract representations of work or identify suitable headings to label work. A learning strategy that is most effective is when learners consciously do *comprehension monitoring*. *Mnemonics* or memory tricks are strategies (e.g. association or visual imagery) often used by learners to facilitate 'hard-to-remember' material such as long lists of items or unfamiliar words in a foreign language.

Ridgway (2000:179) points out that researchers often disagree on whether learning strategies are conscious or unconscious. According to Ridgway (2000:179), scholars agree that strategies require some degree of conscious awareness on the part of the learner. However, Ridgway argues that the line between conscious and unconscious is not fixed, and differs from one individual to another due to automatising; that is, at times the learner operates consciously, and at other times the learner performs automatically and unconsciously.

2.7.2 Metacognitive strategies

Second language (L2) learners need to be assisted to understand mental and emotional processes in their learning (Goh & Taib, 2006:222). According to Goh and Taib (2006), L2 learners need to be guided to understand important aspects of the listening process. Learners' awareness of their listening process allows them to become aware of the nature and demands of listening in another language; in turn, they become better placed to evaluate and manage their own learning. According to Goh and Taib (2006:222) this kind of teaching that explicitly helps learners develop their knowledge about the listening process is referred to as 'metacognitive instruction'.

Researchers (e.g. Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:222) have shown that L2 listeners can be successfully taught using different strategies to help them compensate for what they are not able to comprehend. The researchers argue that

teaching individual strategies may not necessarily lead to overall listening improvement. They note that instruction in a repertoire of strategies or metacognition about strategies is rather “more effective than individual strategy instruction for teaching comprehension skills” (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:472). On their part, Yeldham and Gruba (2014:49) note that different forms of strategies instruction can lead to significant gains in listening comprehension.

Metacognitive strategies as noted by Plonsky (2011:998) involve preparation prior to or reflection after L2 use. Plonsky argues that these strategies are essential components in improving L2 performance through strategy instruction. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010:223) further note that development of metacognitive knowledge enables L2 learners to assess themselves and also select appropriate strategies to improve their performance. In metacognitive instruction, L2 learners are trained to directly employ relevant strategies and, in the process, they are helped to increase their metacognitive knowledge (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:223).

2.7.3 Listening strategies

Learning strategies have something to say for language learning and teaching as well. Although Lam (2009:131) claims that the value of strategy instruction in teaching listening strategies for second language learners has not been conclusive, Rahimi (2012:554) refers to research done on second language learning by a large number of scholars (e.g. Arnold, 2000; Field, 1998; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Goh 1998) which showed that second language learners benefit from being taught to use various strategies when approaching listening tasks. This research done on strategies for language learning suggests that strategy instruction helps to promote effective use of strategies, particularly with regard to second language listening. Second language listeners are taught to use these strategies to compensate for what they are not able to understand. Wolvin and Coakley (1994:152), for example, identified one of the listening competencies in effective listening as the ability of the listener to employ active listening strategies appropriately when needed.

In terms of language learning, Ma (2010:466) describes learning strategies as “the mental and communicative procedures learners use in order to learn and use

language.” Ma (2010:466) points out that an effective language learner is one who is aware of his or her learning strategies.

Robin and Guo (2007:16) state that listening strategies are techniques used by a listener to comprehend and recall the incoming information. Santos, Graham and Vanderplank (2008:112) define listening strategies as “... conscious plans to manage incoming speech, particularly when the listener knows that he or she must compensate for incomplete input or partial understanding.” Ma (2010:466) argues that listening strategies support learners’ awareness of the processes that are essential for their own learning so that, in the end, they have the ability to take greater and greater responsibility for that learning. For example, some learners benefit by developing their own strategies which focus on enhancing their knowledge-based abilities (Mendelsohn, 2006:76; Vandergrift, 2007:91).

Vandergrift (1997) constructed a taxonomy of listening strategies which includes: *cognitive*, *metacognitive* and *social-affective* strategies. These learning strategies have gained recognition on research related to strategies that are used in second language listening comprehension. In *cognitive strategies* (e.g. *predicting* and *inferencing*), the listener manipulates the learning material or applies a particular technique in the task to be learned. *Metacognitive strategies* (i.e. directed attention, planning, defining goals, selective attention, monitoring and evaluating) assist listeners to coordinate their own learning process. Metacognitive strategies allow the listener to plan, monitor and evaluate the success of a particular strategy. The *social-affective strategies* (i.e. questioning, cooperating, and self-reassuring) focus on how the listener learns by interacting with others. According to Vandergrift (1999:170), listeners use socio-affective strategies when they co-operate with classmates, and ask for clarification from their teachers. They also use socio-affective strategies when they apply specific techniques to help them lower their anxiety level.

Besides the above-mentioned taxonomy of listening strategies developed by Vandergrift (1997), other listening strategies, according to Shang (2008:32), include: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. In addition, Shang (2008:32) notes that some predominantly used strategies, which help to differentiate effective listeners from ineffective listeners, include self-monitoring, inferencing from context,

and elaboration. According to Rost (2002:21) some basic constructive strategies that successful second language listeners are likely to adapt when they face some uncertainty in the listening process are predicting, guessing, selecting, clarifying and responding. Rost (2002:21) explains that listeners use real world expectations to *predict* what the speakers will say as well as what might happen. They make inferences by *guessing* what the speakers might have meant or said, even though the bottom up information in relation to the language may be incomplete.

Listeners further focus on key words and try to *select* specific information that is adequate to help them complete a given task. They also use *clarifying* strategies by monitoring their level of understanding as well as identifying questions which they could ask to supplement any incorrect misunderstanding, whereby they try to revise their representation of meaning. Besides clarifying, listeners also *respond* by reflecting where they interact with the speaker and personalise the content while focusing on what was understood, and they try to engage in a conversation in a comfortable way.

As far as listening strategies are concerned, it can be concluded that foreign language learners require strategies or plans to achieve their learning goals; learners need help on strategy use in order to develop effective learning strategies to become independent, and to compensate for what they are not able to understand; and strategy instruction on listening strategies should be based on learners' skill level. In this study attention is given to listening strategies and how effective lecturers and students regard listening strategies to be. According to Vandergrift (1997) and Shang (2008), at the initial stages of L2 learning, low proficiency listeners face various difficulties compared to high skilled learners on strategy use. The following section discusses how learners use these strategies to complete their learning goals.

2.7.4 Learners' use of listening strategies

Several studies have indicated that there is a difference between more proficient and less proficient listeners on the way in which they use different listening strategies (e.g., Ridgway, 2000:180; Shang, 2008:29; Cross, 2009:153). Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010:472) and Shang (2008:310) note that there is evidence which

supports the notion that skilled second (and foreign) language listeners use a range of strategies to control their listening processes. They point out that not only do more proficient learners use more metacognitive strategies compared to the less proficient learners, but skilled listeners also appear to coordinate these strategies in a continuous metacognitive cycle (Vandergrift, 2010:473). Cross (2009:153) also found that more proficient listeners use a variety of strategies with greater flexibility, frequency, sophistication, and appropriateness in order to complete the expected tasks as compared to less proficient listeners. In addition, in comparison with less proficient listeners, more proficient listeners utilize more superior configurations of strategies.

Though different areas of listening strategy research have been done, there is a shortage of research that focuses specifically on how learners' listening strategies are developed or change over time (Macaro, Graham & Vanderplank, 2007:165). Macaro (2006) refers to the "... apparent lack of consensus among researchers in the field as to whether it is the range and frequency of strategy use, the nature of strategies, or the combinations of strategies that is the key to successful language learning", in spite of the large body of research done on strategy use in language learning.

Researchers agree that learners need to be helped so as to develop effective learning strategies to achieve their learning goals. To help learners improve their listening proficiency, L2 teachers should carefully select a variety of strategies to be used by learners based on their listening skill level. A variety of strategies can be used in different listening situations. The following section therefore discusses different types of listening that instructors can model based on the purpose of the listening.

2.8 FACTORS AFFECTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

One of the research questions that this study seeks to address (refer to section 1.5) relates to challenges experienced by Ethiopian lecturers and students relating to teaching of listening in EFL. A discussion of factors that affect listening

comprehension is important in order to provide the necessary background information for this particular issue.

As has been indicated many times in the preceding sections, listening is an extremely complex language skill and cognitively demanding (Imhof, 1998:82; Ridgway, 2000:180; Vandergrift, 2011:455; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:471; Batova, 2013:1 and Ghoneim, 2013:101). Numerous factors affect learners in their listening skills development. For example, understanding a foreign language may break down due to learners' inability to recognise phonetic variation of a known word. He or she may know the word in the text but not in spoken vocabulary or the learner may be unable to segment the word out of a piece of connected speech (Field, 2003:327). This may be problematic in the Ethiopian context where students seldom come into contact with English mother tongue speakers and where they are exposed to the different English accents of their teachers and lecturers.

Vandergrift (2003:457) observed a number of listening difficulties related to comprehension problems experienced by learners of EFL based on the three phases of comprehension, namely *perception*, *parsing (processing)* and *utilisation* (refer to section 2.5). During the *perception phase*, listeners had difficulties with the speed of text, inability to recognise familiar words, neglecting the next part of a text while concentrating on meaning, an inability to chunk streams of speech, missing the beginning of texts, concentrating too hard or were unable to concentrate in the process. During the *parsing phase*, listeners had problems in that they tended to pay more attention to individual words rather than segments of words, were unable to hold chunks of meaning in memory or they forgot quickly what they heard. They also indicated an inability to form a mental representation from what they heard or they were unable to understand subsequent parts because of earlier problems. During the *utilisation phase*, listeners struggled with understanding words but not the message, and they were confused about key ideas in the message.

Renandya and Farrell (2010) report a number of challenges that are associated with listening to audio-recorded speech for EFL learners, namely fast speech, variable speech, blurry word boundaries, and speech that needs to be processed in real time. Speech rate is correlated with language comprehension; that is, any increase in

speech rate (or what is considered normal) may result in a decrease in language comprehension for many EFL learners. It is important to note that learners may experience difficulty with recorded speech, as the listening laboratory is still used in Ethiopian universities.

Lawtie (2008:9), identifies three levels in which different factors affect listening comprehension.

- *Level one (literal level):* the learner hears, receives and attends to the information. A number of factors are associated with this level. The first relates to physical factors, such as loss of hearing, limited attention span, lack of ability to sit still and noise levels that can block or distort incoming messages (see also Hargie, 2011). The second relates to factors in the physical environment such as seating arrangements, lighting, listener comfort or distance between the listener and speaker. The third set of factors are related to the emotional and psychological factors (for example, the listener's self-concept and self-image, environmental conditions of trust that exist) and, finally, second or foreign language proficiency.
- *Level two or the interpretive level* (Lawtie, 2008:9): is characterised by the way in which the listener processes the incoming stimuli; the interpretation also depends on the listener's prior knowledge of the topic and the language of the speaker which is also based on the context of the listening situation. This level is also referred to as the process of storing information in the listener's memory for future retrieval. According to Hargie (2011:200), complex or abstract information may be difficult to link with prior knowledge or previous experiences which make it difficult to reach understanding.
- *Level three or critical level:* refers to a time in which the listener evaluates, judges, reacts and responds to the incoming message. In other words, at this level the listener uses his or her critical thinking ability to interpret and judge the speaker's ideas. At this stage, according to Lawtie (2008:9), the learners evaluate, make judgements and interpretations in order to get a clear understanding of the speaker's message. Four factors influence the ability of the listener at this level. The first is related to the perception of the

listener with respect to the importance and value of the message; the second are attitudes and opinions of the listener towards the source or the message; the third is related to the failure of the listener to connect the incoming new idea with prior knowledge; and, lastly, learners have a problem in processing the oral language in a meaningful way (Lawtie, 2008:9). In addition, Hargie (2011:200) states that listeners' personal biases and prejudices may make them assume that they know what the speaker is going to say which may lead to misunderstanding.

In line with Hamouda's (2013) findings on problems experienced when listening, Renandya and Farrell (2010:53) mention speech variability (dropping, adding or modifying sounds as often happens in natural speech) as problematic in foreign language listening comprehension, while words or phrases in reduced form (in other words, speakers may be economising on speech, or may be avoiding difficult consonant sequences by eliding sounds) are listed by Field (2003:329) as problematic. Renandya and Farrell (2010:53) further list processing speech in real time (i.e. if the learner misses what is being said, he or she usually does not have a chance to listen again) and blurriness as challenging. Blurriness is when words tend to blend with the surrounding words which make it difficult for EFL learners to clearly perceive the boundary between words, which in turn leads to language comprehension breakdown.

Anxiety or comprehension breakdown because the learner does not recognise a particular word due to different causes such as an inability to segment the word out of a piece of connected speech (Field, 2003:327), the speed at which the information is presented, no possibility of asking for a word to be repeated, inadequate vocabulary which compels the listener to stop listening so as to figure out the meaning of that word and makes him or her to miss the next part of the speech field are some of the main causes of listening comprehension problems discussed by Piolat (2008:12), Sharma (2006:42) and Ghoneim (2013:102).

Ghoneim (2013:102) mentions the listener's failure to recognise the signal that the speaker uses, especially when the listener cannot see the facial expression of the speaker, concentration problems in a foreign language, the nature of the listening

passage (interesting texts make it easier for the listener to listen to; however, although the topic could be interesting, the level of effort required to figure out the meaning intended by the speaker may be problematic) are mentioned as challenges. Ghoneim (2013:102) also explain that comprehension problems arise when students lack contextual knowledge. Learners may understand the main idea of the text, but they may have difficulties to comprehend the whole meaning of the text.

2.9 RELEVANT RESEARCH INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGE LISTENING COMPREHENSION

This section documents some of the research studies which have been conducted to understand foreign language listening comprehension. Only a few studies were selected for discussion, based on the value that they have for the current investigation of lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of EFL listening teaching and learning in Ethiopia.

2.9.1 Factors influencing listening comprehension and measures for improvement (Guo & Wills, 2005)

In a study conducted by Guo and Wills (2005) at Shanxi University of Finance and Economics in China, they aimed to find the factors influencing English listening comprehension and to provide strategies for improving students' listening comprehension. In spite of the increased need for effective English listening skills by university learners, Guo and Wills (2005) found that this skill was still the "weak link in the language teaching process". The importance of their research was that they acknowledged that the listening levels of each learner differed and that it was important to emphasise listening teaching, encourage the studying of listening theory and to use the best methods when teaching listening. They emphasised the importance of rigorous application of the communicative approach in English classrooms and the necessity for learners to be able to use English as a tool for communication.

The study by Guo and Wills (2005) is important for the current investigation as it seems that there are some similarities in the way in which English used to be taught

in China and in Ethiopia. Just like in Ethiopia, the Grammar-Translation method used to be the dominant way of teaching English in China (Guo & Wills, 2005). Chinese students, just like Ethiopian students (see chapter one), also used to come to university without having been exposed to effective listening teaching and, although they showed extensive knowledge of grammar rules and English vocabulary, they found it difficult to understand oral text and to respond to it. Guo and Wills (2005) found that students experienced the following problems with listening comprehension: psychological obstacles (such as a lack in confidence in their English capability), the pronunciation and intonation in spoken language and their cultural background knowledge (i.e. a lack of understanding of the culture of English, American and other English speaking cultures).

Guo and Wills (2005) made use of experimental groups and a control group. The new teaching model that Guo and Wills (2005) implemented used the teaching approach of “Listening-based learning for overall language development” and resulted in a change in the role of the teacher from “distributor of knowledge” to “a multi-skilled facilitator” (Guo & Wills, 2005:7). The teaching processes that were followed had three stages, namely pre-listening activities, activities while-listening and post-listening activities. In order to teach listening comprehension, Guo and Wills (2005:10-14) implemented activities such as level-based listening teaching where they focused on pronunciation and intonation, a combination of intensive listening (expecting learners to understand every sentence and every word) and extensive listening (expecting students to grasp the general meaning of the text) and combining listening with reading, writing and speaking. It is thus clear that not only did they acknowledge the interrelationship between the bottom-up and top-down processes, but also the integration of the four language skills. Guo and Wills (2005) found that students in the experimental groups who were exposed to the new model made more progress than the other students and ascribed the students’ progress to the following factors: the experimental group came to understand the importance of listening comprehension, they learned active listening strategies and got the opportunity to apply those strategies, the combination of intensive and extensive listening and the combination of listening with other language skills.

Taking note of this study conducted by Guo and Wills (2005) is further important because of the many similarities between English learning in China and Ethiopia: the culture of both countries differs from Western culture. Both do not make use of the Roman alphabet (although some regions in Ethiopia have started to use the Roman alphabet right from the start of their education) and both countries regard English as a foreign language. By acknowledging the importance of implementing pre-listening activities, activities while-listening and post-listening activities and integrating listening teaching with other language skills, Guo and Wills adhered to the principles of communicative language teaching (which will be discussed in chapter three). Pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities informed the construction of the questionnaires used in this study to a large extent.

2.9.2 Listening strategy application (Vandergrift, 2003)

Another study that is of importance for the current investigation is a study on listening strategy application when listening in a foreign language, done by Vandergrift (2003). The study focused on the language learner while engaged in the act of listening so as to reveal the strategies used and the differences in strategy use between more skilled and less skilled listeners. Vandergrift (2003) used 36 junior high school core French students in grade 7 (12–13 years old) from intact classes from two different schools based in a large Canadian urban setting where French is a second language.

At the time of the research, participants had three to six years of exposure to core French instruction. Each participant was classified as either a 'more skilled' or a 'less skilled' listener based on a score obtained on the listening comprehension test. Data was collected during sessions which lasted for 30–40 minutes each, within a period of one week of the training session where think-aloud data was recorded for three different texts. Data analysis was based on a predefined taxonomy of listening comprehension strategies, namely: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies (refer to section 2.7.2). The researcher found that students used more of the cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies but that they made very little use of socio-affective strategies. Worth of note from this study was that it was found that more skilled listeners used metacognitive strategies

(comprehension monitoring) more frequently than less skilled listeners. In addition, less skilled listeners appeared to engage bottom-up processing (translating) which according to Vandergrift hampers the development of a conceptual framework and efficient construction of meaning. Besides, less skilled listeners have greater difficulties in holding meaning in memory or they are unable to develop a solid mental representation of the text. Vandergrift (2003) also found that the interactive approach (both top-down and bottom-up processes) was utilised by more skilled listeners.

2.9.3 Listening and metacognition (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010)

Although Vandergrift's study was conducted with children, his research indicates the role that strategy use and strategy instruction plays in listening teaching and is as such important for my own study. Another study conducted by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) is, however, more important as it was conducted with university students. This study done by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) investigated the effects of a metacognitive, process-based approach to teaching second language listening. The researchers used both an experimental and a control group drawn from 106 university-level students studying French as a second language. The study used six intact classes comprising of two high-beginner classes and four low-intermediate classes. Change in metacognitive knowledge about listening was measured using a Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire consisting of 21 randomly ordered items related to second language listening comprehension. The items focused on five factors (i.e. planning and evaluation, problem solving, directed attention, mental translation and person knowledge) which relate to the use of the strategies and processes linked with second language listening comprehension. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010:481-483) found that, though the treatment group (i.e. the group receiving the metacognitive instruction) out-performed the control group, the less skilled listeners in the experimental group significantly improved when compared to their counterparts in the control group. The researchers also observed that there were benefits of raising learners' metacognitive awareness by guiding students through the process of listening, specifically for less skilled listeners. They further observed growth for the listeners in the experimental group in 'problem solving' and 'mental translation' compared to those in the control group.

The fact that Canada is a bilingual country and that French is a second language in Canada in some parts (and first language in other parts) and thus often heard on television or radio, should be kept in mind as that is an important difference between Ethiopia and Canada. The study conducted by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari is nevertheless important as it emphasises the role of metacognition in listening comprehension. A number of questions related to metacognition were included when designing the questionnaire to be used in this study.

In his study on the teaching of listening, Hamouda (2013) provides a very comprehensive list of factors that provide a challenge to listening comprehension. Some of the most important factors addressed in Hamouda's study are discussed in the next section.

2.9.4 Listening comprehension problems (Hamouda, 2013)

As one of the research questions of this study deals with challenges experienced in EFL listening it is important to take note of Hamouda's (2013) research on the listening comprehension problems encountered by a group of first year English major Saudi students in the EL listening classroom. As in Ethiopia, English is regarded as a foreign language in Saudi and it is possible that the problems encountered by learners in Ethiopia might be the same as those experienced by students in Saudi. According to Hamouda (2013:115) most of the students enrolled in the English department in the Qassim University where he conducted his research have serious shortcomings in their listening comprehension: "They are unable to comprehend natural spoken English delivered at normal speech because they do not understand the spoken content of the lessons." As was explained in chapter one, similar problems are experienced in Ethiopian universities.

The purpose of Hamouda's (2013) research was to identify the listening comprehension problems experienced by Saudi students when listening to oral texts and to determine what strategies they use to overcome these problems. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, Hamouda (2013:119) made use of both quantitative (a questionnaire which was answered by 60 first-year students) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews with 12 students) methods of data collection.

An analysis of the questionnaire items that dealt with listening comprehension problems encountered by Saudi students when listening to spoken English revealed that students may experience problems with the following (Hamouda, 2013:124-138):

The listening text itself can cause listening comprehension problems. Unfamiliar words, complex sentences and grammatical structures, the length of the text and an uninteresting and unfamiliar topic could contribute to comprehension problems.

Basic linguistic problems experienced by students were because of the use of colloquial and slang expressions, the use of reduced forms (“I’ll” instead of “I will”), incomprehension of intonation patterns, the use of unfamiliar words and inability to infer the meaning of unknown words.

Failure to concentrate and losing focus often results because learners are looking for an answer or are thinking about a question. The length of a text may also be the cause of comprehension problems, because learners tend to lose focus after listening for too long.

Psychological characteristics that can be problematic and that can result in listening comprehension problems are anxiety, a lack of interest and inability to understand a listening text. *The listener him or herself* often struggles to predict what would come next, experience problems to remember unfamiliar words and find it difficult to answer listening questions which require longer answers.

Speakers often cause listening comprehension problems, because listeners find it difficult to understand natural speech which is full of hesitations and pauses. Speakers often pronounce words unclearly, speak too fast or speak with unfamiliar accents. In addition, the listener cannot always make the speaker repeat what was said. Besides, *poor quality tapes or disks* were indicated by the majority of students as the reason for the difficulties they encountered when listening.

The follow-up interviews which Hamouda (2013:142-143) conducted with 12 students confirmed what was found in the questionnaires. They reported in particular

that problems with the speed of spoken language that was too fast to comprehend, intonation, different accents, limited English vocabulary, and background knowledge influence their listening comprehension. In addition unclear pronunciation, poor knowledge of grammar, difficulty with the length and difficulty of materials, different accents and dialects and inability to concentrate were amongst the reasons cited by respondents for poor listening comprehension. In addition, seven out of the 12 respondents indicated that they could not understand the listening texts because they had no background knowledge of the topic.

Hamouda (2013:148-151) concluded his research report by suggesting that teachers and students could try to overcome listening comprehension problems by, for example, adapting and improving listening material, using visual aids, activating or building on students' prior topical and linguistic knowledge, choosing listening activities that relate to students' own lives and using a slower speech rate. He suggested that students could, from their side, try to alleviate their own difficulties by improving English proficiency and improving learning strategies.

2.9.5 Bottom-up and top-down processing of information (Yeldham & Gruba, 2014)

Another study that was done with university students in a country where English is a foreign language, which is of value for my own study on EFL listening in Ethiopia, is Yeldham and Gruba's (2014) study that examined the development of lower-level learners of English as a foreign language in a Taiwanese university. The study utilised a longitudinal multi-case study and focused on six second language learners in an English listening course who were engaged in a bottom-up skills course. The study lasted for over one and a half semesters where students attended a one hour listening skills class per week which emphasised bottom-up skills. The researchers found that instruction that is focused on developing bottom-up abilities is inadequate for many listeners where some learners experienced difficulties in developing and maintaining strong text mental models. They also observed that despite improving their bottom-up decoding skills, two participants who were bottom-up listeners had difficulties developing their top-down strategy use. The researchers concluded that regardless of a predominant listening approach, there is need for learners to utilise

both bottom-up skills and top-down strategies so as to develop their interactive listening abilities.

Based on experimental designs (Vandergrift, 2003; Guo & Wills, 2005; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) and a mixed-method design (Hamouda, 2013) as discussed above, the researchers sought to understand listening comprehension problems, how more skilled and less skilled listeners develop and/or use strategies, and approaches in language listening comprehension. These studies also focused on the use of metacognitive, cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies (Vandergrift, 2003; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) as well as the use of bottom-up, top-down and interactive approaches to listening comprehension (Yeldham & Gruba, 2014).

The findings indicated that more skilled listeners frequently use metacognitive strategies (planning, problem solving, monitoring, selective attention and inferencing) as compared to less skilled listeners (Vandergrift, 2003; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) and that skilled learners use more top-down approaches (listening strategies) than bottom-up approaches while less skilled learners utilise more bottom-up approaches (focusing on word meaning) (Ghoneim, 2013). More skilled learners were also found to use more of the interactive approach (both top-down and bottom-up processes) than less skilled listeners (Vandergrift, 2003).

In conclusion, researchers agree that raising learners' metacognitive awareness is beneficial, especially for less skilled listeners. There is also a need to use strategy instruction to create awareness for students of the wide variety of strategies and how to use the strategies as a way to help them develop their listening skills. The questionnaire used in this study inter alia focussed on how effective students and lecturers perceive the teaching of listening strategies to be.

2.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on different concepts of listening. In foreign language acquisition, learners must obtain proficiency in listening comprehension so as to understand what they hear and, in turn, take part in the communication. The listening process takes place in five stages: hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating,

and responding to the speaker. However, scholars argue that the listening process is not linear, meaning the five components work together to some degree in every listening situation. Hence, listeners place emphasis on one or two components based on the situation and purpose.

In second language teaching, three 'skill based' instructional approaches were identified, namely: top-down, bottom-up, and interactive instructional approaches. In the top-down approach, listeners use context and prior knowledge to build a conceptual framework for comprehension. The bottom-up approach relates to developing the learners' lower-level listening skills considering that L2 (or foreign language) learners have limited working memory and have difficulties in consciously attending to the rapid, complex and simultaneous processes that are involved in language comprehension. The interactive approach is based on the notion that low skilled learners need strategic abilities while skilled listeners often need both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Effective listening depends on how information is handled by the learner. Key listening situations discussed in this chapter included *transactional*, *interactional*, *critical*, and *recreational listening*. However, quality of good listening may also depend on the purpose for listening based on the situation; for example, participating in conversations, listening to announcements, and watching television.

A number of factors that affect listening in L2 and a foreign language were also discussed. In the perception stage, listeners may struggle with the speed of the text (audio recording) or failure to recognise familiar words. In stage two or parsing, they may fail to form a mental representation or hold chunks of meaning in memory or forget quickly, while in the utilisation stage they may have a problem in processing the oral language in a meaningful way.

In conclusion, there is need to use strategy instruction to create awareness for students of the wide variety of strategies available, and how these strategies could be helpful in developing their listening skills.

In the next chapter an overview of the teaching of listening skills is provided.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on various aspects about listening, such as the difference between hearing and listening, the listening process, listening strategies that learners employ when listening and factors affecting listening in a foreign language. This chapter provides a review of literature pertaining to the teaching of listening skills within the framework of communicative language teaching. Key issues related to the teaching of EFL listening skills are discussed. These include *inter alia* teaching of strategies, such as cognitive and metacognitive strategies and an account of studies conducted on the use of strategies in the teaching of listening skills. An overview is also provided of listening teaching activities and best practices for the teaching of listening skills in a foreign language. The role of the teachers and teaching materials during instruction on teaching listening skills and the integration of listening with other skills during instruction are also addressed. In the last section of the chapter, barriers to and factors that can have an effect on the effective teaching of EFL listening skills are discussed.

Listening is the first language skill that people learn. Although listening is considered important in language learning, it is the weakest language skill for the majority of second and foreign-language learners (Vandergrift, 2013:1). Given the explanation provided in chapter one on the importance of listening for learning a language, it is necessary that teachers know how to help their students become effective listeners (Schwartz, 1998:2). For instance, instructors need to understand what 'high skilled' and 'low skilled' language learners do (Grenfell, 2007:9) so as to come up with learning programmes that can help learners with listening in a second or foreign language.

Fang (2008:25) states that the teaching of effective listening skills can assist learners to capitalise on the incoming language input while for the teachers it helps in facilitating the teaching process. Goh and Taib (2006:222) indicate that it is not easy to teach listening as language teachers are challenged on how to help learners

improve in a skill which involves processes that are unobservable (Goh & Taib, 2006:222).

3.2 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LISTENING

Although communicative language teaching (CLT) is not a theory or a specific method, it is an approach to language teaching that is used in this study to provide a methodological framework for the discussion of listening teaching in a foreign language. Whereas second language teaching in the early 1960s was influenced by behaviourism and embraced grammar-based methodologies such as audio-lingualism which depended on drilling exercises and repetition (Griffiths, 2008:256), the 1970s marked the emergence of communicative methodologies (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:86; Vandergrift, 2012:6). The development of communicative methodologies can, according to Richards and Rodgers (2014:86), be ascribed to the notion of communicative competence and functional approaches to the study of language. The communicative approach to language teaching developed because linguists started to look at language not as a set of rules to be applied, but as a way of expressing meaning. It was realised that learners did not really learn how to apply language effectively in everyday situations by merely studying and applying language rules. The communicative approach significantly influenced the way in which language was taught and led to the development of differentiated courses that took the communicative needs of learners into consideration. Language teaching became learner-centred and meaning was emphasised over form, and fluency over accuracy (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:95; Fang, 2010:113).

Richards and Rodgers (1986:69) define (CLT) as:

A theory of language teaching that starts from a communicative model of language and language use and that seeks to translate this into a design for an instructional system, for materials, for teacher and learner roles and behaviours, and classroom activities and techniques.

Communicative language teaching is aimed at improving learners' communicative competence in the target language and to enable them to use the target language appropriately as a means of communication in any given social context.

The shift to communicative language teaching was in essence a shift from positivism to post-positivism and more meaning-based views of language. According to Jacobs and Farrell (2010:270), this shift focused the attention of language teaching to the role of the learner, the learning process (rather than the product of learning), the social nature of learning, learner diversity and in particular to authentic learning. It further resulted in a whole-to-part orientation instead of a part-to-whole approach and an emphasis on the importance of meaning rather than rote learning. It emphasised the development of learners' higher order thinking skills and the application of these skills in situations beyond the classroom. New forms of assessment were applied and teachers were expected to continuously reflect and expand their understanding of teaching through the process of teaching (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001:271). The development of all four language skills was promoted and an integrated teaching approach to teaching the four skills was adapted (Vandergrift, 2013:9).

The communicative approach has recently been subjected to a lot of criticism by scholars such as Bax (2003) who wrote an article titled "The end of CL: A context approach to language teaching" and Harmer (2003:289) who claims that the problem with CLT is that it means different things to different people. Littlewood (2011:542) however argues that it is not yet time to abandon the term and that "...the term CLT still serves as a valuable reminder that the aim of teaching is not to learn bits of language, but to 'improve the students' ability to communicate'." In this study I concur with Harmer's (1993:70) and Littlewood's (2011:542) contention that CLT can be regarded as an umbrella term to describe a wide variety of teaching and learning activities to improve students' ability to communicate.

The communicative approach had a marked influence on the way in which listening was taught and is still being taught. Xiaoxian and Yan (2010:16) indicate that traditional listening tasks used in foreign language learning encouraged a passive view of listening skills where learners viewed listening as a receptive activity, that is,

they simply received and recorded what they heard instead of making an attempt to integrate the message and seek clarification when they got challenged in the listening process. Whereas the skill was initially merely used to present a new grammar point and consisted of activities where learners had to listen to short passages (Field 2012:207), the communicative approach resulted in the use of authentic material (Vandergrift 2013:8). Several questions on the use of listening material were included in the questionnaire that was compiled for this study. As discussed in section 3.2.2 of this chapter, another aspect of importance in the use of the communicative approach is that it is learner-centred.

3.2.1 The use of authentic material

According to Mousavi and Iravani (2012:21) authentic materials are oral and written language materials that are used in daily situations by native speakers of the language. Ma (2010:464) argues that it is important for teachers to consider the features, strategies and methods of communicative listening instruction. Ma (2010:464) suggests that these features imply real-life listening activities in a communicative situation. The communicative situation, according to Ma (2010:464) and Adelman (2012:512), includes real-life activities such as listening with a purpose, listening to the news on radio or exchanging news over the telephone, discussions with colleagues, asking for directions, asking questions, arguing and taking notes, receiving instructions to go somewhere or do something, retelling stories, participating in an interview, or attending a seminar, lecture or listening to a speech. Ma (2010:465) argues that in classroom practice these real-life listening characteristics should be incorporated to assist learners in the listening process. Schwartz (1998:11) also suggests that the listening activities in a communicative approach to language teaching should roughly mirror real-life tasks.

Sun (2009:58) also emphasises the importance of teaching listening by creating and imitating real-life situations which give learners room to think and express what they heard. To integrate both thinking and expression, teachers need to create first a learning environment that imitates real-life scenes as well as a selection of excellent listening materials. Vandergrift (2003:472) notes that authentic texts can be used to motivate students since they get an opportunity to learn and understand the

language as it exists naturally. Mousavi and Iravani (2012:22) argue that, for students to cope with English outside the classroom, teachers should avoid speech modification and provide learners with language experiences they would likely encounter in real-life situations. Samples of listening materials should therefore consist of natural language from different sources that give students experience of a variety of topics, situations, and speakers.

Adelmann (2012:514) states that our everyday speech is filled with dialogical relations with others' words. In real-life listening activities, listeners are expected to give some kind of overt, immediate *response* which may be verbal or non-verbal to what has been said (Ma, 2010:464-465). Learners, for example, are expected to give some feedback to the instructor; implying that listening comprehension exercises should be based on short, active responses which occur at or between parts of the listening rather than at the end.

Ma (2010:465) elaborates on the role of learner response in real-life listening situations and notes that real-life listening activities expect people to listen with a purpose and with certain expectations. Listeners give an immediate response to what they hear, they see the person they are listening to, some visual or environmental clues give meaning to what they hear, stretches of what is heard come in short chunks and the text that is heard is mostly spontaneous. Ma (2010:465), however, states that some situations may lack one or more of these features. For example, when people watch television they are not expected to respond or when listening to a lecture they may listen to uninterrupted speech for a long period of time. Ma (2010:465) regards the learners' response as important because the need to produce an overt response gives the learners an immediate motivation to listen, it helps the learners to create certain kinds of meaning which helps them to structure their listening activity and the response provides the learners with a framework to conceptualise the central meaning and to draw relationship with the text. Ma (2010:465) states that the ultimate goal of listening may not necessarily be to get an immediate response, but the information the listener gets may also serve as a basis for discussion or for giving an oral report.

In a study done by Mousavi and Iraveni (2012) the impact of authentic versus non-authentic listening materials was investigated. The study participants were 80 Iranian with upper-intermediate level of English proficiency. The subjects participated in two experimental treatment groups for one semester and received instruction in listening to authentic radio-tapes and non-authentic listening materials taken from assorted sources. The lesson plan had a sequence of activities in three stages; that is, pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities. The researchers found improvement on EFL students' comprehension after exposure to authentic materials in the classroom due to the treatment. They concluded that in order to prepare and enable students to orally interact with others outside the classroom, teachers should provide students with ample opportunities to listen to samples of natural or authentic language in the classroom.

3.2.2 A learner-centred approach

Communicative language teaching shifted the emphasis from the teacher to the learner. The choice of listening material in a communicative approach is done in such a way that it meets learners' expectations and interests. It also serves to motivate them. The active role of the listeners who must employ strategies to facilitate comprehension in order to help monitor and evaluate their listening (Richards, 2008:1) as well as listening teaching aimed at addressing learners' different needs (Goh, 2008:191) are acknowledged.

In communicative listening instruction, Rost (2002:18) notes that students are expected to understand and respond in a particular way but in most cases they are given vague guidance about how to listen and how to learn from listening. Rost argues that in listening some method of structuring learners' expectations should be provided so as to maximise the learning opportunities. Rost (2002:18) points out that decisions made about classroom instruction are based on some principles which affect the "... selection of input that learners see and hear, our choice of the types of activities we ask learners to engage in and the kind of feedback we feel we should give to our students". Rost (2002:18-21) presents a few principles of language development which directly influence decisions made about teaching listening, in particular, input selection, construction of activities and tasks and how students are

empowered to become better learners. According to Rost (2002:18-21) it is important in a learner-centred approach to choose inputs that would increase learners' motivation. The role that listening material plays in the effective teaching of listening forms an important part of this study (see section 3.8).

A learner-centred approach focuses on learners' motivation to acquire the language. Rost (2002:18-19) argues that in L2 learning, learners with persistent motivation and adequate access to a L2 environment as well as enough time, can acquire a L2 to a near-native level. His argument is based on the fact that the main trigger of language acquisition is the learners' motivation where learners seek opportunities for learning (e.g. inputs, outputs and feedback opportunities) and commit themselves to address learning challenges so as to sustain their learning progress (see also Graham & Macaro, 2008:756; Ma, 2010:466 and Lotfi, Maftoon & Birjandi, 2012:13-14). Rost (2002:19) points out that to ensure that students get listening experiences that encourage them to want to learn the language, teachers should select "the right stuff" or "kinds of input that will engage learners, arouse their curiosity, and make them want to remember what they are learning."

Harmer (1993) and Krashen (1981) note that for any kind of action to be performed successfully, motivation of the learner plays a significant role. Ahuja and Ahuja (1990:8) argue that motivation is fundamentally important in the teaching of listening skills. According to them, motivation is one of the most significant elements of listening proficiency. It does play a very important role as far as listening is concerned. More specifically, motivation, in terms of interest, emotional appeals and attitudes and mind sets, determines one's level of aural competence. Listening comprehension improves if there is interest in the topic before the speech communication or in the discussion to follow after the speech. Ahuja and Ahuja (1990:8) say that motivated listening leads to better understanding and interpretation. The inference that we can draw here is that listening comprehension can be improved if listeners are interested in what they listen to. The significance of motivation seems to be extremely mandatory when it comes to listening. Underwood (1989:104) states that, while motivation plays a role in the learning of all the language skills, it is of the utmost importance in learning to listen, and needs to be accompanied by a high level of success from the very beginning. It is therefore

important that lecturers ensure during the pre-listening phase, that students are motivated to listen.

A learner-centred approach further requires awareness of learners' affective disposition. Use of both *emotional teaching* and *language knowledge* in teaching listening is essential (Sun, 2009:57). Teachers should take into account the emotional factors (i.e., feelings, senses, moods, and attitudes) associated with learners' motives, self-respect, worries and controls. Goh and Taib (2006:222) suggest that teachers can help learners understand their mental and emotional processes, especially those processes that are unobservable. By so doing, learners become aware of the nature and demands of learning another language; in turn, they are able to evaluate and manage their own learning. According to Sun (2009:57), teachers can create a favourable condition for students in order to motivate them to give oral or non-oral responses. In listening classes, teachers should encourage students actively and offer timely praises even for very small progresses which give students a sense of achievement. Teachers should also help students to build self-confidence and overcome inferiority. For example, Wu (2010:139) points out that in situations where learners are resistant, encouragement helps to develop students' motivation to learn and also promotes learners' autonomy. Sun (2009:57) further suggests that teachers need to help build students' confidence and overcome inferiority, which then inspires students.

Parrott (1993:161) argues that, "learners employ a variety of strategies in their attempt to understand attitudes and expectations. Although some of these personal factors (strategies, attitudes and expectations) may facilitate understanding, others may be counterproductive." Some of the personal factors that emanate from students and inhibit effective listening may include fear of being embarrassed by getting the answer wrong, trying to understand each and everything that they listen to and also trying to listen word by word (Parrott, 1993:161).

Listening can be effective if listeners are feeling relaxed, are physically and mentally alert and willing and ready to ask questions and ask for clarification (Parrot, 1993:161). According to Bond (2012:62) learners' listening behaviour is intertwined with their current and habitual motivational orientation, attitudes, interests, and also

their pertinent self-monitoring skills and control beliefs. Hence learners, in addition to what their teachers do, play their own part for their listening lesson to be successful and this underlines the importance of a learner-centred approach.

3.3 CONSCIOUS TEACHING OF LISTENING STRATEGIES: THE CURRENT DEBATE

The important role of conscious teaching of listening skills in order to acquire the target language is currently acknowledged by scholars such as Richards (2005:86; 2008:14), Luchini and Arguello (2009:317) and Yeldham and Gruba (2016:3) who are of the opinion that the conscious teaching of listening strategies can help listeners to compensate for their processing deficiencies to deal with partial understanding of text and to become more effective learners. Richards (2008:11) states in this regard that strategies are "...the ways in which a learner approaches and manages a task, and listeners can be taught effective ways of approaching and managing their listening". Brownwell (1994:21) favours strategy instruction and states that teachers need to select components of the listening process that need to be emphasised so as to single out instruction strategies that target the particular skill. The aim of strategy instruction according to Plonsky (2011:994) is to empower learners to take control of the language learning process.

Cognitive strategies, according to Richards (2008:11), refer to the process of comprehending and storing incoming information in the short term or long term memory for later retrieval when needed. According to Yeldham and Gruba (2016:2; 35;) cognitive strategies come to use when an input is directly manipulated to assist a learner's understanding, especially through processes such as utilising prominent textual signals, guessing meaning, anticipating what the speaker will say next and using mental images. In extracting meaning from spoken discourse, the listener goes through several mental steps and engages in specific cognitive strategies (Ghoneim, 2013:103).

Language learning strategy research began in the 1970s, as part of a general shift in theorising about language teaching and learning away from the purely psychological towards social aspects. Researchers (e.g. Lotfi, *et al.*, 2012 and Bozorgian & Pillay,

2013) in particular became interested in why some learners become more successful compared to others in learning a foreign language and the use of strategies was posed as a possible answer to this.

Grenfell (2007:10) notes that in the early research on language learning strategy, the word 'strategy' was often used to refer to techniques, tactics, tricks and general dispositions. Based on this observation Grenfell identifies a range of behaviours which could be classified as 'strategic' in nature. These behaviours include any study skills and methods used in the classroom by learners to help them understand grammar and be able to store it in the memory bank including: the learner's general attitude and willingness to actively participate in language learning; the on-going ways in which learners build their linguistic structure which could be used to help in their language acquisition productively; the social and emotional aspects which relate to how a learner interacts with peers and native speakers; and how the learner deals with the affective aspects of foreign language learning.

The success of teaching listening mostly depends on the strategies the listener applies when listening (Mendelsohn 1998:82; Vandergrift, 2004:4). Hosseini (2013:12) notes that conscious strategy instruction helps promote the effective use of strategies by learners and Erarslan and Hol (2014:2) argue that strategies assist learners in language learning and acquisition as well as performance in completing a language task. Thompson and Rubin (1996:332) and Carrier (2003:384) report that listening strategy instruction has positive results when one or two strategies are used immediately following the instruction period.

Yeldham and Gruba (2014) conducted a study that examined the idiosyncratic development of L2 learners in a listening strategies course. Utilising a longitudinal study, the researchers focused on four Taiwanese EFL learners who participated in a course which combined direct instruction of strategies with their practice embedded in the class listening texts. Results from the study show that all learners developed a greater balance in their use of top-down and bottom-up strategies, selectively integrating suitable strategies from the course into their listening repertoires. They concluded that strategy instruction should be taught to raise learners' awareness of a variety of strategies that they can utilise to meet their

needs. This implies that students need to be encouraged to select and evaluate strategy use in order to learn to use strategies that they find useful in a more efficient manner.

Although the general contention is that strategy instruction would help language learners to be more aware of their strategy use, which would further enable them to respond to their particular learning situations and consequently take control of their own learning, there are certain reservations about strategy instruction. In this regard Field (2001:30) cautions that the teaching of individual strategies may not necessarily bring overall improvement in listening. In addition, Oxford (2003:10) notes that there is no single set of strategies that are always used by “good language learners”; besides, studies according to Oxford (2003) have demonstrated that less skilled learners use strategies in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled fashion. Vandergrift (2013:4) argues in this regard that benefits of strategy instruction remain inconclusive considering that skilled listeners appear to use strategies in an interconnected way.

Taking note of the shortcomings of strategy instruction, Grabe (2004:46) proposes that metacognition strategies are more effective for teaching listening comprehension skills than individual strategy instruction. Vandergrift (2013:12) emphasises that communicative language teaching highlights the importance of practicing core listening skills, but that the purpose of these activities is mainly to achieve comprehension and as such focuses on the product of listening. The ideal situation is that listening activities should aim at deepening learners’ “... understanding of themselves as L2 listeners, raise greater awareness of the demands and processes of L2 listening, and teach learners how to manage their comprehension and learning.” To achieve this goal, Vandergrift (2013:12) proposes the enhancement of the current strategy approach to engage learners in a range of metacognitive activities (see section 2.7.2 and 3.4). A number of studies have supported the notion of metacognitive instruction to help learners evaluate and manage their own learning (Vandergrift, 2004:9; Goh & Taib, 2006:222; Goh, 2008:192; Lam, 2009:131). Thus, the following section will focus on understanding how metacognitive strategies are used in the teaching of listening skills.

3.4 METACOGNITION AND THE TEACHING OF LISTENING

Metacognitive strategies are explained as essential components in improving second or foreign language performance through strategy instruction (Goh & Taib, 2006:223) and they are also regarded as the most reliable predictors of language learning (Goh, 2008:194; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:472; Goh & Hu, 2013:1 and Plonsky, 2011:99), especially during preparation prior to or reflection following second or foreign language contact or use.

Metacognition according to Goh and Hu (2013:2) refers to individuals' knowledge about their cognitive processes and products, and the capacity for individuals to actively monitor and consequently regulate these processes. Metacognition therefore involves knowledge and beliefs about the way factors (i.e. *person*, *task*, and *strategic knowledge*) interact and how they affect the course and outcome of cognitive activity (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:473; Goh & Hu, 2013:2).

According to Goh and Hu (2013:3), *person knowledge* refers to “knowledge about oneself as a learner”. It is knowledge about how individuals react to learning situations, the challenges they may face, and their feelings of anxiety or self-confidence. According to Yeldham and Gruba (2016:2) *person knowledge* is the awareness of the cognitive and affective, for example, anxiety, self-efficacy, and motivation factors as well as individual abilities that are needed to facilitate individuals' listening and development.

Task knowledge refers to the understanding about the nature and demands of a learning task (Goh & Hu, 2013:3). *Task knowledge* allows a learner to think about the internal and external factors that may lead to task difficulty. According to Yeldham and Gruba (2016:2) task knowledge involves individual “awareness of the purpose, nature and demands of listening tasks”; that is, knowing what one requires to be able to concentrate, and continue listening despite difficulties on the task.

Goh and Hu (2013:3) refer to *strategy knowledge* as “knowledge about the strategies that one uses or can use to achieve learning goals”. Goh and Hu point out that, besides understanding their learning goals, individuals also have knowledge about

ways of learning that are not helpful in achieving a learning goal. According to Arslan, Rata, Yavuz and Dragoescu (2012:140), metacognitive strategies are based on “reflecting on one’s own thinking”.

Metacognitive strategies have been broken down into three categories based on L2 research especially in general listening development, to include *planning*, *monitoring*, and *evaluating* (Goh, 2008:197; Richards, 2008:12; Ma, 2010:467 and Arslan *et al.*, 2012:140). *Planning* is a strategy that is used to determine the learning objectives as well as how the objectives can be achieved; that is, deciding what to do before undertaking the task. *Monitoring* is a strategy which involves checking on the progress in the course of engaging in a learning task, or what needs to be done during the task. The *evaluating* strategy helps to determine the success of the learner’s efforts at processing the oral input or the outcome after completing a learning task.

Lam (2009:130) states that the main role of metacognition strategies in the learning process is to enable the learner to think ahead of the goal, understand the demands of the learning task, come up with a plan to carry out the task, and to assess the progress of the learning task. However, Lam (2009:130) notes that the task of planning of metacognition strategies comprise of two aspects, *the prospective* and *retrospective* aspects. The prospective aspect involves determining the linguistic and other requirements of the activity at hand while the retrospective aspect relates to establishing how well the activity has been accomplished. Based on Lam’s argument, the teaching of metacognitive strategies could be used to help second or foreign language learners to deliberately plan before and after the listening tasks. This planning is likely to facilitate learners to accomplish the task and, in turn, helps them to improve their task performance.

In *prospective planning*, Lam (2009:130) proposes three metacognitive strategies which could be used by teachers to assist listeners during task completion and performance in foreign language communication, including *problem identification*, *planning content*, and *planning language*. According to Lam, the aim of problem identification is to facilitate the overall planning during listening to a foreign language which would allow the learner to assess the purpose and the expected outcome of

the task. *Planning content* and *planning language* are regarded as *strategic planning* believed to be beneficial in task performance.

Retrospective planning, according to Lam (2009:130), refers to 'evaluation' which is done during teaching. This kind of planning is believed to promote reflection after the second or foreign language task is completed. Lam argues that retrospective planning aims at helping the learner perform better on similar tasks in the future. Metacognitive strategies as discussed by Lam, correlate with pre-, while and post-listening activities as discussed in section 3.6).

A number of studies provide empirical evidence for the usefulness of metacognition instruction that raises learners' awareness of the listening process and helping learners to better regulate their comprehension (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Cross, 2011; Bozorgian, 2014 and Graham & Macaro, 2008). Bozorgian (2014:149), for example, investigated the impact of metacognitive instruction and metacognitive knowledge on the listening skill of a group of 30 Iranian male students who were learning English as a foreign language. The participants received guided instruction in metacognition (planning, monitoring, and evaluation) through a pedagogical cycle approach over a semester. In the study to assess the participants' listening performance, International English Language Testing System listening tests were used. In addition to the test, participants also completed a Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire, which examined their use of metacognitive awareness when engaged in listening tasks. The results of the study indicate that the students improved their listening skill after being taught about metacognition. No significant increase in metacognitive awareness was, however, reported.

Yeldham and Gruba (2014:35) conducted a study with the purpose of determining the instructional approach which can be used to develop interactive second language listening abilities for learners. The research employed longitudinal multi-case studies to chart the development of six L2 learners in an English listening course who were considered to be at a lower proficiency-level from a Taiwanese university. The researchers found that instruction focused on developing bottom-up abilities was not adequate for most listeners. They found that based on the instructional approach used, i.e. top-down or bottom-up, language development for

the six learners within the course which was spread over a semester and a half was not as expected. The researchers concluded that regardless of the learners' predominant listening approach there is need to develop an interaction between bottom-up and top-down processes in order to aid learners' progress.

In the teaching of listening, metacognitive instruction takes different forms for learners (Goh & Taib 2006:223). Language instructors should therefore provide an integrated sequence of activities to facilitate metacognitive strategies so as to promote learner autonomy as well as self-awareness in order to develop their planning, organising, monitoring, and evaluation skills (Arslan, *et al.*, 2012:149; Goh & Taib 2006:223). Learning activities in metacognition instruction should help learners understand themselves as L2 listeners, the demands and the process of L2 listening. In addition, the activities should teach them how to manage their comprehension and learning (Goh, 2008:192). Metacognition instruction therefore requires a planned effort from the side of the teacher so as to lead to learner autonomy and improved self-knowledge through selection of efficient strategies and useful listening resources for learners to constantly get contact with the language.

3.5 APPLICATION OF SCHEMA THEORY TO LISTENING TEACHING

According to Hu (2012:282), the schema theory (refer to section 2.6.2) provides a framework in which effective teaching of English listening could be developed so as to successfully help second language learners practically improve their communicative competence. Based on the important role of schema, Hu (2012:283) proposes a Schema Theory-based Teaching Mode for teaching English listening in the classroom which includes: pre-listening, during-listening and post-listening activities.

Hu (2012:283) observes that learners may fail to activate their schema appropriately during the listening process leading to various degrees of non-comprehension, a fact associated with the listeners' lack of appropriate schema. According to Schwartz (1998:5), learners' schemata are however different; that is, some learners' schemata are very rich while others are very shallow. In addition, information contained in the learners' schemata may also be different. Hu (2012:283) argues that for language

comprehension to take place, learners must have appropriate schemata which must be activated during text processing. Teachers of EFL listening - especially teachers and lecturers from a country such as Ethiopia where English is seldom heard outside the classroom - should therefore understand that learners' schemata regarding English language vary accordingly which could be influenced by the learners' culture. However, based on the schema theory, an important goal in the EFL teaching should be helping learners activate their background knowledge; in turn, learners use that knowledge to understand the new text.

Hu's (2012) Schema Theory-based Teaching Mode of English listening provides a framework in which typical listening activities are presented in relation to each listening stage or phase. In the pre-listening stage/phase, activities used prior to the listening task are geared towards helping learners move from the passive state of mind into an active state (Hu, 2012:283). According to Hu (2012:283) pre-listening activities prepare learners for the while-listening stage; thus, learners proceed from the pre-listening to the while-listening stage with a purpose; also, teachers ensure that learners are highly motivated, eager to learn and possess other necessary listening skills. In the post-listening phase, learners need to act upon what they have heard and as such transform listening into an active, interactive process (Hu, 2012:283).

It is therefore important that during planning, instructors should select appropriate listening material and design listening tasks taking into consideration the listening stages or phases (Rost, 2002:19-20; Richards, 2008:11; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012:23). The link between listening material and the three listening phases were in particular taken into consideration with the development of the questionnaires used in this study.

3.5.1 Phase 1: Pre-listening activities

Phase 1 or pre-listening activities refer to the planning or predicting stage (Vandergrift, 2013:5). According to Richards (2005:87), pre-listening sets the stage for learners to practice listening for comprehension through activities which require activating of prior knowledge and making predictions as well as reviewing key

vocabulary. Once learners are aware of the topic and text type, they are required to predict types of information as well as possible words they may hear. Instructors request them to write down their predictions and they may also be requested to write some words or phrases in their first language. Examples of pre-listening tasks as discussed by Lotfi, *et al.* (2012:7) include giving questions to discuss the text topic which aims at helping learners activate their prior knowledge of the text they would subsequently hear, providing activities which encourage vocabulary building for learners to help them predict the meaning of unknown words from the context, and using grammar which focuses on tasks to help learners use the learning situation in order to remember and use complex grammatical structures that are present in the texts. Activities which require listeners to use context and prior knowledge relate to top-down processing (Yeldham & Gruba, 2014:34) (refer to section 2.4.2). Similarly, Goh and Taib (2006:223) suggest that before listening teachers can model how to use listening strategies, for example, using think-aloud activities about what the learners already know about the topic and letting learners think about what words they might expect to hear.

Rueda, *et al.* (2009:32) point out that when people have a purpose for listening it makes it easy and more effective for them to listen. Determining the purpose of the listening task, therefore, also forms part of the pre-listening phase. EFL teachers set the purpose in advance on what to listen for; that is, they may decide based on the proficiency level of the learner on whether to focus more on linguistic or background knowledge. They determine whether to attend to the overall meaning (top-down processing) or to focus on the words and phrases (bottom-up processing). For example, Rueda, *et al.* (2009:32) state that English language students could be given an exercise consisting of a list of missing information regarding a person or place which they have to hear and provide a report after listening. In this activity, students know exactly what they expect to hear, that is, a city or a person's name.

According to Hu (2012:283) typical activities during the pre-listening phase would include establishing a purpose for listening (e.g. listening for social interaction, information, academic, and pleasure) to enable learners to listen selectively; activating existing knowledge (e.g. posing questions prior to the listening task to activate prior knowledge on the topic) to reduce difficulties associated with the

listening materials; 'warming-up' to the theme (i.e. initiating a critical thinking process for concepts, facts, possible events, characters, and feelings relevant to the context) where learners make intelligent guesses, use contextual clues which further trigger potentially relevant schemata to help them comprehend; providing necessary cultural background information in relation to the listening materials; and using multi-media materials (e.g., projector, computer, video, and pictures) which are important in helping listeners construct complete and permanent schema. It is important that integration of all four language skills take place in the pre-listening phase (e.g. letting students talk about the topic to be dealt with in the listening passage, read about the topic or write a paragraph about what they think they are going to hear in the listening passage).

3.5.2 Phase 2: While-listening

During the while-listening stage, Hu (2012:284) state that intervention by teachers is almost impossible considering that the learner lacks the opportunity to interrupt the speaker. According to Hu (2012:284), learners' thinking is much faster than the speed of the speaker (roughly four times); hence, listeners should be encouraged to utilise 'rate gap' to actively process the incoming message. To do so, learners can use a variety of ways, such as writing down keywords, taking notes, predicting expected information, summarising what has been said, and identifying the main points or patterns. In the process, learners evoke their schemata which then help in the language comprehension.

Vandergrift (2013:5) suggests the following activities for the while-listening phase.

3.5.2.1 First listening

First listening is referred to by Vandergrift (2013:5) as the first verification stage; that is, it involves "selective attention and monitoring". Learners at this stage verify what they predicted and also make a note of any additional information which they understood (see also Vandergrift, 2003:489). During first listening, learners integrate both bottom-up and top-down processing to construct meaning. Vandergrift (2013:1) argued that learners use different knowledge sources to aid in the interpretation

process; that is, linguistic knowledge (bottom-up processing) helps the learner in the decoding process while prior knowledge (top-down processing) is applied in the interpretation process where learners create mental representation of what they have heard (see section 2.4.1.3). Vandergrift (2013:5) points out that students may also compare what they wrote with a partner, make modifications or decide on key details which need special attention; a process which requires metacognition strategies such as planning, monitoring, and selective attention.

3.5.2.2 Pair process-based discussion

In pair process-based discussion (Richards, 2008:13), a learner pairs with a partner and they both compare notes of what they understood during the first listening. They also make modifications where possible and establish what needs to be resolved. In addition, they take note of any other critical detail that requires special attention during the second listening opportunity. A series of stages are noted by Rueda, *et al.* (2013) which refers to comprehension check. Learners in this case try to expand information contained in the text by reviewing the information from their notes or trying to retell the information based on their notes and expanding information based on the text by interacting with other students where they express their ideas and opinions on different topics related to the text.

A study conducted by Goh and Taib (2006:226) consider this stage as an individual reflection stage. The researchers posit that to help the students recall what they heard, four questions related to metacognitive thinking can serve as a guide, namely: What were you listening to? What helped you to understand the text? What prevented you from getting the answer? What did you do to understand as much of the text as possible? According to Goh and Taib (2006:226) this stage helps learners to confirm their comprehension, understand factors which affect listening and also gain knowledge on strategies that facilitate listening.

3.5.2.3 Second listening

According to Vandergrift (2013:5) second listening is referred to as the final verification stage. The stage involves selective attention, monitoring, and problem

solving. Here, learners listen critically to sections which created confusion or disagreement and make corrections. Learners also take note of any new information which they hear (Richards, 2008:14).

3.5.2.4 Whole-class process-based discussions

Vandergrift (2013:5) refers to this stage as the reflection and goal-setting stage. In this step, a teacher leads a discussion to confirm comprehension before discussing strategies used by the students. Specifically, the class discussion helps learners to contribute in the re-construction of the text's main points and most important details, and it also helps the students to reflect on how they arrived at the meaning of certain words or parts of the text (Vandergrift, 2013:5). At this stage, Goh and Taib (2006:226) suggest that students can take turns to read aloud their notes on their reflections during the discussions and, while each student gives his or her report, other students listen, ask questions or also give their own comments.

Vandergrift (2003:490) argues that students need to evaluate approaches they used, decisions made, as well as outcomes of a listening task. At this stage, instructors according to Vandergrift should encourage students to self-evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of strategies they used. Students can also discuss what they heard orally through group or class discussions, or they can utilise performance checklists or journals.

3.5.3 Post-listening phase

The post-listening phase as discussed by scholars such as Goh (2008:207), Goh and Taib (2008:224) and Vandergrift (2013:5) basically involves engaging learners with activities that include listening exercises which ensure meaningful language use. Goh (2008:207), for example, suggests that after a listening task, learners need to revisit the task so as to rectify listening problems or comprehension errors.

Post-listening activities according to Hu (2012:284) involve acting upon what they have heard to clarify meaning, summarising the listening material orally or in writing, or retelling what they heard to check comprehension. Learners could also use

pictorial presentation like charts, diagrammes, webs or maps. These activities according to Hu (2012:284) strengthen learners' understanding of what they heard, and they also help learners to store the new information in their memory bank which further prepares them for listening comprehension during the next listening lesson. Hu (2012:284) argues that in the post-listening stage learners consolidate prior knowledge that has been activated and as well they review new information which they just learnt. Activities presented at this stage therefore assist learners to transfer the listening skill to other areas beyond the listening classroom which facilitates listening comprehension in language learning.

Developing learners' metacognitive thinking (i.e. person, task, and strategy knowledge) is therefore critical during a listening task. For example, in this study the learners lack exposure to spoken English, and the culture of speaking the language outside the classroom is missing, so teachers need to plan well for listening activities in and outside the classroom. Hu (2012:284) argues that at this stage learners should be encouraged to apply what they have heard to clarify meaning and to be able to extend their thinking beyond the classroom. This could be done by providing guided reflection on the listening task which focuses on selected aspects of metacognitive knowledge; that is, learners are encouraged to evaluate and apply their metacognitive knowledge.

Language comprehension depends heavily on developing both bottom-up and top-down listening skills. Taking into consideration the three phases (pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening) EFL teachers need to pay attention and provide activities and tasks that make use of linguistic and background knowledge especially during the pre-listening phase. Such an approach helps listeners to "obtain background activation before listening and use both bottom-up and top-down processing models to achieve better understanding while-listening" (Hu, 2012:287).

When considering the detailed discussion that researchers provide for the various listening phases, it is clear that it requires teachers to plan the listening phases before the listening lessons are presented and that the activities for the various phases should be planned well.

3.6 INTEGRATING LISTENING WITH OTHER LANGUAGE SKILLS

As indicated in the first chapter (section 1.1) listening and reading are receptive language skills while speaking and writing are productive skills or, as Sun (2009:57) states, listening and reading require input competence, while speaking and writing require output competence. Wu (2010:139) says that to acquire a good command of a language, the learner needs both listening and speaking skills and therefore calls for an integration of the two skills. In real-life situations one specific language skill usually does not take place independently or in isolation; instead, one language skill is usually integrated with the other(s). Turner (1995:21) explains this integration as:

We mix and combine the skills all the time. Listening and speaking are inseparable in the young first language learner. Throughout our daily lives we read and make comments; we listen and write. In the classroom of foreign language learning the skills need to be integrated in the same way. The language learning we do through listening should not be unconnected with the language learning we do through speaking, reading or writing. If learners are to have that automatic access to language that they enjoy in a first language, then they need to keep what they know in constant circulation.

The above quotation indicates that the listening tasks should be prepared in a way that let students practice the other skills as well. This does not mean, however, that the practice of listening skills should be overshadowed by the other skills. Rost (1990:214) remarks that the integration of listening with other skills should be appropriate.

Integration according to Goh (2008:199) is essential in the extraction of information and construction of meaning for L2 learners. Goh (2008:199) argues that integrating listening activities with metacognitive materials helps L2 learners to become aware of various processes involved in L2 listening. The researcher suggests that integration can assist learners in applying their knowledge to their listening development beyond the classroom.

Instruction of EFL listening skills should therefore be structured in such a way that learners get an opportunity to practice both listening and speaking skills. By providing authentic or real-life listening tasks students could practice both skills and subsequently acquire good command of the language.

3.7 FACTORS THAT NEED TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN TEACHING LISTENING

The factors discussed below need to be considered when teaching listening.

3.7.1 Designing clear tasks

One of the principles of listening teaching activities is, according to Rost (2002:19-20), the designing of clear tasks that are focused on creating meaning. A task is defined by Rost (2002:19-20) as a basic “learning structure” which is designed with the aim of increasing learning. A listening task according to Rost also “involves distinct input (oral and/or visual), a clear set of procedures, and a tangible outcome.” Listening tasks could be one-way (e.g., from an outside source like a videotape) where the learners has to do something with the input, or two-way (i.e., from an outside source like a partner) where the learner is supposed to process and respond to his or her partner so as to complete the collaborative task (Schwartz, 1998:10; Rost, 2002:19-20). Also refer to section 3.7 and 3.8 for a discussion of different listening tasks.

3.7.2 Ensuring the use of active learning strategies

Rost (2002:21) explains that teaching methods employed when teaching listening should ensure the usage of active listening strategies. Rost (2002) suggests that strategies like predicting, guessing, selecting, clarifying and responding/reflecting, should be directly incorporated into the listening tasks so as to help learners take control of the listening process. By so doing, learners can knowingly adjust their efforts which in turn help them to participate and comfortably become more active in a listener role (Rost, 2002:21).

3.7.3 Intensive and extensive listening

Sun (2009:57) suggests that both *intensive listening* (detailed) and *extensive listening* (general) should be combined to help students understand the purpose for listening, and to know what information they need to grasp in order to make timely responses (e.g. selecting graphics, and filling out tables in business English listening training). Renandya and Farrell (2010:56) suggest that extensive listening is an effective way to enable students to effectively develop fast automatic processing of oral language. Mousavi and Iravani (2012:24) note that providing opportunities or authentic materials to experience language can gradually help students improve language comprehension. Sun (2009:57) suggests careful selection of intensive listening materials by including easier materials for reading, that is, materials with fewer new words, clear records, standard tones, and slow reading speed. Students at the end should be able to retell the content of the material and orally answer questions. In extensive listening, students can listen to the material for about three times without interruption. However, while teaching intensive listening and extensive listening, each should be practiced step by step.

3.7.4 Teaching the culture of the target language

Cultural knowledge is also an important component in teaching listening and speaking in a foreign language (Sun, 2009:58). Listening, according to Sun, does not mean only understanding the literal contents of words and sentences, but there is a need to understand the deep and implied meanings of native speakers. For example, to master the English language, and to freely manipulate it, a learner must understand the culture of English-speaking countries. While teaching listening, instructors should introduce to students the history of those countries, their traditions, and living habits, as well as literary quotations, original idioms and background knowledge to help them express their thoughts appropriately while communicating with foreigners. Social strategies, for example, can be used to assist learners to work with others and understand the target culture as well as the language (Oxford, 2003:14). The choice of listening material is therefore important to ensure that students get into contact with the culture of the different mother tongue speakers of the target language.

Fang (2008:28) contends that language learners often lack socio-cultural, factual as well as contextual knowledge of the foreign language to ensure proper comprehension. Students in most cases are unfamiliar with clichés and collocations in English to help them predict a missing word or phrase, which makes them bored when they listen to unfamiliar sounds, words and sentences for long periods. Fang (2008:28) therefore advises that teachers should fill the gap between the input and students' responses and between the teachers' feedback and students' reaction to make listening a purposeful experience.

3.7.5 Teaching listening before testing it

A listening lesson should sound like a teaching session, not a testing session. This implies that learners should be exposed to different activities of listening before they are exposed to testing. Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1995:106) and Rixon (1986:124) take a firm position in saying that it does not have to be regarded as cheating if students would like to hear the passage again, in any way it suits them, be it in small sections, with pauses, or in any other way that students are comfortable with. Rixon (1986:124) further explains that students should not be expected to give an immediate answer. They need time to check whether what they heard matches with what they know. They need to be given time to reconsider the answer(s) they have initially been giving. This implies that students should be given ample time to analyse what they listen to in order to give answers adequately.

Based on research, it is obvious that listening skills cannot be taught in isolation from other skills. Listening tasks used by teachers, for example, should incorporate active listening strategies like predicting, guessing and reflecting to help students take an active role in their learning. Besides, social strategies should be employed to help students understand the target culture to help students in language comprehension. Student should therefore be exposed to different activities and listening teaching material to ensure effective listening.

3.8 SELECTING LISTENING TEACHING MATERIAL AND ACTIVITIES

Teachers and lecturers have an important role to play when they teach listening. They need to help build up students' confidence by teaching them to listen better rather than testing their listening abilities. It is also the teachers'/lecturers' responsibility to provide students with activities in which students can be successful. In addition, lecturers should tell students that the lecturer is not the only person in the class who has useful and interesting things to say. Hence, it is important that lecturers provide students with numerous opportunities for listening to a variety of different types of listening passages (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010:171). Harmer (1993:24) agrees with this. He states that since students in classrooms differ in many cases, such as social background and ability, teachers and lecturers need to prepare a variety of activities and make use of a variety of listening material (listening passages) so as to satisfy most of their students' needs at various times. In a listening lesson, a single specific type of exercise should not be overused (Harmer, 1993:24). In line with Harmer's (1993: 24) idea, Underwood (1989:174) also remarks that the frequent use or avoidance of recorded materials can have its own demerits. Therefore, exposure to different types of passages and to the possibilities of interaction with the speakers is important in boosting learners' listening experiences and self-reliance in handling the spoken word.

Fang (2008:28) suggests that when teaching listening, teachers should select listening material that would provide students with opportunities that would enable them to be conscious of different native-speaker accents. Fang (2008:28) further suggests that they should choose short, simple listening material with little redundancy (noise) for low skilled learners and more complex authentic materials with more redundancy for high-skilled learners. It is important to take this into consideration in the Ethiopian context as students' EFL listening skills are not well developed and students are seldom in everyday life exposed to native speakers' accent.

The importance of using authentic listening material was discussed in section 3.3.1. In this regard Shang (2008:41) recommends that, while planning listening lessons, teachers should integrate authentic listening materials from a variety of topics

together with realistic listening tasks. However, Fang (2008:27) argues that authentic listening materials should be graded according to the learner's level. At the lowest proficiency levels, the selected listening materials should offer familiar content that is connected with students' interests. For example, Wu (2010:138) argues that topics selected as listening materials should be relevant and interesting to the learners so as to motivate and to get them more involved in the listening activity.

Teachers can use different ways to design or select effective listening texts (e.g. informal talks and interaction between speakers and listeners) and tasks (e.g. expectation, purpose, and on-going listener responses) for teaching listening skills (Ur, 2010:108). They should select listening texts and set tasks that are as realistic as possible to help students relate what they are doing with real life outside the classroom.

3.8.1 Types of listening texts or materials

Listening texts should be selected so as to provide the learners with the possibility to practice understanding different forms of listening discourse (Ur, 2008:108). For example, listening materials may include stories, anecdotes, jokes, talks and commentaries (Byrne 1986:16; Fang 2008:27). Fang (2008:27) also suggests use of listening material such as conversations, discussions, plays and interviews. Informal talk (e.g. small talk) could also be used as part of listening texts involving more than one speaker and might expect learners to discriminate between speakers. In such cases the focus is on oral communication strategies (Taguchi, 2008:433; Ur, 2010:108). This type of listening text is mostly used in teaching listening skills based on discourse, which mostly focuses on improvised, spontaneous speech or a fair imitation of it.

Selecting texts that would provide opportunities for interaction between speakers and listeners is important (Ur, 2008:108), especially because these type of listening texts provide a particular basis for further language activities. For example, learners may listen to an interview, and later they may be asked to interview each other to obtain similar information (Ma, 2010:468).

Byrne (1986:16) mentions *songs* as good listening material whereas Sevik (2012:10) states that songs are one of the most enjoyable ways that learners can use to practice and develop listening skills. While using songs as listening material, students should be provided with tasks such as filling in missing words, phrases and sentences (Byrne, 1986:16).

A variety of audio-visual inputs like *videos, films, news clips, radio programmes, documentaries, and television plays* (Hulstijn, 2003:422; Fang, 2008:27 and Taguchi, 2008:433) are important in the teaching of listening where students can polish their aural/oral skills. Other visuals, according to Ma (2010:470), may include pictures, sketches on the blackboard or overhead projector, flannel-or magnet-board cut-outs, and objects. According to researchers (e.g. Terantino, 2011:10-11) the internet has also been observed to be a good source of listening teaching resources. For example, relevant 'YouTube' video clips could be used for language teaching where learners apply their foreign language skills. Considering that the resource is user-friendly, accessible, and free of charge, EFL teachers could download authentic materials which offer rich multicultural content that offers unique insight into the target culture. For example, Terantino (2011:11) states that YouTube provides fast and fun access to language as well as cultural-based videos which can be used for instruction from all over the world. Besides, YouTube, according to Watkins and Wilkins (2011:113), provides authentic English exposure and promotes a learning style that is more autonomous and student-centred. Such materials according to Ma (2010:470) bring some life into the listening situation and also aid in the comprehension of the language.

It is important to take note of Fang's (2008:28) suggestion that listening materials should be selected based on the students' level of proficiency. At low proficiency levels, listening materials should offer very familiar and/or predictable content, especially those materials that connect with students' interests to enable them to take advantage of their world knowledge and to assist them in comprehension when their linguistic skills are deficient.

3.8.2 Listening activities and listening tasks

Teachers and lecturers should make use of a variety of activities or tasks when teaching listening. In line with the three phases of listening teaching, students should be informed in advance about the kind of text (e.g. a song, dialogue or advertisement) they are going to hear (pre-listening phase) (Ma, 2010:468; Ur, 2008:108). Other language skills can be integrated during this phase by for example letting learners read an article related to the topic that will be addressed in the while-listening phase or they can be taught the meaning of unfamiliar words that they will encounter in the listening passage. This means that the information the listeners get activates their prior knowledge and makes them ready for the incoming messages.

3.8.2.1 Setting the purpose

The learner according to Ma (2010:468) is first informed to pay attention to specific meanings that are related with the task which he or she has to perform. The task therefore encourages the learner to listen selectively, and extract information that is relevant to the task at hand. For example, the instruction like “listen to the passage...” would not give learners an indication of what they could expect to hear. On the contrary, an instruction such as, “You are going to hear a husband and wife discussing their plan for monthly expenditure...” activates the learners’ previous knowledge and concepts of facts, events and experiences. Thus, it helps them to make use of their accumulated knowledge in order to anticipate the message and understand it easily (Ur, 2008:108).

During instruction the purpose of the pre-set task should be communicated to the listeners and should preferably involve some kind of visible or audible response. For example an instruction like “listen and understand...” does not clearly indicate the purpose (Ur, 2008:108). The purpose according to Ma (2010:469) could be to extract relevant information from the text so as to transfer it to another form. In order to let the student understand the purpose, the instructor should give an instruction like “Listen and find out how the family plan their monthly expenditure.” Ur (2008:108) clearly articulates that explanation of the purpose helps the listener to listen selectively for important information.

3.8.2.2 The use of instructions and games

In language comprehension giving instructions for the listening activity is an essential component in listening tasks (Schwartz, 1998:14; Ma, 2010:464). It is argued that when students listen and do exercises based on some directions or instructions, it could be a pleasurable activity since students get instantaneous feedback on how well they have listened. The teacher can easily assess such kinds of exercises because everyone performs at once. Since it is a kind of game, students do not experience any kind of tension and shame at getting something wrong (Schwartz, 1998:14; Ma, 2010:464). Communication games in listening, according to Ghoneim (2013:105), can be played in pairs that involve giving and understanding of instructions, for example, think aloud activities. This kind of listening activity helps students develop listening skills that they need in real life.

3.8.2.3 Using visual information when teaching listening

Charts and graphics (i.e. pictures, maps, diagrams, etc.) can be used when the speaker compares and contrasts two things (Schwartz, 1998:14; Fang, 2008:27). Charts are helpful if there are many things to be compared and contrasted. When the tasks focus on such exercises, students need to be familiar with note taking. The notes can be used by the students (listeners) when taking unguided notes on the same types of passage.

In addition to the use of charts, pictures can be a valuable stimulus for students (Fang, 2008:27). As students listen, they may compare what they hear with what they see in a picture, or they may listen to a description and try to identify what the speaker is talking about. Students can also be provided with some pictures arranged in a wrong order. Students can then be asked to listen to the listening text and arrange the pictures in their logical order according to what is stated in the listening passage. Schwartz (1998:14) states that visuals are appropriate especially in the pre-listening stage, mainly to provide learners with some background knowledge to aid in language comprehension, to help learners activate their existing knowledge

about the topic, clarify any cultural information related with the topic, make students aware of the kind of inputs they will listen to, their role and the purpose of listening,

and also to provide opportunities for group or class discussion activities. Fang (2008:27) further suggests that visuals assist learners to guess or imagine actively.

3.8.2.4 Making inferences or guessing meaning

Teachers can provide listening tasks that require learners to make an *inference or guess the meaning* of what they heard. Inferencing is referred to by Schwartz (1998:21) as “using the linguistic and visual information in the text to guess at the meaning of what is heard, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information.” Learners according to Schwartz (1998:21) can watch a video or a segment of a video, make predictions and give reasons for their predictions.

3.8.2.5 Skimming listening

Teachers can incorporate listening tasks that include listening for the gist of the message. Listening for the gist or main idea is referred to by Schwartz (1998:21) as ‘skimming listening’. Schwartz points out that a combination of listening activities can be used to promote listening behaviours. During the pre-listening and while-listening (Hu, 2012:284) stage, tasks that include predicting or guessing and filling in gaps, selecting relevant and non-relevant information, or global listening could be used to help students get the meaning of the message.

3.8.2.6 Scanning listening

Teaching listening comprehension may include tasks that require learners to search for specific clues to meaning. Schwartz (1998:21) relates this kind of listening task to scanning listening or viewing for specific details (Hu, 2012:284). During while-listening, learners scan (listen) for keywords or questions that have been given in advance. For example, learners may listen to or view a segment of a video and stop

the speaker or tape when the answer to a previously posed question has been heard.

3.8.2.7 Recognising the speaker's mood and attitude

When selecting listening texts or material, teachers should keep in mind that different speakers may give the same information by displaying very *different moods and attitudes*. It is also possible for an individual to give the same information in different ways. The information given by the speaker may not be discerned from the words alone. Teachers should therefore try to enable their students to be “more sensitive to tone of voice ... about the way speakers have delivered their information” (Rixon, 1986:96). For example, Fang (2008:28) asserts that redundancy is a natural feature of speech which could be helpful in one way or an impediment in another way. Fang (2008:28) argues that normal speech is usually “full of hesitations, pauses and uneven intonation”. Fang suggests that teachers should give students tasks to practice with so as to help them familiarise themselves with acoustic forms of rapid natural speech. Teachers should look for rapidly uttered colloquial collocations and assist students to imitate a native speaker's pronunciations.

3.8.2.8 Imitation and dictation

According to Sun (2009:57), imitation is an important aspect in teaching listening as it helps learners to master and memorise words in language materials. It also nurtures development of listening competence. Another comprehensive teaching method according to Sun (2009:57) is dictation. The ability to distinguish or differentiate different elements and tones, the skill of spelling words, and the skill of employing glossary and grammar are some examples of dictation and are the primary language skills that the students are expected to exercise during the teaching of listening skills (Sun, 2009:56-57).

Selection of teaching materials to help learners with language comprehension is therefore critical for teaching EFL listening skills. Emphasis should be given while selecting materials in each of the three stages (pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stages) of language learning.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a review of literature that pertains to the teaching of listening skills within the framework of communicative language teaching which a learner-centred approach is basically.

The role of conscious teaching of listening strategies to help learners to compensate for their processing deficiencies, so as approach and manage their listening in an effective way were highlighted. Teachers need to select instruction strategies that target a particular skill, so as to empower learners to take control of the language learning process; for example, use of metacognitive strategies in teaching of listening skills.

Key approaches relating to integration of bottom-up and top-down listening activities and tasks were addressed, particularly during the three phases (pre-, while and post-listening stages) of teaching listening in language comprehension. Activities related to each stage were also discussed based on research.

Selection of activities and materials and integration of the other language skills (reading, writing and speaking) with listening skill, especially during pre-listening, was emphasised. Research indicates that learners should be provided with opportunities to practise listening and speaking skills through real-life listening tasks so as to gain good command of the language.

Key barriers to effective teaching of EFL listening skills were also highlighted in this section. Instructors should therefore select materials and activities that help learners to activate their prior knowledge so as to make each stage of learning to listen a successful experience. The next chapter (chapter four) focuses on the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapters two and three, a review of literature related to listening and the teaching of listening in a second or foreign language was presented. Chapter two defined listening and discussed the top-down and bottom-up theory of information processing with specific reference to listening in a foreign language. In Chapter three the focus was on the teaching of listening in English foreign language and different strategies for teaching listening skills. A thorough review of the literature was utilised to come up with the formulation of a number of preconditions for effective teaching of listening skills in a foreign language. This chapter gives a detailed discussion of the research design and the methods for collecting data. The research population, sampling, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis techniques, ethical consideration and, finally, the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the research instruments are addressed.

4.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem in this study concerns the perceptions of lecturers and students of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in three selected Ethiopian universities (refer to section 1.2). In an effort to address the problem, a number of sub-questions were formulated to guide the study. According to Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:291) the answer to the research questions helps to fulfil the purpose and the objective of the research. The research question and sub-questions were therefore carefully formulated in order to ensure that these directed and steered the research.

The sub-questions that guided the research were as follows:

- What is the role of listening in the effective learning of a foreign language?

- What are the best practices to teach and learn listening skills for foreign language acquisition?
- What are the current practices in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in selected Ethiopian universities?
- How effective do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive the teaching of EFL listening skills to be?
- What do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive as challenges in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills?
- What evidence-based recommendations can be made on the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in Ethiopian universities?

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:490) define a research design as “the plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analysing data”. The main purpose for using a specific research design is to facilitate the answering of the research questions. Research design as defined by Breakwell (2004:6) and Gupta (2007:74) is simply a plan for the overall structure of the study to be undertaken. Gupta (2007:74) goes on saying that it stipulates the parts that comprise the study. It should identify the logical relationships between those components. The research design helps the researcher to explain how each component in the research design is necessitated by the research question that is being addressed. For Creswell (2009:3) research design is a structure that ties all the components of a research project together from broad assumptions to more specific methods of data collection and analysis. Gupta (2007:74) and Shukla (2008:29) define research design as a systematic and planned approach that is involved in a research undertaking. According to Shukla (2008:29) a carefully developed research design assists the researcher to be free from any personal, procedural and methodological bias.

4.3.1 Research paradigm

The word ‘paradigm’ has become conventional in educational research and in social theory. It is used to refer to ways of understanding the world and as such paradigms

affect everything that individuals do in the world (Scott & Morrison, 2006:169-170). According to Biesta (2012:147) the second half of the twentieth century was dominated by strongly conflicting opinions about what counts as good and worthwhile research – the so-called ‘paradigm wars’. Where there was initially an “either/or” approach to the use of quantitative and qualitative research, the advance of mixed methods research has resulted in a degree of pacification because it was realised that both these research approaches have their advantages and disadvantages (Biesta 2012:147), that they are compatible (Ivankova, Creswell & Clark, 2007:265) and that they can be used in a mixed methods approach to ensure that the weaknesses of one approach is counteracted by the strengths of the other, or that complete answers that meet the goal or purpose of the study can best be obtained by using both quantitative and qualitative research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:395) - as was done in this study.

The paradigmatic stance adopted in this research was pragmatism (also refer to section 1.7.1). Denscombe (2007:116) states that pragmatism is “... generally regarded as the philosophical partner for the Mixed Methods approach.” According to Denscombe (2007:116) it allows for a midway between purely quantitative approaches (see section 4.3.2.1) that are based on a positivistic philosophy and purely qualitative approaches (see section 4.3.2.2) that are based on a philosophy of interpretivism. Pragmatism is therefore useful for social researchers who are of the opinion that neither quantitative nor qualitative research alone will provide the necessary results for the research they intend to do (Denscombe 2007:117). The guiding principles for pragmatism are according to Denscombe (2007:117-118), “ ‘What answers my question’ ”, “ ‘What meets my needs’ ” and “ ‘what works best’ “. Biesta (2012:147) adds to this by explaining that proponents of mixed methods approach support a *pragmatic* rather than a *principled* approach, because they are of the opinion that the choice of the research design and method should be driven by the aims, objectives and research questions.

In this research the approach and research methods which were deemed the most appropriate to answer the research questions as best as possible and meet the needs of the research best, were adopted. A mixed methods approach was followed to do an in-depth investigation into the teaching of EFL listening skills in three

Ethiopian universities. Ivankova, *et al.*'s (2007:265) opinion that a mixed method study allows one to "... address different aspects of the same general research problem and provide its (sic) more complete understanding" further substantiates the rationale for a mixed method approach and the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

4.3.2 Research approach

As was alluded to in section 4.3.1, different types of research approaches are identified by researchers such as Creswell (2009:3) and Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010:420) These approaches are the quantitative, qualitative and the mixed-method approach. A mixed-methods research approach was followed in this study and in order to get a clear picture of this particular approach a brief explanation of the quantitative (section 4.3.2.1) and qualitative (section 4.3.2.2) approaches are given, before the mixed-methods research (section 4.3.2.3) are unpacked in detail.

4.3.2.1 A quantitative research approach

A quantitative research approach tests theories by looking at the relationships between different variables. These variables can be measured using instruments in order to make numbered data for the analysis using statistical procedures. Quantitative design also uses deductive reasoning to test theory (Creswell, 2009:4; Lodico, *et al.*, 2006:6). Quantitative research seeks to quantify the data and based on these quantified data statistical analyses are applied (Shukla, 2008:32). Shukla adds that the objective of using a quantitative approach is to provide specific facts which can help decision makers and policy formulators. Furthermore, it provides insights relating to the relationships between phenomena and/or variables, and is used to explain, predict and to validate the relationships (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:102).

4.3.2.2 A qualitative research approach

A qualitative research approach is mostly used in exploratory research design and is used for explorations and understandings of meanings ascribed to a social problem.

This approach to research involves research questions and procedures, collection of data from the participants' setting, inductive data analysis and making interpretations of the meaning of data (Creswell 2009:4). Qualitative research according to Lodico, *et al.* (2006:15) is a research approach that collects data through observations, interviews and document analysis and makes analysis of the findings by means of narration and verbally. Lodico, *et al.* (2006:28) further state that qualitative researchers are interested in identifying the group or setting that they wish to investigate in depth rather than identifying specific variables. For Leedy and Ormrod (2001:102), a qualitative research approach allows better understanding of the research situation and context.

4.3.2.3 Mixed-method research

A mixed-method research is a design to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009:4; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010:561). Mixed-method research is an approach where qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined to gain a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation (Lodico, *et al.*, 2006:17; Ary, *et al.*, 2010:561 and Greene, 2005:209). Currently, according to Lodico, *et al.* (2006:282), most educational researchers recognise the advantages of using the mixed-method research approach. It is advantageous to use this approach as it provides detailed understandings of the context, processes, and interactions; gives precise measurements of attitudes and outcomes; allows the researcher flexibility in his or her choice of methods of data collection and, finally, it allows for a convincing and powerful way of presenting the results of the summary of numbers and detailed representations of the settings. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:21) explain that the use of words, narrative, and images (qualitative) in data analysis supplements meaning to numbers (quantitative), and that reversely the use of numbers (quantitative data) can add precision to the qualitative data. They are thus complementary to each other and using both approaches ensures that the disadvantage of one approach is limited by the advantages of the other (Creswell, 2009:204). Another advantage is that it allows the researcher to examine the research question from broad perspectives. The mixed methods research also

provides strength for conclusions made through the inclusion of the findings from both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Mixed method approach focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. It is based on the premise that both quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provide a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). The approach involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data and the integration of these two types of research approaches in the data analysis. In mixed methods research, data collection is either done concurrently or sequentially, relating data collection procedures to the specific types of mixed methods design. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2006:125), in concurrent designs (i.e. triangulation, embedded) the qualitative and quantitative data are collected during the same time period but independently.

A mixed-method research approach may have some disadvantages. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:22) regard the difficulty to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research by a single investigator, the difficulty of skills it requires in methods particularly when data is collected concurrently, and its expensiveness with respect to time, budget and efforts as problems associated with this approach. In the current study, the purpose of using a mixed-method approach was to get a comprehensive picture (Greene, 2005:208) of the educational phenomenon of teaching EFL listening skills at institutions of higher education.

As this study is an investigation into the perceptions of students and teachers on the effectiveness of teaching and learning of listening skills to English foreign language students, a sequential explanatory mixed methods/strategy was followed. The reason for selecting this strategy is that a sequential explanatory design according to Creswell (2009:206–209); Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Jiao (2006:88) allows the researcher to collect quantitative data during its first phase which could then be followed by qualitative data collection through interviews and observation in a second phase. Similarly, Creswell (2009:211) suggests that the importance of using sequential exploratory methods allows the researcher to use qualitative data and results to support and strengthen the analysis of quantitative results. In this research

quantitative data was collected first and then followed by the qualitative data collection. Here the qualitative data was used to support and strengthen the quantitative data.

Scott and Morrison (2006:251) state that cross-checking of evidence is important when doing research and that collection of different kinds of data about the same phenomenon may therefore be done. This process of triangulation, as it is called, uses either qualitative or quantitative data or both, to look at the same phenomenon. According to Scott and Morrison (2006:252) triangulation allows for a more holistic and rich account of the particular phenomenon and in addition "... provides key pathways for comparing the data collected by different methods, allowing findings to be corroborated." The utilisation of both quantitative and qualitative collection of data allows the researcher "... to get a better understanding of the thing that is being investigated if he/she views it from different perspectives" (Denscombe 2007:134).

Apart from investigating lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching of EFL listening skills, it was also deemed important to determine what challenges lecturers and students experience with the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills, because these challenges could influence their perceptions. In addition it was important to establish what suggestions they could make to ensure effective listening teaching and to establish exactly how the teaching of EFL listening is done in the universities that were selected for this study. In order to get a holistic view of the phenomenon of EFL listening teaching in Ethiopian universities, a mixed method approach was followed during which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by means of different data collection instruments.

In the quantitative phase of this study, a descriptive survey was conducted by means of questionnaires to students and teachers to determine current listening teaching practices and teachers' and students' perceptions about the effectiveness of pre-, while, post-listening and listening material while teaching EFL listening. The questionnaires were administered to "describe and interpret *what is*" and to provide an exact representation of the circumstances (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000:169). Therefore, the questionnaires were designed to determine the opinion of a specific group (students and teachers at three Ethiopian universities) about a specific phenomenon

(the effectiveness of the teaching of EFL listening skills) at a specific time and in a specific context.

In the qualitative part of this study semi-structured interviews were conducted with lecturers and university students (first and second year) to collect data on their perceptions of the teaching of EFL listening, the challenges they experience and their suggestions for effective teaching of EFL listening. In addition, classroom observations were conducted using a checklist and making notes so as to determine the actual practices of listening teaching by listening to what teachers and students were doing. This was done to get in depth insight into the phenomenon under investigation and for triangulation purposes.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODS

The sampling procedures, data collection methods and data analysis played an important role in enabling the researcher to answer the research questions.

4.4.1 Sampling

This section will present the sample and sampling procedures followed in this study. Sampling is the process of taking smaller portions from a population for observation and analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:197; Best & Kahn, 2005:12). For Lodico, *et al.* (2010:143) a sample is a smaller group of respondents selected from a larger population in order to represent the larger population and allows the researchers to work with a smaller, more manageable subgroup of the population.

From the 31 government owned universities found in Ethiopia the current investigation was based on three conveniently and purposively selected universities. Purposive sampling according to Walliman (2006:79) is where the researcher selects what he or she thinks is a 'typical' sample based on certain selection criteria. As a result, three universities in the SNNPRG province in Ethiopia which are near the university where I teach were included in the study. In addition to purposively selecting the universities, convenience was also a criteria for sampling as I am visually impaired and had to select universities near my own university.

For the quantitative part of the study all 210 first and second year students from the Language Studies Department, as well as all lecturers who had taught EFL listening skills for at least one year (that is 78 lecturers in total) at the three selected universities were requested to complete the questionnaire. All the lecturers returned the questionnaires, but only 158 students consisting of 85 first year and 70 second year students completed the questionnaires.

In the qualitative phase of the study (which consisted of interviews and observations) it was kept in mind that a critical step in conducting individual interviews is getting the right person or people for interviewing. The selection of the participants for this study was based on the assumption that participants who would best help to understand the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2014:189) and could contribute the most important information for the issues under study should be selected. Thus, from each sample university two senior lecturers who had the most years of experience in teaching listening skills and were still teaching listening during data collection were selected purposively and interviewed. This is due to the fact that this study was conducted with the view to investigating teaching and learning of EFL listening skills and determining students' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness, challenges and best practices of EFL listening teaching. This could most suitably be done through the experience of information-rich people (lecturers) who have experience in carrying out the process. Furthermore, the teaching-learning process is best understood through the experiences of those engaged in the activity (Seidman, 2006:10). In addition to the lecturers, six students from each sampled university with different levels (low, average and god) of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) from first and second year students were purposively selected and interviewed. The interviews were conducted in each one of the three universities after getting permission from the university's vice-presidents and after obtaining all the respondents' signed consent forms. For classroom observation two lecturers from each university were selected purposively, due to the fact that they were involved in the interview session and to cross-check for the sake of triangulation (see section 4.3.2.3; 4.5.3) what was said during the interview.

As discussed above in section 4.3, the primary concern of this qualitative data was to support and expand on the findings of the quantitative data and to explore the

situation in its natural context. In other words, the interview and observation data was used to supplement the questionnaire data and interviews and observations were conducted after the collection of the quantitative data.

4.4.2 Data collection

This section discusses the data collection methods, instruments and procedures. The accuracy of the data depends on the right choice of the instrument (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006:113). Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:113) say that before researchers begin to collect the data they need to determine what kind of instrument(s) is/are appropriate to get accurate data. Based on this argument a questionnaire for students and teachers, as well as interviews and observation were used to collect data based on these instruments' suitability to provide accurate and dependable data. The advantage of using a mixed-method approach in this study is that it provides for triangulation. The use of different data collection instruments contributed to triangulation as it allowed for the investigation of the research question from different angles and from more than one perspective (Denscombe, 2007:134).

4.4.2.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire according to Lodico, *et al.* (2010:159) is the most commonly used instrument to collect data in descriptive research. For this study, the researcher developed a structured questionnaire for all students and all lecturers involved in EFL listening courses. Students and lecturers had to answer the same questions, although the wording was slightly changed to accommodate the two different groups of respondents. The questionnaires consisted of closed questions in which students and lecturers were requested to respond to a number of questions relating to the teaching of EFL listening skills. According to Devlin, Dong and Brown (1993:15), a good rating scale should fulfil the following criteria: minimum response bias, high discriminating power, ease of administration and simplicity of the scale for the respondents to answer. To meet these requirements, the questionnaires used in this study for both lecturers (Appendix A) and students (Appendix B) made use of a five point Likert scale in which the respondents had to choose between the following five

options: 1 = Highly effective; 2 = Fairly effective; 3 = Somewhat effective; 4 = Not very effective; and 5 = Ineffective.

The questionnaires were directly administered by the researcher in the respective universities. According to Ary, *et al.* (2010:387) direct administration of a questionnaire is advantageous in that it increases the rate of response; has the lowest cost and the fact that the researcher is present to provide assistance or answer questions raised by the respondents, ensures that there are no misunderstandings. No undue pressure was placed on respondents to complete the questionnaire. They were informed that they were under no obligation to complete it.

For the study the questionnaires were developed by the researcher based on aspects regarding the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills as discussed in chapters two (section 2.6, 2.7) and three (section 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7). Hu's (2012) framework of a Schema Theory-based Teaching Mode of English Listening (section 3.5) formed the basis for designing the questionnaire. Although Hu's framework does not include the use of listening material, questions on the use of listening material was added, because the nature and the content of the listening material as such link with learners' already existing knowledge and therefore also with schema theory (section 3.8). The following table shows how the items in the questionnaire relate to this framework:

Table 4.1: Questionnaire construction for both students and lecturers

Listening teaching phase	Item number in the questionnaire
Pre-listening phase	1; 2; 3; 4; 7; 8; 9; 17; 19; 31
While-listening	10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 18; 32; 33; 36
Post-listening	20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27
Listening material	5; 6; 28; 29; 30; 34; 35

The questions on pre-, while and post-listening phases and the teaching material incorporate aspects of listening teaching such as metacognition, bottom-up and top-down processing, as these aspects are all integrated in the pre-, while and post-listening phase and cannot be dealt with in isolation.

Each questionnaire had two parts: the first section dealt with the demographic information of the respondents and the second section contained items designed to assess various aspects that could be applicable to the effective teaching of EFL listening skills.

4.4.2.2 Questionnaire piloting

A good questionnaire is one that was prepared to help the researcher to obtain the necessary data to meet the objectives of the study (Gupta, 2007:144). According to Kayrooz and Trevitt (2006:162), a pilot study is a preliminary trial of the approach and conducted to test the suitability of the research instrument. In order to check whether all the necessary contents were included or not and whether the sequence and arrangement of the questions were appropriate or not, the instruments for this study were tested before the actual data collection took place. On top of that pilot testing was conducted to determine to what extent the questions included in the questionnaire could help to obtain the needed data.

Based on this premise, to enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and the interview schedule and to evaluate the usefulness of the instruments in obtaining the needed data, a pilot test was conducted with a small group (10 in total) of students at Woliata Sodo University. Only the questionnaire for students was piloted and the interview schedule for lectures and students was piloted with only one student (who also completed the questionnaire) and one lecturer. The respondents in the pilot study were similar to those for whom the research was intended. Thereafter the necessary modifications were made and the questionnaires were improved for the final data collection (see chapter five for the details).

4.4.2.3 Interviews

According to Cohen *et al.* (2000:269) interviews are forms of data gathering by means of direct verbal interaction between individuals. For Mears (2012:170) it is more than mere questions and answers. Interviews are rather:

... purposeful interactions in which an investigator attempts to learn what another person knows about the topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks about it, and what significance or meaning it might have.

Similarly, Shukla (2008:33) views an interview as a technique in which a single respondent is probed by an interviewer to identify his/her motivation, beliefs, attitudes and feelings related to the problem under investigation. In this study interview as a data collection instrument was used to complement data collected through questionnaires.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected lecturers (Appendix D) and students (Appendix D for a copy of the interview schedule). Semi-structured interviews differ from structured interviews in that they are not standardised. Semi-structured interviews were used because it allowed the researcher to prepare a list of the questions to be asked; allowed for convenient conversation; provided an opportunity to probe beyond the interview protocol, steer the conversation back to the given topic and to check that the questions had been answered properly (Clark-Carter, 2004:70; Lodico, *et al.*, 2010:123-124). In this study participants were probed several times by asking for more information or adding questions.

4.4.3 Observation

Observation is a method in which the researcher observes the behaviour of the subjects under study in a real-life situation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000:305). According to Shukla (2008:33) observation is a widely used method to examine how people behave in groups, in the classroom or as members of an organisation. It also allows

the researcher to collect data on what people actually do, rather than what they say they do or will do. Observation as a data collection tool helps the researcher to get first-hand information and allows elimination of contaminating factors (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2006:206). In addition observation allows understanding of context through the researcher's presence, provides direct information, records activities in a natural setting and allows identification of unanticipated events (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2006:172).

In this study observation was used to supplement data collected through questionnaires and interviews and to qualify findings obtained by questionnaires and interviews. With these objectives in mind, after getting permission from each university and after the instructors signed consent forms, two consecutive lessons were observed in each sampled university. The observation was carried out in both language laboratories and classrooms. An observation checklist (Appendix E) was used to do the observations and was completed with the help of a research assistant because during observation, the researcher was not able to observe all activities performed by the lecturers and students as the researcher has a visual impairment. Thus, only activities listed in the checklist were observed and supplementary notes were made about what was observed. Depending on the items on the checklist helped the researcher to make his observation objective. Observation data was obtained using an observation checklist with Likert scale items with values representing the following; 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = average, 2 = poor and 1 = very poor (see Appendix E for details). The Likert scale was judge based on the following points: if almost all expected activities were presented it was rated 5 (very good). If most of the expected activities were done, it was rated 4 (good). If some of the expected activities were observed, it was rated 3 (average). If very few expected activities were included in the lesson, it was rated 2 (poor) and if none of the expected activities were done, it was rated 1 (very poor). Observation data obtained by means of the questionnaires were analysed quantitatively by using frequency and percentage. The mean score for each of the items were obtained. Notes that were taken and comments made on the observation checklist during the observations, were analysed quantitatively and used to expand on the data obtained by means of questionnaires.

4.4.4 Data collection procedures

The data for this research were collected in different stages: During the first stage, the pilot study was conducted for the questionnaires in an Ethiopian University, which did not form part of the main study. The purpose of this pilot study was to test the appropriateness, wording, validity and reliability of the questionnaires; the clarity of language used and the length it took to complete.

In the second stage the revised and final questionnaires were administered to respondents personally by the researcher and trained research assistants. In the final stage, after data collection was completed and all the questionnaires were returned, the qualitative data was collected by means of a series of individual interviews and lesson observations. Interviews were recorded on a tape recorder and later described verbatim. A checklist and detailed note taking was used for the lesson observations. It was believed that at this stage important data was collected in detail. These techniques allowed the researcher to explore the way in which EFL listening is taught in Ethiopian universities; the students' and lecturers perceptions' about the effectiveness of the teaching; the challenges that they experience with EFL listening in the language laboratory and classrooms and their recommendations for the improvement and best practices of the teaching of EFL listening.

The following table (table 4.2) provides a summary of the research sub-questions, the data collection methods and the data sources:

Table 4.2: The research sub-questions, methods of data collection and sources for collecting data

Research sub-questions	Method (and instruments) of data collection	Source for collecting data
Sub-research question 1 What is the role of listening in the effective learning of a foreign language?	Literature review (Chapter 2 and 3)	Books, journal articles, manuals, policy documents
Sub-research question 2 What are the best practices to teach and learn listening skills for foreign language acquisition?	Literature review (Chapter 2 and 3)	Books, journal articles, manuals, policy documents
Sub-research question 3 What are the current practices in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in selected Ethiopian universities?	Semi-structured interviews, Observations; the use of an observation checklist	18 students, 6 teachers, observation of 6 lessons
Sub-research question 4 How effective do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive the teaching of EFL listening skills to be?	Questionnaires to students and lecturers	Questionnaires on the effectiveness of the teaching of listening completed by 78 teachers and 158 students
Sub-research question 5 What do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive as challenges in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills?	Semi-structured interviews, Observations; the use of an observation checklist, notes made during observations	18 students, 6 teachers, observation of 6 lessons
Sub-research question 6 What evidence-based recommendations can be made on the effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in Ethiopian universities?	All of the above	All of the above

4.4.5 Data analysis and interpretation

After the data collection was completed, the next step was to process and analyse the collected data in accordance with the objective stated in chapter one, section 1.7. The data analysis and interpretation step (stage) according to Cohen, *et al.* (2005:147) involves organisation, accounting for, and explanation of the data. In other words, it means getting the meaning of the data in terms of the respondents' ways of understanding the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

The data that was collected through questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The demographic factors (the variables for academic ranks, levels of education/year, work experience and other demographic factors) were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations, frequency counts and percentages). In addition, the data was analysed using inferential statistics, in particular t-tests (see chapter five for the details). The Likert scale data from the questionnaire had items with responses ranging from 1 = highly effective, 2 = fairly effective, 3 = somewhat effective, 4 = not effective, and 5 = ineffective. Since the calculated values/ means could range between 0 and 5, the calculated values were grouped into three equally-sized class intervals and frequency of occurrence of calculated means in each interval calculated. This allowed the researcher to obtain an overview of how means were distributed. The class-interval were determined to be (0-1.66); (1.67-3.33) and (3.34-5.00). In this way frequencies in the first interval (or category) indicated 'low' means; frequencies in the second interval reflected the proportion of 'average means' and frequencies in the last category/ or interval reported the proportion of 'above average means'.

The interview data were analysed qualitatively. Interview data were transcribed verbatim, coded and organised in themes to supplement the quantitative data. Themes obtained from the interview data were coded based on the research questions. Quotes documenting individual views and opinions were also used to corroborate the quantitative results (see chapter five for the details). Data obtained

by means of the observation checklist was analysed quantitatively by calculating mean scores for each of the items.

4.5 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

The appropriateness of the measurement instrument for research undertaking is very important. If faulty instruments are used, the instruments will provide little value in answering the research questions in a trustworthy manner. Therefore, it is important to check the validity and reliability of data collecting tools.

4.5.1 Validity

Validity based on Neuman (2007:138) refers to truthfulness or how well abstract ideas and data fit together. Punch (2005:97) defines validity as the extent to which a measurement instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Three types of validity are distinguished (Punch 2005:97; Muijs 2004:66 and Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2006:165) namely content validity, criterion related validity and construct validity.

Content validity refers to the ability of the instrument to represent the content which contains the required contents and ideas. Here the validity was checked by whether the instrument includes contents from all the necessary areas with respect to the research questions (Punch, 2005:97). Content validity is also defined by Clark-Cater (2004:29) as the "...degree to which a measure covers the full range of behaviour of the ability being measured." One way of checking the content validity of an instrument is to ask experts in the field whether it covers the range that they would expect. Therefore, the content validity of the instruments was ensured by asking comments from Addis Ababa University, a Unisa PhD student and the supervisor of this study for comments for the improvement of the instrument. Content validity was further ensured by relying on information discussed in eth literature review when compiling the questionnaires.

Criterion-related validity focuses on comparing the instrument with another measure of similar construct (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2006:165; Punch, 2005:97).

According to Clark-Cater (2004:29) criterion-related validity focuses on the question whether a measure fulfills certain criteria. In other words, this means that it should produce a similar pattern to another existing measure. For Muijs (2004:67) this type of validity relates to the theory used in the research. Thus, the validity of the instrument was checked by whether or not the instruments developed with respect to the research questions.

Construct validity is also established by relating the instrument to a general theoretical framework in order to determine whether the instrument links with the concepts (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2006:165; Muijs 2004:66). In this research, content validity of the instrument was demonstrated by fair and comprehensive coverage of the items that it was supposed to cover.

4.5.2 Reliability

Reliability is another important element that determines the quality of the measurement instrument. Reliability refers to the extent to which test scores are free of measurement error (Muijs, 2004:71). It means consistency (Punch, 2005:95). For Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2006:171) it refers to "...the extent to which a measuring instrument contains variable errors, that is, errors that appear inconsistently from observation to observation during any one measurement attempt..." Reliability also refers to an instrument's ability to produce consistent scores for an individual over a repeated testing or across different raters (Lodico, *et al.*, 2010:87).

Cohen, *et al.* (2000:117) also argue that to say the instrument/measure is reliable, it should reveal approximately similar results when carried out on similar groups of respondents repeatedly. Reliability, therefore, is not dependent on who, at what time or where the questionnaire was administered (O'Leary, 2004:60). Even though there are different methods of checking the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach alpha test was used to check the reliability of the Likert scale items included in the questionnaire for the present study.

4.5.3 Trustworthiness

For qualitative data trustworthiness was ensured using different strategies. Morse, *et al.* (2002:5) point out that trustworthiness is defined in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:26), in qualitative data trustworthiness can be ensured by its credibility (i.e. checking the internal validity through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation) while transferability refers to checking the external validity through inferences from a research setting.

According to Neuman (2007), dependability refers to reliability or consistency. A measure is considered to be reliable or dependable if it remains stable when repeated under identical or very similar conditions. Confirmability according to Cohen *et al.* (2000:120) is addressed through audit trails. Confirmability can also be achieved by combining methods which provides an opportunity to develop completeness or in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (DeMarrias & Lapan, 2004:277). For example, Morse, *et al.* (2002:9) suggested use of standards or strategies to ensure the reliability and validity and, therefore, the rigor of a study, including, “investigator responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytic stance, and saturation.”

In this study a number of standards were used to ensure trustworthiness of the data, including: methodological triangulation (mixed method approach); use of carefully constructed questions with consultation with the advisor; pilot testing instruments prior to data collection to ensure internal reliability; theoretical sampling to ensure data was sourced from appropriate sources; and the use of different instruments to help in data triangulation at the data analysis stage.

4.6 ETHICAL MEASURES

All social sciences and educational research involve ethical issues, because their research data is collected from people and is about people.

4.6.1 Informed consent

According to Punch (2005:277), Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2006:81) and Cohen *et al.* (2005:50) informed consent is important whenever the research involves people. With respect to informed consent, the researcher needs to pay attention to the following questions before and during his/her study. Do the people I am studying have full information about the purpose of the study and what the study will involve? Is their agreement to participate in the study given freely? Therefore, in this research in all the data collection processes the researcher clearly explained this to participants in the questionnaire paper as well as in the interview schedule before their participation so that they would know that their involvement was genuinely voluntary and that should they wanted not to take part or to withdraw at any stage of the data collection process, they were free to do so without any negative consequences whatsoever. The informed consent letter that had to be signed by all respondents appears in Appendix F.

4.6.2 Confidentiality

According to Denscombe (2007:143) the interests of participants should be protected. Treating all information obtained as confidential is therefore necessary. According to Punch (2005:277) the researcher has to inform his/her participants whose information will be used and of the confidentiality with which their information will be treated. In this research the participants were told that the information they provided would be treated confidentially and be used for the purposes mentioned in the data collection tools only. Universities were also not identified, but rather allocated an alphabet letter, namely A, B and C when discussing results.

4.6.3 Right to privacy

One of the important ethical considerations is the right to privacy. During the investigation the right of privacy may most easily be violated or denied (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005:61). In this research to ensure the right of privacy the identity of the respondents was not revealed during the analysis of qualitative data.

4.6.4 Ethics approval

Denscombe's (2007:147) states that in most cases social researchers are expected to obtain prior approval for their investigation from an ethics committee. Ethics clearance for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee in the College of Education at the University of South Africa (see Appendix G).

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology was provided. This study employed a mixed-method research as a design to inquiry where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to collect and analyse data.

The chapter explains that the research was conducted at three universities in the SNNPRG in Ethiopia. The population of interest as well as the sampling procedures that were used to select the study sample were discussed.

In this study, data collection instruments were questionnaires (for EFL teachers and EFL students), semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and observations during classroom sessions. Purposive sampling was employed especially for the interviews to solicit relevant data which was tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The chapter also provided measures taken to ensure validity, reliability and issues of trustworthiness. Data analysis techniques were also highlighted in relation to the research questions. Explanation of how ethical issues were adhered to was also provided.

The next chapter, chapter five, will deal with the analysis and interpretation of the research results obtained by means of questionnaires, individual semi-structured interviews and observations.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a detailed discussion of the research design and the methods for collecting data. The research population, sampling, data collection instruments, procedures for data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and the validity and reliability of the research instruments were discussed. This chapter presents results and discussions in relation to data obtained about the effectiveness of the teaching of listening in English as a foreign language (EFL) as perceived by students and lecturers at three universities in Ethiopia. To investigate how effective students and lecturers at three Ethiopian universities perceived the teaching of listening to be, the statistical analysis of data obtained by means of questionnaires were analysed as follows: The study is firstly contextualised by presenting a description and brief analysis of the participants' background. This was done by means of calculating one-way frequency tables (i.e. frequency distributions) of the participants' biographical information. Thereafter an overview is provided of the four components (pre-listening phase, while-listening phase, post-listening phase and listening material) that were probed in the questionnaire. This information was obtained by calculating composite one-way frequency tables for each subset of questions that probed the four components. The overview presented here provides a general idea of how effective students and lecturers perceived to be each of the four components identified and as such deals with the sub-research question that was formulated as follows: How effective do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive the teaching of EFL listening skills to be? (Refer to section 1.4, 4.2 and Table 4.1).

A sequential mixed methods approach was used to analyse data that were collected using different instruments as discussed in chapter four, section 4.6. Data obtained from the questionnaires are discussed first. Thereafter the data obtained from classroom observations (both quantitative and qualitative) and responses to interview questions are discussed. The approach allowed for data triangulation so as to ensure validity in case the instruments used presented conflicting results. Data

obtained from the research questions regarding the challenges experienced when teaching listening and suggestions for best EFL listening teaching practices were coded and themes and subthemes were identified. This is addressed in the last part of the chapter.

5.2 CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY: RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The two groups of special interest to the research were lecturers and students and their perceptions and, additionally, whether their views differed. The rate of return for the questionnaire was 100% for the lectures and 75% for the students. Results presented in Table 5.1 provide the background information of 78 lecturers who participated in this study. Information on lecturers' gender, experience, qualification, as well as the class size taught by them were requested in the questionnaires. Results presented in Table 5.2 indicate the background information of 158 students which includes gender, age, year of study, class size as well as their perceived English listening ability.

5.2.1 Lecturers' background information

Data from Table 5.1 indicate that the majority of the lecturers who participated in the study were male (85.9%) while women comprised a small percentage (14.1%). This represents the actual situation in all the universities in Ethiopia where teaching staff are male dominated.

Table 5.1: Background Information on lecturers (n = 78)

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	67	85.9
	Female	11	14.1
	Total	78	100

Experience	1 – 10	39	50.0
	11 – 20	32	41.0
	21 – 30	6	7.7
	31 and over	1	1.3
	Total	78	100
Qualification	Bachelor degree	6	7.7
	Master's degree	63	80.8
	Doctorate degree	9	11.5
Class size	≤40	42	53.8
	41-50	36	46.2
	>51	-	0
	Total	78	100

Out of the 78 lecturers, the majority are holders of master's degrees (80.8%), while about 11.5% hold a doctoral degree, and only 6% a bachelor degree. Fifty per cent of the lecturers had work experience of between one and ten years, while a further 41% had work experience of 11-20 years and a small percentage (10%) had work experience of 21 years and above. Results on the class size indicate that about 53.8% of lecturers handle a class size of 40 students or less while 46.2% of the lecturers have a class size of 41 to 50 students.

5.2.2 Students' background information (n = 158)

Results from Table 5.2 show that out of 158 students, 53.2% were female while 46.8% were male. Although the classes are female dominated, the majority of the lecturers are male. The majority of the students were between the age of 18 to 20 (70.3%) while only 29.7% were 21 years and above. Of the 158 students, 53.8%

were first years while 44.3% were second year students. About 60.1% of the students had 40 students or fewer in a class while 39.2% of the students attended classes consisting of 41-50 students. Only 6% indicated a class size of more than 51 students. This corresponds with the information provided by lecturers (53.8% of the lecturers indicated that they have classes of less than 40 students and 46.2% indicated that they have between 41 and 50 students).

Table 5.2: Students' background information

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	74	46.8
	Female	84	53.2
	Total	158	100
Age	18	31	19.6
	19	36	22.8
	20	20	27.8
	>21	47	29.7
	Total	158	100
Year of Study	1st Year	85	53.8
	2nd Year	70	44.3
	Total	158	100
Class Size	<40	95	60.1
	41-50	62	39.2
	>51	1	6
	Total	158	100
Perceived English Listening Ability	Very good	17	10.8
	Good	53	33.5
	Average	47	29.7
	Poor	40	25.3
	Very poor	1	6.0
	Total	158	100

From Table 5.2 data in relation to the English listening ability show that about 44.3% of the students rated themselves as good or very good, 29.7% were of the opinion that their listening ability was average, while 31.3% regarded their listening ability as poor or very poor. The variation on the students' English listening ability could be related to the sample where the majority (53.8%) were first years and 44.3% were second year students.

5.3 FREQUENCY RESPONSE PATTERNS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

In this section the frequency response patterns to groups of questions in the questionnaire provide an overview of students' and lecturers' responses to the following four components that could have an influence on the effectiveness of teaching listening in EFL:

- the pre-listening phase,
- the while-listening phase,
- the post-listening phase, and
- the use of listening material (refer to section 3.6).

Subsets of questions evaluated the components on a 5 point effectiveness scale (where 1 indicated 'highly effective'; 2 'fairly effective'; 3 'somewhat effective'; 4 'not very effective' and 5 indicated 'ineffective').

The tables that consist of the frequency distributions of participants' responses to groups (subsets) of questionnaire questions that probed the four listening components are used to provide a general overview of participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of listening skills in EFL.

The eight composite frequency tables reported on in this section provide a general overview of students' and lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching of listening as experienced by the participants. In each table below, the last row of the table reports the total responses recorded per perception level for the subset of questions that query a component of effectiveness of the teaching of listening. In the

totals row, the percentage of total responses per perception level is also reported. A general overview of whether participants feel positive, in other words feel that a listening component is effective, can be gleaned from these frequencies and percentages in the totals row. If the majority of responses fall, however, in the 'highly effective' and 'fairly effective' range, this would indicate that participants felt positive and regarded the component of the listening course as effective. If the majority of responses fall, however, in the 'not very effective' to 'ineffective' rating level range, this would suggest that participants perceived the effectiveness in a negative light, that is the listening component was experienced to be ineffective or rather ineffective. Responses to 'somewhat' were regarded as 'undecided' responses.

In each table the frequency is given with the percentage directly below.

5.3.1 Lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the pre-listening phase

This section presents lecturers' and students' perceptions on the effectiveness of the pre-listening stage. Results presented in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 are based on responses from ten Likert scale type items which focused on activities implemented during the pre-listening phase.

Table 5.3: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure

Questionnaire questions	Pre-listening (Effectiveness rating, lecturers)					
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	Total
1. Integrating EFL listening skill with teaching of reading, writing, speaking	33 42.31	19 24.36	11 14.10	11 14.10	4 5.13	78
2. Letting students think about the listening process they are going to follow	22 28.21	21 26.92	19 24.36	11 14.10	5 6.41	78
3. Explaining the purpose of listening activity before letting students listen to the listening passage	35 44.87	20 25.64	8 10.26	11 14.10	4 5.13	78
4. Incorporating activities to stimulate students' background knowledge prior to exposure to the listening passage	35 45.45	21 27.27	9 11.69	7 9.09	5 6.49	77
7. Ensuring beforehand that students are not anxious during EFL sessions	24 31.17	21 27.27	16 20.78	10 12.99	6 7.79	77
8. Announcing the topic and then let students predict what the listening passage may be about	38 48.72	12 15.38	17 21.79	5 6.41	6 7.69	78
9. Explaining unfamiliar keywords that would be heard in the listening passage	30 38.46	22 28.21	12 15.38	9 11.54	5 6.41	78
17. Teaching students different listening skills before letting them listen to the listening passage	30 38.46	14 17.95	17 21.79	11 14.10	6 7.69	78
19. Explicitly teaching listening strategies before letting students listen to the listening passage	22 28.21	25 32.05	14 17.95	10 12.82	7 8.97	78
31. Ensuring students are motivated to listen to the listening passage	29 37.18	25 32.05	16 20.51	3 3.85	5 6.41	78
Total	298 38.30	200 25.71	139 17.87	88 11.31	53 6.81	778 100.00
Frequency Missing = 2						
Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 36.37 under the null hypothesis of response patterns that do not differ statistically significantly over questions) = 0.45						

As can be seen from Table 5.3 the lecturers' overall impression of pre-listening activities is positive. They perceive this phase to be either highly effective or fairly effective (64.01% effective rating responses as opposed to 18.81% rather ineffective responses). A small number of responses (17.87%) were undecided. This suggests that the pre-listening phase was regarded as highly effective. Results further show that more than two thirds of the lecturers regarded the following items as highly or fairly effective: *integrating the teaching of EFL with other skills* (66.67%), *explaining to the students the purpose of the listening activity beforehand* (70.56%), and *implementing activities to stimulate students' background knowledge before letting them listen to the listening passage* (72.72%). Apart from this they also perceived *ensuring beforehand that students are motivated to listen to the listening passage* as positive (69.23% highly or fairly effective responses were received).

Results presented in Table 5.4 are based on responses obtained from the students on how effective they regard a number of activities that would typically be implemented during the pre-listening phase.

Table 5.4 Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure students' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-listening

Item: Questionnaire questions	Pre-listening (Effectiveness rating, students)					Total (n)
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	
1. Integrating EFL listening skill with teaching of reading, writing, speaking	40 25.32	33 20.89	35 22.15	34 21.52	16 10.13	158
2. Letting students think about the listening process they are going to follow	29 18.35	40 25.32	31 19.62	34 21.52	24 15.19	158
3. Explaining the purpose of listening activity before letting students listen to the listening passage	45 28.48	24 15.19	36 22.78	37 23.42	16 10.13	158
4. Incorporating activities to stimulate students' background knowledge prior to exposure to the listening passage	28 17.72	32 20.25	43 27.22	30 18.99	25 15.82	158
7. Ensuring beforehand that students are not anxious during EFL sessions	28 17.72	28 17.72	38 24.05	32 20.25	32 20.25	158
8. Announcing the topic and then let students predict what the listening passage may be about	37 23.42	29 18.35	37 23.42	28 17.72	27 17.09	158
9. Explaining unfamiliar keywords that would be heard in the listening passage	33 20.89	29 18.35	36 22.78	38 24.05	22 13.92	158
17. Teaching students different listening skills before letting them listen to the listening passage	33 20.89	24 15.19	40 25.32	36 22.78	25 15.82	158
20. Explicitly teaching listening strategies before letting students listen to the listening passage	26 16.46	44 27.85	33 20.89	32 20.25	23 14.56	158
34. Ensuring students are motivated to listen to the listening passage	37 23.42	35 22.15	29 18.35	38 24.05	19 12.03	158
Total	336 21.27	318 20.13	358 22.66	339 21.46	229 14.49	1580 100.00

Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 38.98 under the null hypothesis of no statistically significant difference between response patterns of questions) = 0.33

From Table 5.4 it can be seen that although the students' overall impression of the effectiveness of the pre-listening activities they were exposed to is positive (41.40%), more than a third of the students (35.95%) indicated a degree of inefficiency. Therefore, although there is an overall positive perception, it is not a very strong vote on effectiveness. A large percentage of the responses (22.66%) were undecided. The variation on the responses could be attributed to the aggregation of data across the universities hence loss of information (see also analysis of variance section 5.4.3). As far as individual items are concerned, it seems that students did not perceive lecturers' *activities to ensure that they (the students) are not anxious during the listening lesson* as positive. A total of 40.50% of the students perceived this as either not very effective or ineffective, while 24.05% were undecided. Although the overall vote of effectiveness was not very strong, three of the pre-listening activities that students perceived as positive can be singled out. They are *the integration of listening skills with reading, writing and speaking* (46.21% highly effective or fairly effective responses were received); *ensuring that students are motivated to listen to the listening passage* (45.57% highly effective or fairly effective responses) and the *explicit teaching of listening strategies before listening to the listening passage* (44.31% highly effective or fairly effective responses).

On face value, it seems that lecturers and students are in agreement about the effectiveness of the integration of listening with other language skills and being motivated to listen to the listening passage. From the discussion of Table 5.2 it was noted that only a small proportion of students (10.8%) rated their listening ability as very good; meaning the majority of the students may be struggling with the listening teaching strategies used by their lecturers. The students' low rating of their own listening ability corresponds with their weak vote of effectiveness of pre-listening activities.

5.3.2 Lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the while-listening phase

In this subsection, the lecturers' and the students' perceptions about the effectiveness of the while-listening phase are presented in two separate tables (Table 5.5 and Table 5.6). Results are based on responses from 11 Likert scale type items which focused on activities that would usually be implemented during the while-listening phase when teaching EFL listening skills.

Table 5.5: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure lecturers' perceptions of the efficiency of while-listening activities

Item: questionnaire questions	While-listening (Effectiveness rating, lecturers)					Total (n)
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	
10. Expecting students to listen for specific information in the listening passage	31 39.74	26 33.33	13 16.67	4 5.13	4 5.13	78
11. Letting students distinguish between fact and fiction while listening to the listening passage	22 28.21	23 29.49	12 15.38	16 20.51	5 6.41	78
12. Letting students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the listening passage	27 34.62	25 32.05	14 17.95	6 7.69	6 7.69	78
13. Letting students interpret the tone of message in the listening passage	24 30.77	22 28.21	16 20.51	9 11.54	7 8.97	78
14. Letting students interpret emotive (manipulative) language in the listening passage	12 15.38	23 29.49	20 25.64	17 21.79	6 7.69	78
15. Letting students practice listening in real-life situations	32 41.03	14 17.95	18 23.08	7 8.97	7 8.97	78
16. Letting students respond to eye movement, gestures, and body language while listening	24 30.77	17 21.79	18 23.08	14 17.95	5 6.41	78
18. Letting students take notes while listening	26 33.33	27 34.62	10 12.82	10 12.82	5 6.41	78
32. Letting students listen for the gist of the matter in the listening passage instead of trying to remember information	26 33.33	26 33.33	12 15.38	8 10.26	6 7.69	78
33. Letting students communicate with one another while teaching EFL listening	21 26.92	28 35.90	18 23.08	3 3.85	8 10.26	78
36. Making use of a variety of methods when teaching EFL listening	33 42.31	18 23.08	13 16.67	7 8.97	7 8.97	78
Total	278 32.40	249 29.02	164 19.11	101 11.77	66 7.69	858 100.00
Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 55.97 under the null hypothesis of response patterns that do not differ statistically significantly over questions) = 0.05*						

As shown in Table 5.5, the lecturers' overall impression of while-listening activities is positive – they perceive this phase to be effective (61.42% effective rating responses as opposed to the 19.46% rather ineffective responses that were received). Thus, although an experience of ineffectiveness is present, the overwhelming tendency was towards a perception of an effective activity phase.

As far as individual items are concerned, Table 5.5 reveals that lecturers perceived *expecting students to listen for specific information* as positive (73.07% highly or fairly effective responses were received). *Letting students take notes while listening* was also perceived as positive (67.95% highly or fairly effective responses were received). Table 5.5 also shows that *letting students interpret emotive (manipulative) language in the passage* is regarded by lecturers as not positive. For this while-listening activity 44.87% highly or fairly effective, 25.64% undecided and 29.48% not very effective or ineffective responses were received. This was also the case with the activity *letting students respond to eye movement, gestures, body language*, although responses were slightly more positive. For this activity 52.56% highly or fairly effective responses were received, 23.08% were undecided, while 24.36% not very effective or ineffective responses were received.

Results provided in Table 5.6, depict students' rating of the effectiveness of the while-listening phase.

Table 5.6: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure students' perceptions of the efficiency of while-listening activity

While-Listening						
Item: questionnaire questions	While-Listening (Effectiveness rating, students)					Total
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	
10. Expecting students to listen for specific information in the listening passage	38 24.05	32 20.25	35 22.15	35 22.15	18 11.39	158
11. Letting students distinguish between fact and fiction while listening to the listening passage	26 16.46	38 24.05	25 15.82	46 29.11	23 14.56	158
12. Letting students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the listening passage	26 16.46	41 25.95	26 16.46	48 30.38	17 10.76	158
13. Letting students interpret the tone of the message in the listening passage	33 20.89	28 17.72	39 24.68	38 24.05	20 12.66	158
14. Letting students interpret emotive (manipulative) language in the listening passage	21 13.29	42 26.58	33 20.89	38 24.05	24 15.19	158
15. Letting students practice listening in real-life situations	30 18.99	29 18.35	37 23.42	43 27.22	19 12.03	158
16. Letting students respond to eye movement, gestures and body language while listening	31 19.62	32 20.25	37 23.42	30 18.99	28 17.72	158
18. Letting students take notes while listening	34 21.52	39 24.68	32 20.25	35 22.15	18 11.39	158
32. Letting students listen for the gist of the matter in the listening passage instead of trying to remember information	26 16.46	34 21.52	36 22.78	37 23.42	25 15.82	158
33. Letting students communicate with one another while teaching EFL listening	19 12.03	39 24.68	34 21.52	45 28.48	21 13.29	158
36. Making use of a variety of methods when teaching EFL listening	38 24.05	25 15.82	37 23.42	25 15.82	33 20.89	158
Total	322 18.53	379 21.81	371 21.35	420 24.17	246 14.15	1738 100.00
The probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 52.78 under the null hypothesis that response patterns of questions do not differ statistically significantly) = 0.09						

There is a small difference between a positive and negative effectiveness rating. Although the overall impression of while-listening activities is positive, it is not a very strong positive perception and is only slightly more positive than negative. This can be seen from the 40.34% effective rating responses compared to the 38.32% rather ineffective responses that were given. 21.35% of responses were undecided. Thus, although an experience of effectiveness is prevalent, the experience of an ineffective activity phase is also present.

As far as individual items are concerned, two items warrant further discussion. For the activity *expecting students to listen for specific information instead of trying to remember information*, 44.3% highly or fairly effective responses, 22.15% undecided and 33.54% not very effective or ineffective responses were received. The activity of *note taking while listening* was regarded as highly or fairly effective by 46.2% of the students, 20.25% were undecided and 33.54% either not very effective or ineffective responses were provided. *Letting students distinguish between facts and fiction while listening* received 43.67% rather ineffective responses, 15.82% undecided responses while 40.51% either highly or fairly effective responses were received.

Table 5.5 and 5.6 show that both lecturers and students regarded the activities of *expecting students to listen for specific information* in the listening passage and *note taking while listening* as effective while-listening activities. Although the highly effective and fairly effective ratings for these two activities were 44.3% and 46.2% respectively, these two items were rated higher than the other activities (see analysis of variance section 5.4.3).

5.3.3 Lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the post-listening phase

In this subsection, the lecturers' and the students' perceptions about the effectiveness of the post-listening phase is presented in two separate tables (Table 5.7 and Table 5.8).

Eight items were included in the Likert type scale items as a measure of how effective lecturers and students regard activities that are usually typically performed after the listening activity.

Results presented in Table 5.7 show that the lecturers' overall impression of the post-listening phase was positive. They perceived this phase to be effective as 57.78% effective rating responses were given as opposed to 19.27% rather ineffective responses. A large percentage (22.95%) of undecided responses was received. Although on overall lecturers regarded the post listening activities as effective, the data in Table 5.7 further show that 37.18% of the lecturers perceived it as either highly effective or fairly effective to expect students to pronounce the words as closely as possible to the tape recorder while 38.46% of the lecturers were undecided and 24.36% perceived this item as rather ineffective. Taking into consideration that word pronunciation is a key element in language acquisition, the lecturers' perception that it is not really effective when teaching listening could indicate a challenge for the students' comprehension of the listening passage. The fact that 73% of lecturers regarded *asking questions to evaluate what students remember from listening* as either highly or fairly effective indicates that lecturers possibly still regard the teaching of listening as merely having to test what students can remember about the listening passage.

Table 5.7: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure lecturers' perceptions of the efficiency of the post-listening phase

Item: questionnaire questions	Post-Listening(Effectiveness rating, lecturers)					Total
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	
20. Teaching students how to draw conclusions based on the listening passage	22 28.21	21 26.92	22 28.21	6 7.69	7 8.97	78
21. Letting students integrate new information with prior knowledge after listening to the passage	33 42.31	15 19.23	14 17.95	9 11.54	7 8.97	78
22. Expecting students to express their own opinions on the topic of the listening passage	28 35.90	20 25.64	15 19.23	8 10.26	7 8.97	78
23. Letting students critically evaluate the listening passage	19 24.36	24 30.77	19 24.36	9 11.54	7 8.97	78
24. Letting students evaluate their notes by comparing them to those of others	24 31.17	22 28.57	17 22.08	8 10.39	6 7.79	77
25. Letting students transfer information from oral to written mode	27 34.62	19 24.36	17 21.79	7 8.97	8 10.26	78
26. Asking questions to evaluate what students remember from listening	29 37.18	28 35.90	9 11.54	7 8.97	5 6.41	78
27. Expecting students to pronounce words they have heard on the tape recorder	13 16.67	16 20.51	30 38.46	15 19.23	4 5.13	78
Total	195 31.30	165 26.48	143 22.95	69 11.08	51 8.19	623 100.00
Frequency Missing = 1						
Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 40.57 under the null hypothesis of response patterns that do not differ statistically significantly over questions) = 0.06						

Table 5.8: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure students' perceptions of the efficiency of the post-listening phase

Item: questionnaire questions	Post-Listening(Effectiveness rating, students)					Total
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	
20. Teaching students how to draw conclusions based on the listening passage	25 15.82	33 20.89	44 27.85	40 25.32	16 10.13	158
21. Letting students integrate new information with prior knowledge after listening to the passage	30 18.99	38 24.05	37 23.42	32 20.25	21 13.29	158
22. Expect students to express their own opinions on the topic of the listening passage	25 15.82	43 27.22	35 22.15	39 24.68	16 10.13	158
23. Letting students critically evaluate the listening passage	23 14.56	47 29.75	33 20.89	35 22.15	20 12.66	158
24. Letting students evaluate their notes by comparing them to those of others	23 14.56	43 27.22	43 27.22	30 18.99	19 12.03	158
25. Letting students transfer information from oral to written mode	26 16.46	38 24.05	36 22.78	23 14.56	35 22.15	158
26. Asking questions to evaluate what students remember from listening	33 20.89	38 24.05	29 18.35	38 24.05	20 12.66	158
27. Expecting students to pronounce words they have heard on the tape recorder	23 14.56	30 18.99	41 25.95	36 22.78	28 17.72	158
Total	208 16.46	310 24.53	298 23.58	273 21.60	175 13.84	1264 100.00
Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 34.17 under the null hypothesis of no significant difference in response patterns) = 0.19						

From table 5.8 it can be deduced that the students' overall impression of post-listening activities were positive. They perceived this phase to be effective (46.53% effective rating responses as opposed to 30.10% rather ineffective responses). Although there was an overall positive perception, it is not a very strong vote on effectiveness (see analysis of variance section 5.4.3). Furthermore, 21.60% of responses were undecided. Worth noting is the response for item 28 as previously discussed regarding lecturers' response on how effective it is to expect students to pronounce words as closely as possible to the pronunciation used on the tape-recorder. The findings from the study show that 33.55% of the students were of the opinion that this post-listening activity was either not very effective or ineffective.

From the preceding discussions it is evident that the majority of lecturers had a higher positive rating of the activities used during the pre-, while and post-listening stages compared to students. Considering that lecturers were evaluating themselves, it could be argued that there was a tendency of lecturers to portray their practices as effective. However, it is obvious from the students' responses that there are some challenges on the lecturers' part which need to be addressed to make EFL listening classrooms more effective while teaching listening skills. These findings indicate that indeed the activities that help students to internalise the meaning of the text they have listened to are not perceived as effective as it should be in order to help students comprehend what they hear.

5.3.4 Lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the listening material

In this subsection, the lecturers' and the students' perceptions about the use of the effectiveness of the listening material are presented in two separate tables (Table 5.9 and Table 5.10). Seven items were included as a measure of how effective lecturers and students regard the use of listening material to be while teaching English listening skills.

Table 5.9: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the listening material used when teaching listening

Item: questionnaire questions	Listening Material (Effectiveness rating, lecturers)					Total
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	
5. Using listening passages interesting to students	35 44.87	13 16.67	17 21.79	8 10.26	5 6.41	78
6. Using of listening passages somewhat above students' level of understanding	14 17.95	17 21.79	25 32.05	14 17.95	8 10.26	78
28. Using of the language laboratory to teach listening skills	29 37.18	19 24.36	11 14.10	11 14.10	8 10.26	78
29. Letting students listen to English mother tongue speakers	28 35.90	21 26.92	10 12.82	11 14.10	8 10.26	78
30. Making use of authentic listening passages	26 33.33	24 30.77	11 14.10	9 11.54	8 10.26	78
34. Utilising appropriate equipment in the language laboratory	26 33.33	19 24.36	12 15.38	10 12.82	11 14.10	78
35. Using activities and listening material such as songs, narratives, dialogues to teach listening	24 30.77	18 23.08	19 24.36	7 8.97	10 12.82	78
Total	182 33.33	131 23.99	105 19.23	70 12.82	58 10.62	546 100.00
Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 31.20 under the null hypothesis of response patterns that do not differ statistically significantly over questions) = 0.15						

Table 5.9 shows that the lecturers' overall impression of the listening material used to teach listening is positive. They perceived the listening material used to be effective as can be seen from the 57.32% effective rating responses as opposed to the 23.44% rather ineffective responses. Thus, although an experience of ineffectiveness is present, the tendency was towards a perception of effective use of material used to teach listening in the EFL classroom. Compared to the other items, there was a high undecided rate for item 6 (32.05%), while 39.73% regarded the *use of listening passages somewhat above students' level of understanding* as either highly or fairly effective, while 28.21% regarded it as not very effective or ineffective. It is important to note that 64.1% of lecturers regarded the *use of authentic listening material* as either highly or fairly effective while 21.80% rather ineffective responses were received for this item. 14.10% were undecided.

Table 5.10 depicts students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the listening material used when teaching listening

Table 5.10: Composite frequency table of responses to questions that measure students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the listening material used when teaching listening

Item: questionnaire questions	Listening Material (Effectiveness rating, students)					
	Highly effective	Fairly effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Ineffective	Total
5. Using listening passages interesting to students	35 22.15	39 24.68	28 17.72	38 24.05	18 11.39	158
6. Using of listening passages somewhat above students' level of understanding	15 9.49	35 22.15	45 28.48	40 25.32	23 14.56	158
28. Using of the language laboratory to teach listening skills	33 20.89	29 18.35	28 17.72	38 24.05	30 18.99	158
29. Letting students listen to English mother tongue speakers	30 18.99	40 25.32	21 13.29	35 22.15	32 20.25	158
30. Making use of authentic listening passages	25 15.82	38 24.05	42 26.58	40 25.32	13 8.23	158
34. Utilising appropriate equipment in the language laboratory	27 17.09	29 18.35	37 23.42	38 24.05	27 17.09	158
35. Using activities and listening material such as songs, narratives, dialogues to teach listening	27 17.09	34 21.52	36 22.78	40 25.32	21 13.29	158
Total	192 17.36	244 22.06	237 21.43	269 24.32	164 14.83	1106 100.00
Probability (of Chi-square statistic assuming the value of 38.01 under the null hypothesis of response patterns that do not differ statistically significantly over questions) = 0.03*						

From Table 5.10 it can be deduced that while 39.42% of students regarded the language material used to teach listening as effective, almost the same percentage (39.14%) of ineffectiveness responses were received. 21.43% were undecided. As was the case with the lecturers' responses, the students' responses to item 6 also differed compared to the responses to the rest of the items. Apart from the relatively high undecided response of 28.48%, 39.88% regarded the *use of listening passages that are somewhat above students' level of understanding* as not very effective or ineffective. Whereas lecturers regarded the *use of authentic listening material* as positive, only 39.87% of students perceived the *use of authentic listening material* as either highly or fairly effective, while more than a third (33.55%) regarded it as not very effective or ineffective and 26.58% were undecided.

The sheer volume of information presented in the preceding section (four different components each with responses that ranged between seven and 11 questions), might obscure detail of underlying trends and tendencies in the data. In view of this, certain questions arose:

- How reliable do these groups of questions describe and evaluate the four listening components?
- Can a compact perception-measure of each component be calculated from these subsets of question responses?

How reliably the sub-sets of questionnaire questions measure or describe the defined listening components was assessed by means of scale reliability testing, also referred to as item analysis. Scale reliability tests, therefore, had to be conducted on the subsets of participant responses that probed the four components of EFL listening teaching. The results of the scale reliability testing are discussed in section 5.4.1.

The second question concerned the calculation of more compact perception measures about the efficiency of the four components of teaching EFL listening skills. Such measures could be calculated only once internal consistency reliability

of the listening components had been verified. In other words, this means verifying that all questionnaire questions that were designed to evaluate a listening component truly contribute towards explaining the specific component (refer to section 5.4.1). To determine more compact measures, the measure for each component was calculated as the mean response to all responses a participant offered in answering the questions that probed a particular component (e.g. listening material or pre-listening activities). These compact perception measures which can be referred to as 'scores' or 'perception scores' are discussed in section 5.6.

5.4 RELIABILITY TESTING AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE RESULTS

5.4.1 Results of scale reliability tests

The composite frequency tables presented in the preceding section gave an initial and general overview of how lecturers and students respectively experienced the effectiveness of the pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening phases as well as the listening material used in the teaching of EFL listening skills in three universities in Ethiopia.

Results in Table 5.11 firstly report on the results of scale reliability tests that were performed on the four subsets of participants' responses to the questionnaire questions that probed the components of the listening material, pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities. Each row in Table 5.11 reports the results of a separate scale reliability test. The columns of the table report the listening component evaluated for internal consistency reliability in each instance; the second column lists the subset of questionnaire items-responses analysed and the fourth column reports the Cronbach alpha coefficients. The third column usually includes questionnaire items that the analysis indicated as not contributing towards explaining a specific component. For this study no such questionnaire items were identified. This column is, however, included to indicate that the analysis automatically tested for such cases and that the best model was selected.

Table 5.11 Summary of scale reliability tests performed on respectively the responses of participants to four subsets of questions that evaluate perceptions of the efficacy of four components of EFL listening teaching

Component	Subset of questionnaire questions	Questions removed/ inverted?	Standardised Cronbach alpha coefficient
Pre-listening activities	Q1-4,Q7-9,Q17,Q19, Q31	-	0.94
While-listening activities	Q10-16; Q18; Q32-33,Q36	-	0.95
Post-listening activities	Q20-27	-	0.94
Listening material	Q5-6, Q28-30 Q34 Q35	-	0.89

Note: Each row of the table reports the results of a separate analysis

The Standardised Cronbach alpha coefficients reported on in Table 5.11 range between 0.89 and 0.95 which all exceeded the value of 0.7 (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The coefficients therefore verified the internal consistency reliability of the four efficacy components of the listening course. Internal consistency reliability implies that all questions within a group of questions contribute towards describing the particular listening component. Therefore, if a 'compact' perception measure of any of these components is to be calculated (from the subset of responses that describe the component), the calculated measure will be a reliable measure of the specific listening component (e.g., pre-listening activities). Based on the discussion provided by Gliem and Gliem (2003) on Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, a measure of 0.89 to 0.95 for our study ranges from good to excellent.

5.4.2 Compact measures of participant perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching listening in EFL

The measure for each component was calculated as the mean response to all responses a participant offered in answering the subset of questions that probed a particular listening component (e.g. 'listening material'). These compact perception measures are referred to as scores or perception-scores and are presented in the tables in this section. Results presented in Table 5.12 show the combined mean for lecturers and students on the four components (pre-, while and post-listening as well as the listening material). The scale items are summed up for all items for each component (e.g., 10 items for pre-listening) and the weighted mean of the summated items is given. Considering a standard deviation from the mean data suggests that the practice is fairly effective based on the majority of lecturers and students.

Table 5.12: Overall score means for the four components of the effectiveness of the English listening course

Variable	N	Mean	Standard. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-listening	236	2.66	1.09	1.00	4.90
While-Listening	236	2.74	1.07	1.09	4.91
Post-Listening	236	2.74	1.10	1.00	5.00
Listening Material	236	2.79	1.05	1.00	5.00

Results provided in Table 5.13 show the separate means for lecturers and students on the four components (pre-, while and post-listening as well as the listening material). Results shown in the table suggest that the lecturers and students perceived the effectiveness of listening teaching differently. For example, the values of 2.23 (approximately '2') and 2.88 (approximately '3'), for the pre-listening phase suggest that the lecturers evaluated the pre-listening phase activities in a more

positive way than the students. These suggestions can be verified by means of analysis of variance tests that are discussed in section 5.4.3.

Table 5.13: Score means calculated for respondent type categories

Respon- dent type	N	Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Lecturers	78	Pre-listening	78	2.23	1.01	1.00	4.90
		Listening material	78	2.43	1.04	1.00	5.00
		While-listening	78	2.33	1.01	1.09	4.91
		Post-listening	78	2.38	1.07	1.00	5.00
Students	158	Pre-listening	158	2.88	1.07	1.00	4.70
		Listening material	158	2.97	1.01	1.00	4.86
		While-listening	158	2.94	1.05	1.09	4.73
		Post-listening	158	2.92	1.08	1.13	4.75

The biographical property of gender also affected the perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the teaching of EFL listening. Table 5.14 presents the score means calculated for gender categories (male and females) separately for the four components (pre, while and post- listening, and the listening material).

Table 5.14: Score means calculated for gender categories

Gender	N	Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Male	141	Pre-listening	141	2.36	0.93	1.00	4.80
		While-listening	141	2.40	0.93	1.09	4.73
		Post-listening	141	2.40	0.95	1.00	5.00
		Listening material	141	2.51	0.95	1.00	5.00
Female	95	Pre-listening	95	3.11	1.15	1.00	4.90
		While-listening	95	3.24	1.08	1.09	4.91
		Post-listening	95	3.24	1.13	1.00	4.88
		Listening material	95	3.21	1.05	1.14	4.86

Results suggest that males and females perceived the effectiveness of listening teaching differently on three components (pre-, while and post-listening). For example, the mean for males is roughly '2.00' and that of females is approximately '3'. This suggests that the males evaluated the three phases of listening as more effective as compared to females. However, the same cannot be said for the listening materials where the mean for males (2.51) and that of females (3.21) was approximately '3', meaning they both evaluated the usage of listening materials in teaching of listening skills as less effective. These suggestions can be verified by means of an analysis of the variance tests that are discussed in section 5.4.3.

Results in Table 5.15 presents the score means calculated for gender categories (males and females) and by respondents for the four components (pre-, while and post-listening, and the listening material) separately. Results suggest that the males (lecturers and students) perceived the effectiveness of listening teaching differently except on the 'while-listening phase' where the mean for males was 2.48 and that of females was '2.25' which is approximately '2'. Male lectures evaluated the three components (pre- and post-listening, and listening materials components) as more effective while students rated the components as less effective. However, the while-listening stage was evaluated positively by both groups.

Table 5.15: Component means scores for lecturers and students with regard to gender categories

Type of respondent	Gender	N	Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Lecturers	Male	67	Pre-listening	67	2.18	0.90	1.00	4.80
			While-listening	67	2.25	0.91	1.09	4.73
			Post-listening	67	2.32	0.99	1.00	5.00
			Listening material	67	2.39	1.00	1.00	5.00
Students	Male	74	Pre-listening	74	2.53	0.93	1.00	4.50
			Listening material	74	2.52	0.93	1.09	4.73
			While-listening	74	2.48	0.91	1.13	4.75
			Post-listening	74	2.62	0.90	1.00	4.43

Lecturers	Female	11	Pre-listening	11	2.55	1.53	1.00	4.90
			Listening material	11	2.71	1.29	1.14	4.71
			While-listening	11	2.82	1.43	1.27	4.91
			Post-listening	11	2.78	1.49	1.00	4.88
Students	Female	84	Pre-listening	84	3.19	1.08	1.10	4.70
			Listening material	84	3.30	1.02	1.09	4.73
			While-listening	84	3.31	1.07	1.13	4.75
			Post-listening	84	3.28	1.00	1.29	4.86

From Table 5.15, results for female lecturers and students suggest that both groups perceived the effectiveness of listening teaching equally on all the components; that is, with a mean of roughly '3.00' they viewed the components to be somewhat effective. In general, it could also be suggested that the females (lecturers and students) and male students rated the effectiveness of three components (pre-, and post- listening, and the listening material) as less effective as compared to male lecturers. However, both male lecturers and male students were of the opinion that the while-listening stage was more effectively done as compared to females who evaluated the component as somewhat effective. These suggestions are verified by means of an analysis of variance tests that are discussed in section 5.4.3.

5.4.3 Analysis of variance results

An analysis of a variance (ANOVA) test offers a way of investigating the significance of the effect of biographical properties on perceptions of the efficacy of the listening course. An analysis of variance tests identifies whether, and which, biographical properties statistically significantly influence participants' perceptions of a component of the course; for instance, the effectiveness of listening materials. An indication of the significance of such a biographical effect on perceptions is derived from the P-value (F-probability) that is associated with the F-statistic (or F-value) calculated for each biographical property as part of the ANOVA test. An effect is identified as significant if the reported F probability (see Table 5.16) is less than 0.05 or 0.01; or 0.001 (respectively 5% [*]; 1% [***] and 0.1% [****] significance levels). In an analysis of the variance model the set of perception scores (e.g., evaluation of

'listening material') is regarded as the dependent variable and the biographical variables (gender, and/or type of respondent, and/or gender) are regarded as the independent variables.

For this study the general linear model (GLM) approach to analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to accommodate the fact that the number of observations per category of the biographical properties is not equal (for those properties considered appropriate for investigation, namely type of respondent, gender and age). In an initial analysis which was not included in Table 5.16 below, the effect of age was found to be not significant and this effect was added to the error term of the ANOVA models for the different components of the listening course. This resulted in the effects of type of respondents and gender being investigated for their effect on perceptions in further ANOVA analyses. In the best-fit analysis reported below (Table 5.16), the effect of type of respondents and gender proved to be statistically significant effects on perceptions of the different components of the listening course evaluated for effectiveness.

Table 5.16 Analysis of variance: Summary results of ten separate two-factor analysis of variance

Listening component	General F-statistic (and Probability)	R-square			
			Type of respondent (lecturer/student)	Gender	Type * gender
Pre-listening	13.15 ($<0.001^{***}$)	0.15	7.25 (0.01^{**})	7.91 ($<0.01^{**}$)	0.64 (0.42)
While-listening	15.59 ($<0.001^{***}$)	0.17	4.44 (0.04^*)	14.10 ($<0.001^{**}$ *)	0.35 (0.55)
Post-listening	13.94 ($<0.001^{***}$)	0.15	3.39 (0.06)	12.13 ($<0.001^{**}$ *)	0.95 (0.33)

Listening material	11.32 (<0.0001***)	0.13	5.02 (0.03*)	7.75 (<0.01**)	0.85 (0.36)
Significance level: *: statistically significant on the 5% level of significance **: statistically significant on the 1% level of significance ***: statistically highly significant on the 0.1% level of significance Number of missing values = 2					

Table 5.16 reports that the effect of type of respondent was statistically significant on at least the 5% level of significance for all components (except post-listening activities) and, for gender, statistical significance was verified for all components on at least the 1% level of significance. This implies that being male or female and being a student or lecturer significantly affected how the various components of the English listening course were evaluated.

In this way the analysis of variance tests succeeded in identifying that the biographical attributes of type of respondent (lecturer or student) and gender influenced participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the components of EFL listening teaching. The next section (section 5.4.4) further details the nature of the influence of type of respondents and gender on perceptions. Section 5.4.4 thus discusses the results of the Bonferroni multiple comparisons of means tests.

5.4.4 The results of Bonferroni multiple comparisons of means test conducted on the type- and gender-category score means of the four perception scores

According to the Engineering Statistics Handbook (s.d.), "The Bonferroni method is a simple statistical method that allows many comparison statements to be made (or confidence intervals to be constructed) while still assuring an overall confidence coefficient is maintained. The method applies to an ANOVA situation when the analyst has picked out a particular set of pairwise comparisons or contrast or linear combinations in advance.

Table 5.17 reports on the results of the Bonferroni multiple comparisons of means test results. These results enable the researcher to elaborate on the question: 'How do the identified effects of type and gender affect perceptions?' In the second and sixth columns of Table 5.16 the category score means for the respective listening components are reported. The category score means are calculated according to the categories of gender and type of respondent (the identified significant effects). The results for the Bonferroni tests in each instance are reported as small letters prefixed to the category score means (columns 1 and 5): if, for a listening component and biographical effect (e.g. pre-listening and respondent-type) the category means are prefixed with different small letters (e.g. an 'a' and a 'b'), this indicates that the category means differ statistically significantly (e.g., the score means of 2.88, which approximates '3' and the score mean of 2.23, which approximates '2', for lecturers and students on pre-listening evaluation). For the mentioned example, this implies that lecturers perceived the listening activity to be 'fairly effective', while students perceived the pre-listening activity as 'somewhat effective'. For the same listening component females expressed a 'somewhat effective' (approximately '3' score) view and male a 'fairly effective' view' (approximately '2' score).

Table 5.17: Bonferroni multiple comparisons of means: test-results

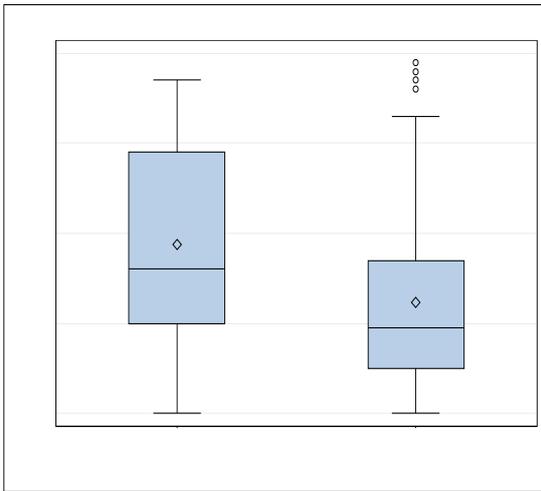
Pre-listening activity				While-listening activity			
Bon Grouping	Mean	N	Respondent Type (Lsd = 0.26)	Bon Grouping	Mean	N	Respondent Type (Lsd = 0.26)
A	2.88	158	students	A	2.94	158	Students
B	2.23	78	lecturers	B	2.33	78	Lecturers
Bon Grouping	Mean	N	gender (Lsd = 0.25)	Bon Grouping	Mean	N	gender (Lsd = 0.25)
A	3.11	95	Female	A	3.24	95	Female
B	2.36	141	Male	B	2.39	141	Male

Post-listening activity				Listening material			
Bon Grouping	Mean	N	Respondent Type (Lsd = 0.27) ^{&&}	Bon Grouping	Mean	N	Respondent Type (Lsd = 0.25)
A	2.92	158	students	A	2.97	158	Students
B	2.38	78	lecturers	B	2.43	78	Lecturers
Bon Grouping	Mean	N	Gender (Lsd = 0.26)	Bon Grouping	Mean	N	Gender (Lsd = 0.25)
A	3.24	95	Female	A	3.21	95	Female
B	2.40	141	Male	B	2.51	141	Male

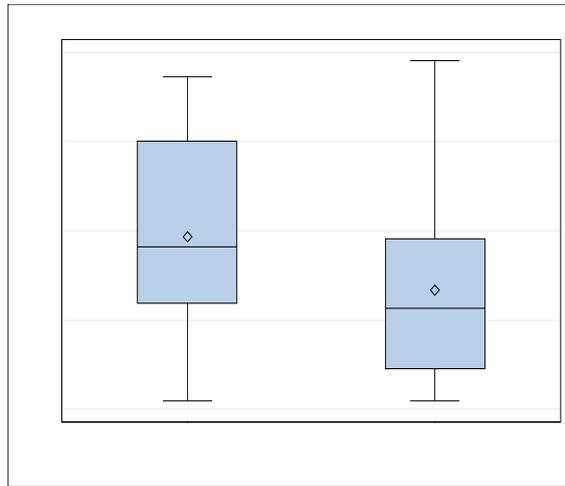
^{&&}For perception scores on the post-listening activity, significance of type was indicated only the 6% level - which is slightly less conservative than the normally acceptable level of 5% - perception differences in this instance between students and lecturers should therefore be treated with caution.

The general deduction can be made that females consistently evaluated the teaching of EFL listening skills somewhat less positive than males with females constantly evaluating the four listening course components as 'somewhat effective' and males as 'fairly effective'. The same kind of deduction can be made with regard to the type of respondents/participants. Students rated the effectiveness of the four components constantly as 'somewhat effective' and lecturers as 'fairly effective'. The bar graphs displayed below in Figure 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate these trends for the four components.

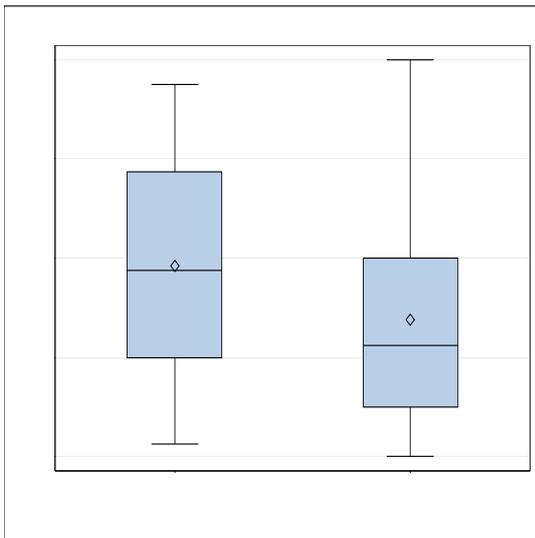
Effect of type of pre-listening evaluation



Effect of type on while-listening evaluation



Effect of type of post-listening evaluation



Effect of type on listening material evaluation

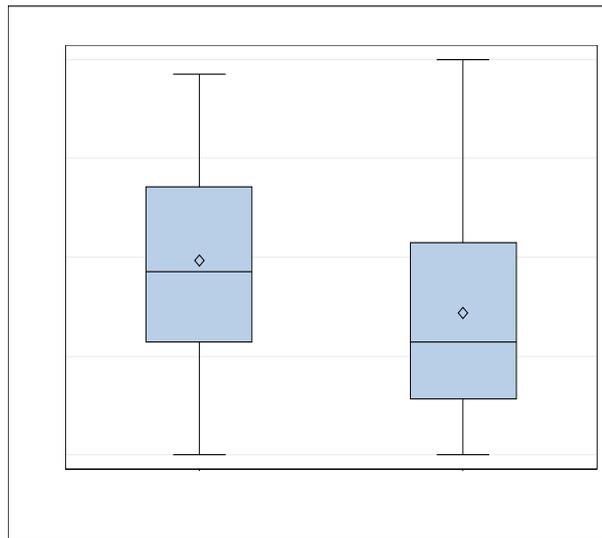
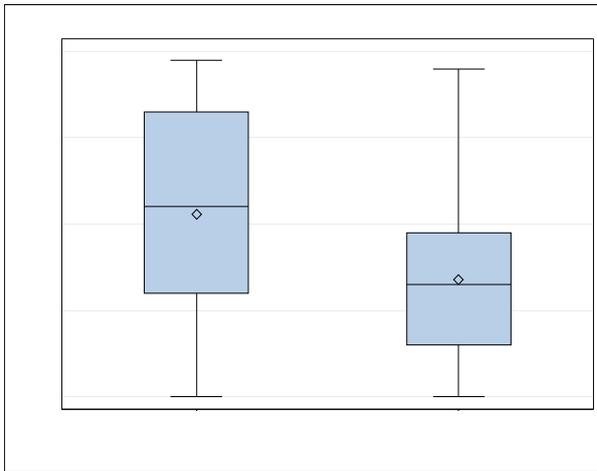
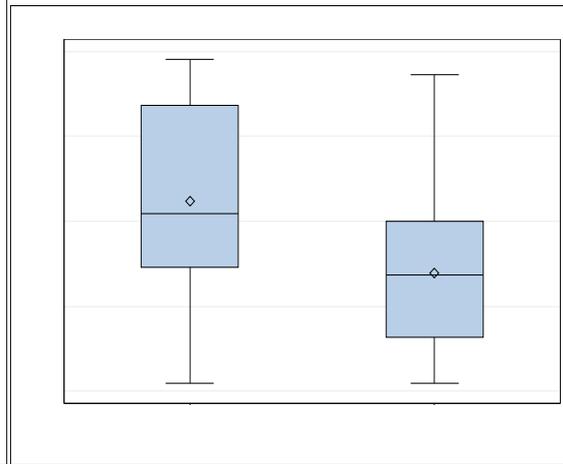


Figure 5.1: Bar graphs for the four components of effectiveness of listening course illustrating the effect of type-of-respondent

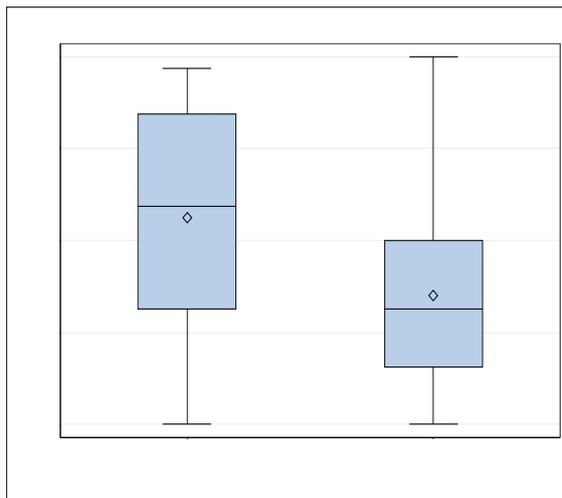
Effect of type of pre-listening evaluation



Effect of type on while-listening evaluation



Effect of type of post-listening evaluation



Effect of type on listening material evaluation

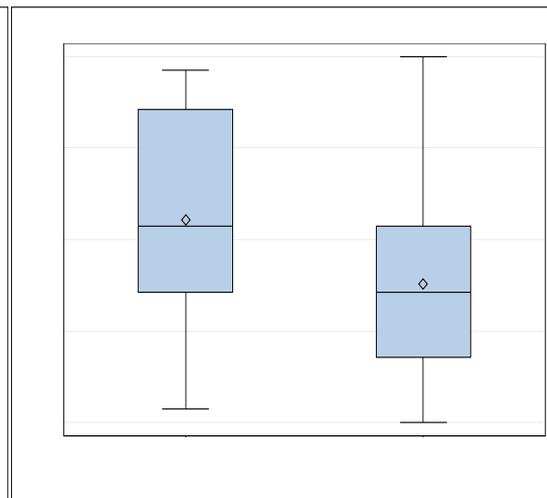


Figure 5.2: Bar Graphs for the four components of effectiveness of listening-course illustrating the effect of gender on perceptions

In summary it can be deduced that reliable concepts of the effectiveness of the teaching of listening skills in EFL could be calculated and this was verified by means of scale reliability tests. Furthermore, the research was able to prove that participants evaluated the effectiveness of the course more to the positive side because they attached varying degrees of effectiveness to the components.

The initial trend could be quantified and elaborated on by means of an analysis of variance and Bonferroni multiple comparisons of means tests that were performed in the perception scores that were calculated for each participant and each gender group.

The analyses revealed that students in general perceived the effectiveness of the teaching of listening in EFL less positive ('somewhat effective') than lecturers ('fairly effective'); and that females – especially female students - were more critical ('somewhat effective') than males ('fairly effective').

5.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM INTERVIEWS AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS PERTAINING TO THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF TEACHING EFL LISTENING

To help understand the current practices used in teaching of EFL listening skills, and for the purpose of triangulation (see sections 5.5.1 – 5.5.3), qualitative data were collected from both lecturers and students. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with six lecturers and eighteen students (first and second years) on current practices used in EFL listening teaching (see Appendices C and D). Observation sessions were also conducted to verify data obtained through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews on the four components; that is, pre-, while and post-listening and listening materials. Lecturers and students also had to answer questions on the challenges and best practices when teaching EFL. Lecturers' and students' names were coded to ensure respondents' identity was protected and confidentiality maintained and further for ease of analysis. The following coding system that has been used can be explained as follows: In the code UnAL₁ UnA refers to University A and L₁ to lecturer number one. In the code UnBS₁₁ UnB refers to University B and in the code UnCS₁₁ UnC refers to University C, while S₁₁ refers to year one, student number one. If S₂₃ is used, it refers to year two, student number three.

5.5.1 The pre-listening phase

Results from the quantitative data presented in section 5.3.1 show that the overall impression of pre-listening activities as perceived by lecturers was positive. More than two thirds of the lecturers perceived activities used during this phase as either highly or fairly effective. Students were, however, less positive about the effectiveness of pre-listening activities. Only 41.40% of the students were positive about the effectiveness of this component.

During the interview sessions, students were asked to describe how lecturers prepared them for the listening activity (pre-listening phase) and whether they regarded the preparation as effective. The majority of both first and second year students from the three universities agreed that the preparation given by lecturers before a listening lesson was not adequate. For example, student UnAS₁₁ said that the lecturer *“only talks about the topic. The preparation is not also enough as he doesn’t explain well.”* From the same university, student UnAS₁₂ said that the lecturer *“... writes some notes on the blackboard and reads the questions one by one and talks about them.”* According to the student, the lecturer *“... doesn’t give proper lesson, as a result the preparation is not sufficient.”*

Insufficiency of preparation during the pre-listening phase was further echoed by student UnAS₂₁ who said that *“the lecturer doesn’t have enough knowledge himself, as a result, the preparation was not enough”* while student UnAS₂₃ from the same university said that *“... the lecturer tries to prepare us, but not as we expect.”*

Some students referred to the difference between activities used to prepare them for listening in the classroom and the language laboratory. Student UnBS₁₁ stated that *“... his preparation can be enough some times in the lab but not in the classroom.”* However, student UnBS₁₁ said that *“... lecturers picks up some new words and give explanation”* but, according to the student the preparation was not enough because of a shortage of time that made the lecturer rush through the lesson. Similar statements were obtained from other students. Student UnBS₂₂ had this to say: *“Lecturers usually do not prepare their students for listening activities ... the*

preparation is not sufficient.” Student UnCS₁₂ mentioned that the “... *lecturer comes late sometimes.*” For example, student UnAS₁₂ said that “... *lecturers do not give this due attention, they do not motivate us students, and also fail to explain ... they only talk and stop without supporting.*” Most students agreed that preparation for the listening activity was not sufficient and ineffective.

Lecturers were also asked how they activate students' prior knowledge and prepare them for the actual listening activity. Their responses confirmed students' claims that the pre-listening activities were not effective, as very few lecturers could explain how they go about to prepare students for the listening activity. Some of the lecturers merely stated that they start with pre-listening activities, then proceed to the listening phase while using different activities that have been recommended by different scholars in the field. They could, however, not elaborate sufficiently on the kind of pre-listening activities they implement. Lecturer UnAL₁ stated that he gives “... *some technical vocabulary items with which they will be able to speculate what is coming next in the listening of passage.*” Lecturer UnBL₁ also stated that he asks oral questions as an activity to judge students' knowledge about the topic they were about to cover during the pre-listening phase. None of the lecturers mentioned that they explicitly explained to students what listening strategies they could employ when listening or that they explained the purpose of the listening activity to the students or that they tried to stimulate students' background knowledge. Neither did they refer to the teaching of listening skills or ensure that students were not anxious and motivated to listen. Lesson observations (see Table 5.18) confirmed that lecturers seldom applied any of these activities during the pre-listening phase.

The need to prepare students by including pre-listening activities is in line with research conducted by Rueda *et al.* (2009) who state that people always have a purpose for listening which makes it easier and more effective for them to listen. The use of pre-listening activities by lecturers supports work by Vandergrift (2013:4) who argues that providing second language students with a context helps in activating their prior knowledge and it also helps in developing students' conceptual framework for constructing the meaning of what they do not understand. A lack of proper

preparation for the listening task will, therefore, be detrimental to the effective teaching of EFL listening.

The lecturers' reference to their use of oral questions during the pre-listening phase relates to work done by Lotfi, *et al.* (2012) who suggest that use of questions to discuss the text topic helps students to activate their prior knowledge of the text they would subsequently hear. It, however, seems that lecturers who were interviewed merely used questioning to determine what students already know about the topic.

Table 5.18 presents the checklist used during classroom observation that included ten items to verify the practices used by lecturers during the pre-listening stage.

Table 5.18: Observation data on teaching practices during the pre-listening phase

Pre-listening	Universities			
	A	B	C	Mean
1. Integrating EFL listening skill with teaching of reading, writing, speaking	1	2	2	1.7
2. Letting students think about the listening process they are going to follow	1	1	2	1.3
3. Explaining the purpose of the listening activity before letting students listen to the listening passage	1	1	2	1.3
4. Incorporating activities to stimulate students' background knowledge prior to exposure to the listening passage	3	1	2	2.0
7. Ensuring beforehand that students are not anxious during EFL sessions	2	2	3	2.3
8. Announcing the topic and then letting students predict what the listening passage may be about	2	2	3	2.3
9. Explaining unfamiliar keywords that would be heard in the listening passage	1	1	3	1.7
17. Teaching students different listening skills before letting them listen to the listening passage	2	1	2	1.7
19. Explicitly teaching listening strategies before letting students listen to the listening passage	1	2	3	2.0
31. Ensuring beforehand that students are motivated to listen to the listening passage	1	3	2	2.0

Note: Likert type scale: 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = average, 2 = poor, 1 = very poor

Observation carried out in the three universities showed that preparation carried out during the pre-listening phase was mostly poor or very poor. The findings from the

observation confirmed what was stated by students that there was inadequate preparation of students by lecturers in relation to EFL listening activities. Observations revealed that lecturers mostly started the lesson by writing the topic of the day's lesson on the board without doing any substantial pre-listening activities. They seldom activated students' pre-knowledge by referring back to previous listening activities. The explicit teaching of listening strategies and listening skills that could be used while listening were neglected. Students were in a few cases asked to predict what they expected to hear in a listening passage on a specific topic and, although a few lecturers tried to ensure that students were not anxious about the listening task that lay ahead, it was not done effectively.

5.5.2 The while-listening phase

During the interviews, lecturers were asked to state activities which they used while teaching EFL listening skills. Most of the lecturers stated that they used various methods and strategies during the while-listening phase. For example, lecturer UnAL₁ mentioned that students were usually asked to write down something from the passage while they were listening to it, while UnAL₂ said that he "*... select materials that are suitable to listen to first, before students start taking notes.*" Lecturer UnBL₁ said that activities he expected students to perform while listening included "*predictions, guessing from the contexts, and understanding about specific ideas*"

On their part, students were asked to state what a typical lesson looked like during an EFL listening class. Students expressed different activities in relation to what happens in a typical EFL listening lesson. Lecturers, for example, according to student UnCS₁₃, may start teaching listening in the language laboratory and later ask them to work on the questions after listening. Student UnAS₁₂ stated that lecturers "*... may read stories and ask students whether they can remember or not.*"

The majority of the students said that lecturers read or gave one of their fellow students a passage to read to the class and then asked them to answer questions. Student UnCS₁₂ for example said that the lecturer "*... reads some passage and asks some questions.*"

Most of the students further stated that they watch videos, listen to audio tapes or native speakers' accents, and later they are asked to answer questions to see how much they could recall. For example, student UnCS₂₁ said that the lecturer "... *used video*" or "*writes some words on the blackboard.*" Student UnBS₁₁ mentioned that sometimes the lecturer "... *opens certain recorded cassettes and lets us listen after which we were asked to answer questions.*" Additionally, a small percentage of students stated that lecturers helped them to take notes.

Responses from lecturers demonstrated that most of them made an effort to include various activities during the process of teaching listening, especially activities that required students to listen and try to remember what they learnt. This corresponds with the findings of the quantitative data (see section 5.3.3) where it was found that 73% of lecturers regarded *asking questions to evaluate what students remember from listening* as either highly or fairly effective. One of the students, UnAS₁₂, felt that expecting them to answer questions on what they remembered was a futile exercise because, "... *students do not remember anything since the pronunciation of the native speakers is very difficult to understand.*" The same student also commented on the lack to practice listening, "*and we are not allowed to practice things, the teaching method is not appropriate.*" In addition, student UnBS₂₃ said that "... *activities usually used are simply reading passages and asking certain questions without helping students to know more about the skill*" and such activities "*cannot be beneficial for some of the students.*"

The findings are cause for concern if it is taken into consideration that Renandya and Farrell (2010) found that foreign language students experience a number of challenges particularly when listening to native speakers in video or audio-recorded speech. The need to use different activities in a listening lesson was also emphasised by Sun (2009) who argued that creating and imitating real-life situations during the teaching process presented students with a way to think and express what they had heard. It was also a way to help them integrate both thinking and expression (see also section 3.6.2).

Responses provided by lecturers during the interviews indicated that they were aware of the activities that worked well in the teaching of EFL listening. The questionnaire data also revealed that they had a positive perception of the effectiveness of while-listening activities. Observation carried out in all the universities regarding activities used during the while-listening phase, however, showed that the use of such activities was ineffective, which corroborates students' concerns (see Table 5.19).

The classroom observation checklist included 11 items to verify the practices used by lecturers during the listening stage as shown in Table 5.19. Results show that activities used during the listening stage in all three universities were poor and very poor. The findings from the observation confirmed issues which were identified by the students during the interview session. This is that most of the listening activities were not beneficial in enhancing listening skills. Classroom observations revealed that no lecturers gave students an opportunity to take notes while listening or to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context. On the other hand, most lecturers were observed interrupting the students by explaining what should already have been explained during the pre-listening stage. Moreover, most lecturers didn't give the students enough time to practice certain listening skills (such as listening with empathy, critical analytical or discriminating listening) that they had to learn. Expecting students to listen for specific information in the listening passage was poorly done, while students were not once expected to distinguish between facts and opinions. Very few opportunities which allowed students to communicate during the while-listening phase or to let students interpret the tone of the message were observed. Most observed lecturers were seen performing the listening activities very quickly so that students were not given enough time to internalise what they learnt.

Table 5.19: Observation on practices used during the while-listening stage of lessons

While-listening	Universities			
	A	B	C	Mean
10. Expecting students to listen for specific information in the listening passage	1	1	3	1.7
11. Letting students distinguish between fact and fiction while listening to the listening passage	1	1	1	1.0
12. Letting students guess meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the listening passage	2	2	1	1.7
13. Letting students interpret the tone of the message in the listening passage	3	2	1	2.0
14. Letting students interpret emotive (manipulative) language in the listening passage	3	2	2	2.3
15. Letting students practice listening in real-life situations	2	2	2	2.0
16. Letting students respond to eye movement, gestures and body language while listening	2	3	1	2.0
18. Letting students take notes while listening	1	1	1	1.0
35. Letting students listen for the gist of the matter in the listening passage	1	2	1	1.3
32. Letting students communicate with one another while teaching EFL listening	2	1	1	1.3
36. Making use of a variety of methods when teaching EFL listening	1	2	2	1.7

Note: Likert type scale: 5=very good, 4=good, 3=average, 2=poor, 1=very poor

5.5.3 The post-listening phase

Questionnaire data revealed that students and lecturers mostly had a positive perception of the effectiveness of post-listening activities. Interview responses from students, as discussed in section 5.5.2 on common activities used by lecturers during EFL listening teaching, indicated that lecturers mostly asked students to answer certain questions after a listening activity. These questions, however, mostly dealt with what students could remember after reading a story to them. For example,

student UnBS₂₁ had this to say, "*Lecturers give questions from the passage to be answered by us....*" In other cases, according to student UnBS₁₃, lecturers asked students to read to their peers while others listen, and they encouraged them to interact with each other after they have listened to the passage. This relates to what was suggested by Goh and Taib (2009), namely that students could take turns to read aloud their notes on their reflections during the discussions while other students listened, asked questions or gave their own comments in turn. One of the lecturers, (UnAL₁), said that "*students also will be asked to write something from the passage they have listened to.*"

Interview data obtained from both students and lecturers, however, revealed that this phase was not done effectively. Student UnBS₂₃ said that "*... we forget ... we do not practice since the time allocated is not enough.*" Many other students also commented on the lack of enough time to practice or to use strategies such as letting them reflect on what they have heard.

Lack of time for post-listening activities was also mentioned by lecturer UnAL₂ who stated that the time schedule for the language laboratory was not given proper attention. This is reason for concern, especially if one takes into consideration the importance of the post-reading phase. The importance of post-listening activities was reported by Hu (2012:284) who states that students should act upon what they learnt by summarising the listening material orally or in writing, or retelling what they heard to check comprehension. This would, in turn, strengthen students' understanding of what they heard. These activities help students to store the new information in their memory bank which further prepares them for listening comprehension next time.

Although the questionnaire data revealed that the lecturers had an overall positive perception of the effectiveness of post-listening activities, lesson observations confirmed that the post-listening phase did not get the attention it deserved. In most cases the post-listening phase of the lessons deteriorated in memory tests and questions on whether students could remember what they had heard in the listening passage. Questions to determine whether they could draw any conclusions based on what they have heard, whether they could distinguish between facts and opinions in

the passage or whether they could relate what they had heard to what they already knew about the topic addressed in the listening passage were almost non-existent. Questions which expected students to reflect on the listening strategies they had used while listening were also not observed. Activities in which students had to discuss the listening passage in groups were not observed during any of the observation sessions. These type of activities relate to what Vandergrift (2013) referred to as the “reflection stage”. As noted by Vandergrift (2013), lecturers might lead a discussion to confirm comprehension before discussing strategies used by the students. Reflection helps the students to re-construct the most important details as well as how they arrived at the meaning of certain words or parts of the text. It, however, seems that these activities that Vandergrift refers to did not feature as part of the post-listening phase of the teaching of EFL listening in the three Ethiopian universities that formed part of this study.

Table 5.20 shows observation data based on eight items. In general the lesson observations revealed that the conducting of the post-listening activities were either poor or very poor and that students were mostly asked to evaluate what they remembered from listening to the listening passage (the mean for this activity was 3.6).

Table 5.20: Observation on practices used during post-listening stage

Post-listening	Universities			
	A	B	C	Mean
20. Teaching students how to draw conclusions based on the listening passage	1	2	2	1.7
21. Letting students integrate new information with prior knowledge after listening to the passage	2	2	1	1.7
22. Expecting students to express own opinion on the topic of the listening passage	2	3	2	2.3
23. Letting students critically evaluate the listening passage	1	3	2	2.0
24. Letting students evaluate their notes by comparing them to those of others	1	2	3	2.0
25. Letting students transfer information from oral to written mode	2	3	2	2.3

Post-listening	Universities			
	A	B	C	Mean
26. Asking questions to evaluate what students remember from listening	3	4	4	3.6
27. Expecting students to pronounce words as they have been pronounced on the tape recorder	2	2	2	2.0

Note: Likert type scale: 5=very good, 4=good, 3=average, 2=poor, 1=very poor

Data in Table 5.20 confirm that indeed the post-listening stage was inadequately done. This supports the interview responses which showed that due attention was not given towards helping the students integrate what they had learned. This resulted in some students hardly remembering what they learned from the listening lessons. Typical post-listening activities expect students to draw conclusions or provide their own opinion on what they have heard, transfer information from oral to written mode (e.g. provide a written summary of what they have heard), or to share their experience with their classmates and also comment on the work of their peers. However, most of the lecturers were not observed implementing these typical post-listening activities.

5.5.4 The use of listening material

During the interviews students and lecturers responded to questions which asked about the teaching methods and type of listening materials used during the listening sessions. In addition to this, classroom observations were also made to clarify responses given by the interviewees on the listening materials.

The majority of the lecturers stated that they use different materials like movies, listening to radio stations, tape recorders or cassettes, read passages, listen to music, and they also read stories. For example, lecturer UnAL₂ said that he tried to use locally prepared text materials. Lecturer UnBL₁ indicated that he let students practice listening through *“audio, visuals, recorded materials, ... if they are provided with such things, their listening skills can be developed.”* In addition, lecturer UnCL₂ said that he used *“...common activities like storytelling, dialogues, listening to radio news, like BBC, CNN, films and telephones”*

In Ethiopian universities EFL listening is taught by means of both language laboratories and classroom lessons. With regard to the use of language laboratories, lecturers were asked to state how they think students benefit from teaching listening in EFL in the language laboratory as compared to listening taught by lecturers in the classrooms. Lecturers considered both language laboratories and classroom sessions as important in the teaching of listening skills. This viewpoint was in line with the suggestion made by Sun (2009) that language laboratories assist in improving speaking by listening, thinking and expressing thoughts in English. Lecturer UNAL₂ stated that students seemed very interested when they were taken to the language laboratories, while lecturer UnAL₁ referred to the positive as well as the negative side of using language laboratories by responding as follows:

Using language laboratories is more exiting for the students, because they are doing the drills on the desktops using internet, although most of the students fail to use the machines since most of them come from countryside or rural areas where there are no opportunities or exposure. Most of the students like learning in the class as they are used to it more ... certainly others prefer the other method in other words., learning in the lab.

With regard to use of the laboratories, students according to the lecturers need to get access to language laboratories. Lecturer UnBL₁ was of the opinion *that “both ways are equally important”*, but, taking into consideration the students’ background, *“the classroom teaching of listening skills is much better.”* Another lecturer from the same university said that *“it all depends on the situations,”* but *“it is not possible to separate both of them.”* The lecturers agreed that both classroom instruction and language laboratory sessions should be used. However, lecturer UnBL₂ argued that *“... lecturer’s role should be lowered based on the needs of students.”*

Some of the students expressed their discontent with listening to recordings done by native speakers. This is because of the fact that the pronunciation of the materials was not as clear to them as listening passages read by the local lecturers.

Table 5.21: Observation on the use of listening material

The use of listening material	Universities			
	A	B	C	Mean
5. Using listening passages interesting to students	1	2	2	1.7
6. Using of listening passages somewhat above students' level of understanding	1	1	2	1.3
28. Using of the language laboratory in an effective way to teach listening skills	2	2	3	2.3
29. Letting students listen to English mother tongue speakers (on tape)	1	3	3	2.3
30. Making use of authentic (real-life) listening passages	2	2	2	2.0
37. Utilising appropriate equipment that is in working effectively in the language laboratory	3	3	3	3.0
35. Using activities and listening material such as songs, narratives, dialogues to teach listening	2	3	1	2.0

Note: Likert type scale: 5=very good, 4=good, 3=average, 2=poor, 1=very poor

The majority of the lecturers stated that they use different materials like movies, listening to radio stations, tape recorders or cassettes, read passages, listen to music, and they also read stories. However, observation carried out in the three universities showed that the use of listening material was poor or very poor. The only exception was the item on the utilisation of appropriate equipment in the language laboratory which received an average rating in all the universities. This confirmed what lecturers mentioned during the interviews, namely that both laboratory and lessons in the classroom are important for teaching EFL listening skills. Although one of the lecturers claimed during the interview that he make use of listening material such as songs, radio news, films and telephones the lesson observations revealed that this was poorly done.

In summary, it is possible to conclude that although lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the pre-, while and post-listening phases and the use of listening material were positive, students' perceptions differed from those of the lecturers and were in general less positive. The post-listening stage was noted by both lecturers and students as the most challenging stage as time allocated was not adequate, meaning students were not given enough time to practice what they learnt during the sessions. However, the use of language laboratories was found to be motivating to students, but lecturers felt that both laboratories and lecture sessions should be equally used while teaching EFL listening skills. In language laboratories cassettes recorded by native speakers are mostly used as listening material, but it seems that some students find it hard to follow native speakers.

5.6 THE USE OF BOTTOM-UP, TOP-DOWN AND OTHER STRATEGIES

The terms 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' as discussed in section 2.4 refer to the order in which different types of knowledge are processed during listening comprehension. Bottom-up strategies are used when listeners build or create meanings to understand the message sequentially from sound to words, while top-down processing strategies come into play when students start with their prior knowledge to understand the meaning of a message (Vandergrift, 2013:19).

Although bottom-up and top-down strategies for teaching EFL listening are incorporated in pre-, while and post-listening as well as the choice of listening material, these are briefly discussed in this section, as they play an important role in the successful teaching of listening in EFL .

5.6.1 Use of bottom-up strategies

Bottom-up processing involves building meaning from the sounds that one hears. According to Nunan (1998:25), a listener converts the sounds into words, and then into grammatical relationships until he or she arrives at a meaning; hence, bottom-up processing requires knowledge of vocabulary and grammar (Helgesen, 2003:26). In bottom-up processing (Fang 2008:23), schemata are hierarchically formed based on

the new incoming data, where a student starts at the bottom with the most specific to the most general at the top and meaning is arrived at as the last step in the process. According to Yeldham and Gruba (2014a:35) bottom-up processing could be used to develop the students' lower-level listening skills.

Based on the students' background information (Table 5.2) the data show that the majority of students' rated their own listening abilities as average to very poor. Students also indicated that they struggled with vocabulary, pronunciation and the accents of different speakers, and they lacked access to videos or recorded cassettes to practice their listening skills. This was confirmed when students and lecturers were asked to discuss the challenges they experienced with the teaching and learning of EFL listening (see section 5.7). The implications of this are that these students required considerable use of bottom-up strategies. This relates to arguments presented by Rost (2002) and Field (2004) that students with limited second language competence depend heavily upon bottom-up processing (see section 2.4.1 and a discussion of bottom strategies).

During the interviews and as observed during classroom observations, very few of the lecturers made use of bottom-up strategies, such as building students' vocabulary, before letting them listen to the listening passage or allowing them to listen to the listening passage for a second time.

The lack of proper use of bottom-up strategies is concerning especially if taken into consideration that Yeldham and Gruba's (2014) confirmation that bottom-up strategies are useful in developing students' lower-level listening skills (refer to section 2.4.1). In addition, the use of bottom-up strategies is in line with Vandergriff's (2013) suggestion that students at this level may find it difficult to keep up with the sound stream. Students from the three universities could be considered to have a limited working memory in relation to English language; that is, they could not consciously attend to the rapid, complex and simultaneous processes involved in language comprehension (see section 2.4.1).

The use of bottom-up strategies while teaching EFL listening brings successful gains based on literature. However, based on data obtained during observation sessions and taking into consideration that students came from poor backgrounds or that they were not exposed to English native speakers, it is possible to conclude that bottom-up strategies in the three universities were not effectively utilised.

5.6.2 Use of top-down strategies

In top-down processing, students start with their prior knowledge to understand the meaning of a message (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998:433). According to Richards (2008:7), this may include students' previous knowledge about a topic of discourse or situational knowledge. In top-down processing, students use what they already know to create expectations of what they expect to hear and to interpret what they have heard (Helgesen, 2003:26). Top-down processing therefore relates to schemata processing (mental model of knowledge and concepts) in that students tend to construct a schema relating to the topic of a listening text and to use this to guide their processing of incomplete bottom-up information (Field, 2004:369). Schematic processing thus allows students to make intelligent guesses of what they expect to hear, even before they have explicit evidence.

When asked about activities used while teaching EFL listening skills, some lecturers mentioned some activities which relate to top-down strategies. For example, lecturer UNAL₁ said that he used "*predictions, guessing from the contexts, and understanding about specific ideas*" while lecturer UNAL₂ said that he asks oral questions to determine if there is anything students know relating to the current topic.

Lecturers were asked to state whether they provided activities during the pre-listening stage to stimulate students' background knowledge prior to exposure to the listening text and whether they allowed students to predict what the text may be all about before listening. Most of the lecturers indicated that they initially evaluated the background of their students so as to understand their English listening abilities in order to make a decision on the type of method or activities to employ based on the situation. Lecturers mentioned a number of ways in which this is done. Lecturer

UNAL₂ said that he “... *tr(ies) to understand the needs of my students, select materials appropriately to listen first before taking notes.*” In the same line lecturer UNCL₂ said that students “*should know for what purpose they are going to listen to the text the text presentation, conversation, the news, broadcast for example the purpose also should be identified.*”

Very few of the lecturers stated that they used top-down strategies such as asking questions regarding a topic they will cover, and only one lecturer mentioned that he asked students to predict what they expected to hear. Some of the students referred to activities used by lecturers that could be regarded as top-down strategies, for example, asking them oral questions before the listening activity.

One way of applying top-down strategies is by building the new information on students' existing knowledge (Vandergrift, 2013:4). During the interview sessions, lecturers were asked to state how they activate students' prior knowledge in order to facilitate comprehension of the message. One of the lecturers stated that activities that activate students' prior knowledge should include understanding background knowledge regarding the English language. Lecturer UnCL₂ said that “*we activate students' interest by asking certain questions*”, while lecturer UnBL₁ said that he asks “*... students something as prove from the things they know ... motivating them.*”

One of the interview questions asked students to describe how lecturers try to activate their prior knowledge during EFL listening lessons. A few students indicated that to a lesser extent lecturers tried to activate their prior knowledge. For example, student UnCS₁₂ had this to say: “*lecturers usually don't consider students' existing knowledge except very few.*” The same sentiments were documented by first year students from the same university. Discussing the same issue, student UnBS₁₁ said that “*... lecturers do not consider that students have different backgrounds*” while student UnBS₂₃ from the same university said that “*some lecturers know that we students come from different backgrounds and consider our prior knowledge to some extent.*” In addition, student UnCS₂₂ said that lecturers “*care only for the materials. They do not consider the background of students.*”

Although top-down strategies were utilised better than bottom-up strategies, both of these strategies did not get enough attention during the teaching of listening.

5.6.3 Listening teaching strategies

Although lecturers suggested that they used different strategies to provide students with the needed support, the majority of students had issues with the strategies used in EFL classrooms. For example, student UnAS₁₂ mentioned that she and her colleagues, “...cannot remember what we learnt, because the strategies used are not very clear.” However, some students mentioned a few strategies that are used while teaching EFL listening skills. Student UnBS₁₁ said, for example, that “Our lecturer taught us different strategies like giving information about the passage he is going to read.” Student UnBS₂₁ said that they listen to a passage and try to write down some notes from the passage. However, student UnBS₁₃ said that strategies were better used when in the language laboratory.

The difference observed between lecturers’ and students’ responses could be explained by the fact that listening as explained by Buck (2001) is a personal process which takes place within a listener’s mind; that is, listeners make different inferences and interpret the texts they hear differently and what is considered by lecturers’ as effective might be interpreted otherwise by students.

In relation to strategies used, some students stated that lecturers ask them to guess the meaning from the text. For example, student UnBS₁₁ said that lecturers asked them to “... find out the meanings of new words”. Student UnCS₁₁ said that their lecturers teach them “... critical listening only.” Based on the interview data obtained from students and lecturers and the data obtained from lesson observations, it can be concluded that very little explicit teaching of listening strategies or listening skills took place in the three universities that formed part of the study.

In teaching EFL listening lecturers need to consider students' background so as to determine their listening ability and familiarity with the language which may be an obstacle in the initial stages of learning. Considering that most EFL students in the three selected Ethiopian universities have limited background with regard to English language speaking (see section 5.2.2), it calls for more focus on bottom-up strategies especially at the beginner level while top-down strategies could be incorporated as students become more self-directed in language acquisition. Explicit teaching of listening strategies (such as predicting) or listening skills (such as critical listening or listening for pleasure) is important, yet the data revealed that this was seldom done in the three universities that were selected for this study.

5.7 CHALLENGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING EFL LISTENING SKILLS

One of the sub-research questions that was formulated for the study was: What do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive as challenges in the effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills? (Refer to section 1.4, 4.2 and Table 4.1).

During the interviews, students and lecturers were asked about the challenges they face with the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills. In this section the responses obtained from participants are discussed.

5.7.1 Challenges identified by lecturers

Lecturers were requested to identify major challenges which they face when teaching EFL listening skills to students. The responses were categorised into three themes, namely lecturer, student, and institutional related factors. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data are summarised in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Themes and sub-themes on challenges

Theme 1: Lecturer-related challenges	
Sub-theme 1	Insufficient time
Sub-theme 2	Accent and pronunciation
Sub-theme 3	Lack of the necessary skills to teach EFL listening
Sub-theme 4	Lack of enough support provided to students
Theme 2: Student-related challenges	
Sub-theme 1	High demands made on lecturer to teach EFL to non-mother tongue speakers of English
Sub-theme 2	Limited exposure to English accents and pronunciation
Sub-theme 3	Low vocabulary repertoire
Sub-theme 4	Students lack opportunities to practice
Theme 3: Institutional-related challenges	
Sub-theme 1	Lack of authentic material and recorded texts
Sub-theme 2	Poor scheduling of the language laboratory
Sub-theme 3	Poor learning environment for EFL classes

5.7.1.1 Lecturer related challenges

Based on the responses from lecturers and students a number of challenges were identified as shown in Table 5.22. Some lecturers, for example, mentioned issues related to time to cover the texts in the classroom and fluency in pronunciation of English words. In addition, students mentioned lack of commitment to teaching the course, inadequate knowledge of the English language on the part of lecturers and lack of enough support for students.

- Insufficient time

Lack of sufficient time to cover the content and to practice in the laboratory was mentioned by some lecturers and students as a challenge. For example, lecturer UnAL₂ said that *“the time was not properly scheduled for the language laboratory ... poor attention is given to it.”*

Student UnAS₁₂ said that *“If students have enough time, they can improve the skill of listening.”* In relation to strategies taught by lecturers, student UnBS₂₃ said that they *“forget them because we do not practice them since the time allocated is not enough.”* Lack of adequate time may mean low coverage of the course content and provision of support to students to appropriately practice what they have learnt. The findings support a study that was conducted in Ethiopia by Berhanu (1993) who found that students' listening skills were not properly developed. The findings could partly be linked to lack of enough time to practice what the students learned.

- Accent and pronunciation

Pronunciation of English words and the accent of the lecturers was another challenge mentioned by both lecturers and students. Many students mentioned that lecturers spoke in low voices which resulted in students' inability to hear coupled with lecturers' word pronunciations which varied from lecturer to lecturer and also from that of native speakers. Not only students but also lecturers referred to this issue. For example, lecturer UnAL₁ said: *“We lecturers also fail to pronounce the English words*

properly just like the native speakers as closely as possible.” The lecturers also indicated that they have not been exposed to native pronunciation. In addition, lecturer UnBL₂ said that they have issues when *“identifying the kinds of accents, whether it is British or American; when we teach listening skills, we mix-up both pronunciation.”*

The majority of students identified issues related to knowledge of the English language, especially the pronunciation of English words. Student UnAS₂₂ said that *“English language is not pronounced as it written or spelt”* while another student (UnAS₂₃) from the same university said that *“pronunciation of different people in the language laboratory is a major challenge.”* Furthermore, the style of speaking also varies constantly. Student UnBS₁₁, for example, said that *“lecturers have different styles of speaking; my knowledge of listening skill is very poor since I don’t have enough listening skill in my elementary and high school levels.”* Similarly, student UnAS₁₁ said that the low voice on the part of the lecturer *“may show the fact that they aren’t confident enough themselves.”* This finding correlates with Guo and Wills’ (2005) remark that mastering the English language could be more difficult due to poor pronunciation of English words on the part of the lecturers.

- Lack of sufficient skills to teach EFL listening

Most of the students stated that lecturers lack adequate skills to teach English language. Student UnAS₂₃, for example, noted that lecturers themselves lack competence in the listening skills. He said, *“they themselves fail, it’s a difficult skill.”* In addition, some students also mentioned challenges related to competences of the laboratory technician. The issue indicated that students did not get enough support from the laboratory technician to help them acquire the listening skill. Student UnCS₂₂ had this to say: *“Laboratory technicians themselves haven’t got enough trainings ... lecturers of this skill are not good in language to teach the course.”* The use of language laboratories was noted to be non-beneficial by most students who felt that the laboratory sessions were not motivating enough. This is in conflict with the lecturers’ opinion that both classroom listening lessons and laboratory sessions

are equally important and that students found laboratory sessions more exciting (refer to section 5.5.4).

Lack of competence for laboratory technicians might indicate that with limited materials or resources there could be lack of creativity in searching and locating resources that students need to help them practice. These problems may further contribute to lack of understanding of the language on the part of the students.

- Not enough support provided to students

Lack of enough support from lecturers was also mentioned by some students as a challenge to language acquisition for the students. For example, student UnAS₁₂ said that lecturers do not *“give this course due attention, they do not motivate students and also fail to explain ... only talk and stop without supporting.”* Additionally, student UnAS₂₁ mentioned that there is *“lack of enough support from lecturers of language.”*

5.7.1.2 Student related challenges

Lecturers and students identified a number of challenges that were related to students as shown in Table 5.22. Most lecturers mentioned difficulties with students' background which makes the teaching of listening skills in EFL more demanding than teaching other skills like reading, speaking, and writing. Besides, students lack awareness about listening skills from high school or lower grade level. Hence, they lack knowledge of the English sound system and have problems identifying accents and pronunciation of different speakers. In addition, students have low vocabulary repertoires and lack of opportunities to practice.

- Students lack of exposure to English language

Most of the lecturers stated that lack of students' exposure to English language at lower grade levels indicated that they were not accustomed to speaking English with their peers. Lecturer UnAL₂, for example, said that *“students join the universities with a very limited background exposure from their high-school levels ... students have*

not been practicing listening to English rather than speaking other Ethiopian languages.” Lecturer UnCL₁ said that “*students have problem of listening skills ... they cannot understand lecturers.*” In addition, lecturer UnAL₂ commented on students’ background about listening skills by saying that “*... they are so strange towards strategies like listening for understanding details, main ideas or distinguishing the voice of native speakers.*” These findings are in line with work conducted in Ethiopia by Berhanu (1993) who found that students are ill equipped to listen effectively which makes the teaching of EFL more difficult for lecturers.

Almost all the students stated that they have poor background in terms of speaking and using English language from lower grade levels. As noted by student UnAS₁₃, he mentioned that most of his peers “*cannot write and speak fluently*” and have “*no knowledge about listening skill in lower grades and high schools.*” Most of the students’ responses resonated with what the lecturers noted which was that students had no exposure to the English language at lower grade levels. Lack of exposure to the English native speakers’ accents or pronunciation similarly relate with Vandergrift’s (2003) argument that EFL listeners may have an inability to form a mental representation from what they heard which is frustrating for students. As previously noted students may feel that lessons were not well prepared or inadequately provided if they cannot connect what they know to what they have learnt.

- Limited exposure to English accents and pronunciation

Limited exposure to English accents and pronunciation was another issue mentioned by most lecturers. For example, lecturer UnCL₁ said that since students were not taught listening skills at the lower grades levels, “*they have problems of identifying accents and pronunciation of different speakers.*” In addition, lecturer UnBL₁ said that students lack “*exposure to different media like CNN, BBC, etc.*” Hence, they struggled with accents and pronunciations of different native speakers which further presented challenges in language acquisition. Besides, according to lecturer UnAL₁ students may have “*come from different backgrounds, most of them might have been*

taught by their vernaculars languages, getting themselves into the culture of listening skills to the context of foreigners. This is a problem.”

The problem with accent and pronunciation which was mentioned by lecturers as one of the challenges when teaching EFL listening was also mentioned by the majority of the students as problematic. Most of the students had problems with accents and pronunciation of native speakers in the classroom and in the language laboratory. For example, student UnBS₁₁ said that *“lecturers have different styles of speaking, my knowledge of listening skill is very poor....”* while student UnBS₁₃ had this to say: *“We cannot understand the pronunciation of native speakers because we are not exposed to such situations so far.”* Student UnAS₁₂ said that *“... [A] big challenge is pronunciation of both classroom lecturer and also the accent of native speakers in the language laboratory.”* These findings relate with Ghoneim’s (2013) observation that comprehension problems usually arise when students lack contextual knowledge. The findings on student-related challenges also align with what was observed by researchers such as Renandya and Farell (2010:53) on speech variability including dropping, adding or modifying sounds which is normal in natural speech but problematic in foreign language listening comprehension. Anxiety or comprehension breakdown was also noted by Field (2003) as a result of students who were unable to segment the word out of a piece of connected speech.

- Low vocabulary repertoire

Low vocabulary repertoire which students could rely on to interpret or make judgements was another issue mentioned by most of the lecturers and students. For example, lecturer UnAL₁ said that *“Students aren’t well equipped with original and natural texts or appropriate package of vocabulary.”* In the same vein, lecturer UnBL₂ referred to students who have *“...[a] lack of identification, word usage, they do not know how to express themselves, lack of vocabulary especially when students listen to recorded materials and they fail to identify what native speakers say.”* In addition lecturer UnCL₂ said that *“the complexity of grammar, the difficulty level of vocabulary, and the discourse itself ... I feel failure when my students faced such problems.”* This may imply that lecturers get de-motivated to teach the language when students fail to

show improvement in acquiring the language. This finding relates to an investigation carried out by Seime (1989:21) on the listening abilities of college students in Ethiopia. Seime (1989:2) found that students were unable to adequately listen to what their instructors were saying.

Issues regarding vocabulary were identified by most of the students. Student UnAS₁₂, for example, said that *“vocabulary is also a challenge because it is a foreign language for Ethiopian students.”* These issues relate with what was mentioned by Sharma (2006) and Ghoneim (2013) who argued that inadequate vocabulary may compel students to stop listening in order to figure out the meaning of a certain word; making them miss the next part of the speech. In addition, frustrations demonstrated by students resonate with what was observed by Field (2003) that understanding a foreign language may breakdown due to the students' inability to recognise phonetic variation of a known word. Students may also fail to comprehend if they only know the word in the text, but not in spoken vocabulary, or students lack ability to segment the word out of a piece of connected speech.

- Lack of opportunities for students to practice

Lack of opportunities to practice for students, in particular, watching videos or listening to audio cassettes, presents another challenge in teaching of English listening skills as identified by both lecturers and students. Lecturer UnAL₂, for example, mentioned that *“students lack time to repeat listening or covering the texts themselves in the classroom.”* Lecturer UnBL₂ said that there was *“...[a] lack of appropriate materials”* for students to practice EFL listening. Additionally, lecturer UNBL₂ opined: *“Students do not get access of practicing these kinds of abstract listening skills.”*

Students on their part mentioned issues related with time and access to relevant materials to practice. For example, student UnCS₂₁ said that there is *“... no chance of listening to videos or recoded cassettes before the activities”* and continued by saying that students *“... lack the experience and concentration during the time of learning listening to cassettes”* Student UnAS₂₃ mentioned *“... we have no*

opportunity to listen to recorded cassettes spoken by native speakers” as a challenge. The challenges experiences by students were very aptly formalised by lecturer UnAL₁ who said that “*to be a good speaker of English, one should be a good listener.*” The lecturer argued that students’ word pronunciation could improve “*if students are able to listen to the recorded materials.*” The finding is important for the teaching of EFL listening in Ethiopia because Harmer (1993:24) argues that since students differ based on their social background and ability, teachers need to prepare a variety of activities and listening material so as to satisfy most of their needs at various times.

5.7.1.3 Institutional related problems

As far as institutional-related challenges are concerned, interview data obtained from lecturers and students were grouped in a number of sub-themes (see Table 5.21). Challenges mentioned by most of the lecturers and students included a shortage of authentic material and recorded texts, poor class schedules, especially language laboratory sessions, and a poor learning environment for EFL classes.

- Lack of relevant resources

Lack of relevant resources was mentioned by most of the lecturers as a challenge while teaching EFL listening skills. Lecturers argued that lack of resources in the laboratory indicated that listening was like a forgotten or an over-looked skill at the university level. For example, lecturer UnAL₂ identified resources that are lacking at the university like “*internet, multimedia resources, access to web-sites, and text-books in the library.*” Taking into consideration that students need to practice their language listening skills in EFL a lack of resources may create frustration on the part of lecturers and students as well. Further, the scarcity of resources may imply that the effectiveness of teaching listening and the acquisition of language for the students could be affected. Inadequate resources in the universities compromises what was suggested by Goh and Taib (2006:223), namely that lecturers need to provide an integrated sequence of activities and useful listening resources for students to constantly get in contact with the target language.

Most of the students identified some issues related with resources used to teach EFL listening skills. Student UnBS₁₃ for example, said that *“language labs are not facilitated.”* Based on the students’ feedback, it could be concluded that there was a shortage of equipment in the language laboratories, especially in two of the three universities. For example, student UnCS₂₁ said that *“... computers are very old, the video should be replaced by recent machines, the recorded materials also should be new as they were prepared a long time ago.”* Students need opportunities to continuously practice their listening skills. The findings confirm what was observed by Obeidat and Abu-Melhim (2008) that materials in the language laboratories in higher institutions are irrelevant to the contemporary conditions of teaching listening skills, and they do not appeal to the interests of Ethiopian students.

- Management and time scheduling

Management and time scheduling was identified by lecturers as an issue. For example, lecturer UnAL₂ said that lecturers *“lack time to repeat or cover the texts themselves in the classroom”* while teaching EFL. Besides according to lecturer UnAL₂ *“the time was not properly scheduled for the language laboratory, poor attention is given to it.”* This indicates a lack of adequate time allocation and coordination of EFL listening teaching in the institutions, which could lead to inadequate teaching schedules and coverage of materials as well as time for students to practice.

Similar to the lecturers’ responses, feedback from students suggested that time schedules were not adequate to successfully cover the course, taking into consideration the frequent power failure which affects language laboratory sessions. For example, student UnCS₁₂ said that *“time allotment is not enough because we have only two hours weekly and it is dominated by lecture method.”* Another student, UnCS₂₃ from the same university, said *“this course is taught only at first and second year level ... the time given is not enough, we should study this course until we graduate.”*

- Learning environment

The learning environment is a critical issue when it comes to listening as noted by some teachers. The physical environment in which listening takes place is critical for EFL teaching. Lecturers stated that the EFL classroom teaching environment was always disrupted by noise from outside. Lecturer UnAL₂ said that *“sometimes, classrooms are very noisy from the noise which come from outside while teaching.”* The environment where listening skills are taught plays a critical role in the initial phase of listening as it determines how the message is processed and interpreted by the student. This is cause for concern because Vandergrift (2003) cautions that students may fail to understand subsequent parts of the text or message because of earlier problems which may include missed texts in the process of listening. Hargie (2011) also refers to the role that the learning environment plays in his statement that seating arrangements, lighting, listener comfort or distance between the listener and speaker, and noise levels may block or distort incoming messages.

The preceding section, section 5.7, highlighted key challenges which affect the teaching of EFL listening skills. The issues identified by both lecturers and students were categorised into three themes, namely lecturer, student and institutional related factors. Each theme was divided into sub-themes.

One of the challenges that was identified relates to lecturers' teaching skills. Lecturers need to up-date their skills with regard to the teaching of EFL listening skills; that is, pronunciation, styles of speaking and being audible in the classroom. Continuous training in the field, especially for laboratory technicians, remains critical. Bearing in mind that students came from different and poor backgrounds, and have limited or no exposure to English language, the need for lecturers to provide students with adequate support was identified as one of the challenges for lecturers.

Poor or limited exposure to English language speaking was highlighted as a major issue for all students. Respondents noted that students lack opportunities in the lower grades to practice the language and to build their listening skills. Moreover, a lack of prior knowledge made it even more problematic for EFL lecturers to get

students into the culture of listening for specific information (e.g., ideas, information, or details) during laboratory sessions.

A lack of good working equipment as well as up-to date materials were mentioned by both lecturers and students as a challenge. The challenge presented difficulties in EFL instruction which in turn created frustrations for both lecturers and students.

Time allocation and management of the language laboratories was noted by the respondents as a challenge. For lecturers to effectively cover the course and as well assist the students to acquire the language, they needed adequate time allotment and proper teaching schedules to be put in place. Students argued that the time allocated to cover the course (i.e. two hours per week for two years) was not adequate. Considering that students rarely spoke English outside the classroom, the process of helping students to acquire the language still remained a problem for most students in the three universities.

5.8 BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF LISTENING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Lecturers and students were asked to suggest ways in which the teaching of EFL listening skills could be improved. Both lecturers and students identified three major themes as summarised in Table 5.23.

Table 5.23: Themes and sub-themes on improving EFL teaching

Theme 1: Lecturer-related factors	
Sub-theme 1	Assigning experienced and proficient lecturers
Sub-theme 2	Being interested in the course
Sub-theme 3	Being creative and undergoing continuous training
Sub-theme 4	Providing enough support and motivating students
Sub-theme 5	Using different strategies to teach EFL

Theme 2: Student-related factors	
Sub-theme 1	Giving students exposure to English language
Sub-theme 2	Regularly practice within and outside classrooms
Sub-theme 3	Encouraging students to listen to different media
Theme 3: Institutional-related factors	
Sub-theme 1	Nationally the course should be given priority
Sub-theme 2	Provision of enough and relevant materials
Sub-theme 3	Allocating enough time for practice

5.8.1 Lecturer related factors

Suggestions were provided by both lecturers and students on ways in which lecturers could improve the teaching of EFL listening skills.

- Assigning experienced and proficient lecturers

Based on the face-to-face interviews with both lecturers and students, they all agreed that the course needed competent lecturers. Lecturers argued that teachers who lacked competence should not shy away from the course. They should continuously try to improve their theoretical knowledge with regard to EFL instruction. Lecturer UnCL₁ stated in this regard that *“lecturers have to know some theoretical knowledge for English ... introducing English phonemes.”* UnBL₁ stated that *“we need to upgrade ourselves in order to teach listening skill as a course.”*

Some students stated that lecturers should be competent to teach the course. For example, student UnAS₁₃ said that *“all lecturers should be good and competent to teach this course”* while student UnAS₁₁ felt that the Department should *“assign able and proficient lecturers.”*

- Being interested in the course

Being interested in the course was mentioned by some teachers as an important way to support students. For example, lecturer UnAL₁ suggested that, *“Lecturers should be interested; because of the challenges lecturers have resistance not to teach their course, it should be known that challenges teach people, students observe in order to find better solutions.”*

- Being creative and undergoing continuous training

Being creative and getting continuous training was also mentioned by lecturers as a way forward. According to some lecturers, despite all the challenges lecturers should be able to handle problems related to the teaching of EFL listening skills and they should get continuous training to improve their skills. Lecturer UnAL₂, for example, suggested that EFL lecturers have a responsibility to provide help to students, that is to *“enhance the teaching of listening skills, supporting it with technology, teach the course in the language laboratory, integrate it with other skills, define and teach students what listening is, ... try to reserve relevant books in the library, and get professional on job training continuously.”*

Training for lecturers and laboratory technician was suggested by most of the students. Student UnBS₁₂ said that *“lecturers must get trainings.”* According to student UnCS₂₁, *“lecturers should get continuous training,”* and they should understand *“native speakers’ pronunciation.”* In addition, student UnBS₂₃ said that *“Lecturers themselves need to get training and awareness.”*

- Providing enough support and motivating students

Providing enough support and motivating students was a suggestion made by both teachers and students. Lecturer UnAL₂ had this to say;

Even if the laboratories are not well equipped and not facilitated, we lecturers should be committed to teach the

listening skills, lecturers of listening skills are expected to download variety of relevant materials and provide students with them.

According to student UnC_{S23} lecturers should “... encourage and as well look for ways to motivate students.” In addition student UnBS₁₃ argued that “the teaching of listening skills can be improved if students are motivated and provided with enough materials.” The data obtained by means of the interview relates to Rost’s (2002:18-21) suggestion that lecturers should use a student-centred approach when selecting inputs and constructing tasks so as to empower students and to motivate them. This is also in line with the CLT movement as discussed in section 3.2.

- Use of different strategies to teach EFL listening skills

Use of different strategies was mentioned by most of the students as a way forward in the teaching of EFL. Lecturers should plan the use of strategies based on the students’ English language ability. For example, student UnCS₁₂ said that “Lecturers should teach different kinds of strategies.” In addition, student UnCS₁₃ added, “although there are many strategies to learn or teach listen skills, he focuses only on one or two of them.” Use of different strategies to teach second language listening effectively is emphasised by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010:222) who argue that the different strategies help students to compensate for what they are not able to comprehend.

5.8.2 Student related factors

Both lecturers and students provided their suggestions on ways to overcome student-related factors to improve teaching of EFL listening skills.

- Providing exposure of English language to students

Both lecturers and students suggested providing exposure to the English language to students from an early age onwards. Data gathered by means of semi-structured

interviews showed that students lacked exposure to English language speaking at high school and at lower grade levels. Lecturers stated that it was hard to get students into the culture of speaking English especially outside the classroom. For example, lecturer UnBL₂ said, *“From the lower grades, students need to be exposed to the learning of these skills as a base for all skills ... aural skills, speaking and listening must be given properly.”*

Students also suggested that they need more exposure to EFL listening at lower levels of education. Student UnBS₁₁, for example, said that *“Teaching listening skills can be developed more if students have rich backgrounds in the previous levels.”* Mousavi and Iraveni (2012) state that authentic materials enhance comprehension in the classroom. They argue that to prepare and enable students to orally interact with others outside the classroom, teachers should provide students with ample opportunities to listen to samples of authentic language in the classroom. This is important for the Ethiopian context where English is a foreign language and is seldom heard in the community outside the classroom situation.

- Regular practice in and outside classrooms

Regular practice of the listening skills within and outside classrooms was another suggestion based on lecturers' and students' responses. This relates with what was suggested by Fang (2008:27) and Taguchi (2008:433) that the use of a variety of audio-visual inputs, for example, videos, news clips, and radio programmes, could be used to teach listening skills to help students polish their aural or oral skills. Lecturer UnBL₁, for example, suggested that *“Students need to have continuous practice through audio, visuals, recorded materials ... if they are provided with such things, their listening skills can be developed ... they need to be acquainted with different sources.* In addition, lecturer UnAL₁ said that if *“students are aware of the importance of listening, they themselves will be looking for the solutions with the guide of lecturers.”*

In line with the lecturers most of the students were in agreement that they need to put in more effort on their part to learn English. In this regard student UnBS₂₂ said

that students “*need to practice the skill of listening both in the classroom and also outside the classroom.*”

- Encouraging students to listen to different media

Encouraging students to listen to different media was another suggestion made by the respondents. Students should be encouraged to listen to BBC, CNN and other visual or audio media that provide students with ways to improve their listening skills. For example, lecturer UnCL₂ said that there are “*different activities forwarded by scholars so in my opinion the common activities like storytelling, dialogues, listening to radio news, like BBC, CNN, films and telephones and the like should be used to encourage students to learn English listening skills.*”

Student UnAS₂₁ expressed a similar opinion when he said that students need to:

... practice the activities of listening not only in the classroom but also outside classrooms from different sources like movies, radio stations, practicing with friends and classmates. To be good speakers, we should listen very carefully.

According to another student (UnCS₂₃), “*Students are also expected to put some efforts not only learning formal but also developing the skill through practices, listen to some English songs.*”

Suggestions presented by both lecturers and students are in line with work by researchers such as Hulstijn (2003), Fang (2008), Taguchi (2008) and Ma (2010) who argue that audio-visual inputs like videos, films, news clips, radio programmes, documentaries, pictures and television serve as an aid in language comprehension.

5.8.3 Institutional related factors

Lecturers and students mentioned areas to which institutions need to pay attention to help improve the teaching of EFL listening skills.

- Support on national level

Respondents were in agreement that nationally the English listening skills had not been given much priority at high school and lower grade levels. Lecturers felt that it would be less problematic if students were exposed to English speaking at lower grade levels. For example, lecturer UnCL₁ said that:

In Ethiopian context, this skill is not given importance, therefore, this gap relatively need to be filled by everyone concerned, i.e., students, lecturers, district and regional officials, deans, department heads and by and large Ministry of Education and University.

Student UnAL₂ was of the same opinion that “*to improve the teaching and learning of listening skills, mainly students, lecturers, department heads should make the highest contributions.*” Lecturers and students therefore suggested that the responsible Ministry and institutions need to rethink the curriculum in relation to English teaching at the lower grade levels.

- Provision of enough and relevant materials

Access to resources like materials and language laboratory equipment were mentioned as a prerequisite for effective listening teaching; however, lecturer UnAL₂ acknowledged the role that lecturers had to play in the absence thereof:

Even if the laboratories are not well equipped and not facilitated, we lecturers should be committed to teach the listening skills. Lecturers of listening skills are expected to download variety of relevant materials and support students.

The views of the lecturer could mean that although resources were scarce, the internet could be used as an alternative source of materials that could be used to

teach EFL listening. In other words, lecturers need to be creative in the language laboratories to motivate students.

- Allocating enough time for practice

Good time management and proper class schedules were mentioned earlier as an option in improving effectiveness in EFL instruction. Lecturer UnAL₂, for example, expressed his frustration that “*the Department focuses only on administrative issues rather than facilitating the appropriate ways to teach listening skills in particular.*” Facilitation and support at institutional level in this case is key to making teaching of EFL more effective at the three universities.

5.9 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this study an overview of students’ and lecturers’ responses was carried out based on four components that could have an influence on the effectiveness of EFL listening teaching; namely the pre-, the while and the post-listening phase, as well as the use of listening material. Quantitative data were discussed followed by an analysis of both qualitative interviews and observation data for each component.

Quantitative data obtained from the study suggested that the majority of lecturers had a higher positive rating of the activities used during the pre-, while and post listening phases compared to students. The reason for lecturers’ overall positive response could be that they have tried to portray their practices as effective.

As far as the use of listening materials is concerned lecturers’ overall perception of the use of the listening material was positive while only slightly above a third of the students were of the opinion that the use of listening materials was indeed effective. A similar percentage of students felt that there was ineffectiveness in the use of listening materials.

The analysis of variance tests done on the data indicated that being male or female and being student or lecturer significantly affected how the various components of

the English listening course were evaluated. The analyses revealed that students in general perceived the effectiveness of the teaching of listening less positive as compared to the lecturers and that females, especially female students, were more critical than males.

With regard to use of strategies, data obtained during observation sessions and interview sessions showed that bottom-up strategies were not utilised sufficiently in the three universities. Considering that students had limited backgrounds with regard to the English language, lecturers should focus more on bottom-up strategies especially at the beginner level while top-down strategies could be incorporated as students become more self-directed and competent in the acquisition of EFL.

Both lecturers and students identified key challenges that affect the teaching of EFL listening skills which were categorised into three major themes and several sub-themes, namely lecturer-related, student-related and institutional-related themes. The sub-themes related to the lecturers included insufficient time, accent and pronunciation, inadequate knowledge of the English language, lack of commitment to teach the course and lack of enough support to students. Student-related challenges included high demands made on lecturers to teach EFL to non-mother tongue speakers of English, limited exposure to native English accents and pronunciation, low vocabulary repertoire and students' lack of opportunities to practice EFL listening. Institutional-related challenges sub-themes included: a lack of authentic material and recorded texts, poor scheduling of the language laboratory and poor learning environment for EFL classes.

Lectures and students were asked to suggest best practices to improve EFL teaching. The practices were categorised into three major themes and several sub-themes, namely lecturer-related, student-related and institutional-related factors. Lecturer-related sub-themes included assigning experienced and proficient lecturers, getting interested in the course, ensuring continuous training and creativity in the course, providing students with enough support and motivating them, as well as using different strategies to teach EFL listening skills. Student-related sub-themes included giving students more exposure to the English language, ensuring regular

practice within and outside classrooms, and encouraging students to listen to different media like BBC and CNN. On the institutional-related level, sub-themes included giving priority to the course at the national level, providing enough and relevant materials and allocating enough time for practice.

5.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented results, findings and discussions with regard to the effectiveness of the teaching of EFL listening skills in three Ethiopian universities. Chapter six presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations derived from this study.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with findings and discussions regarding the lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching EFL listening skills. Three components, namely pre-listening, while-listening, post-listening and the use of listening material were emphasised in particular as these four components could influence the teaching of EFL listening. The chapter further focussed on the challenges identified by lecturers and students in the effective teaching of EFL listening as well as their suggestions for ensuring effective teaching of EFL listening. This chapter presents the summary of the purpose, methodology, and findings of the study. Significant conclusions that can be drawn from the findings are also discussed. Finally, implications for practice, and suggestions for further research are provided.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The Ethiopian government like many other countries recognises the important role of English as a *lingua franca* in global communication and has thus adopted English as the medium of instruction from grade five onwards to higher institutions of learning. In spite of this, Ethiopian higher education students' command of the English language is not up to standard. In practice, very few students in Ethiopian universities select English as a major subject due to their poor English background. It is also highly unlikely to find mother-tongue English speakers teaching students majoring in English.

Teaching EFL listening is a complex exercise, especially for lecturers in Ethiopia where English language is introduced at grade five and the culture of English speaking is not embraced at all levels. However, different issues need to be addressed for lecturers to make any headway in teaching listening skills for EFL

students. Studies conducted in Ethiopia on the teaching of listening skills showed that students are ill equipped to listen effectively and that the teaching of English listening skills, in particular, is neglected in Ethiopian schools and higher education institutions (refer to section 1.1.2). These in turn affect students' ability in the acquisition of second or foreign language listening skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching of EFL listening skills in three selected Ethiopian universities. Using a mixed method research design, the study addressed the following six basic research questions (section 1.5):

- What is the role of listening in the effective learning of a foreign language?
- What are the best practices to teach and learn listening skills for foreign language acquisition?
- What are the current practices in the teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in selected Ethiopian universities?
- How effective do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive the teaching of EFL listening skills to be?
- What do lecturers and students at selected Ethiopian universities perceive as challenges in the effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills?
- What evidence-based recommendations can be made on the effective teaching and learning of EFL listening skills in Ethiopian universities?

The first two research questions were addressed in chapters 2 and 3 by means of a thorough review of the literature related to the teaching of EFL listening. Firstly, the study reviewed literature pertaining to the theoretical basis for listening comprehension focusing mainly on the listening process. A number of studies related to listening theories (top-down, bottom-up and integrated listening theories) and strategies that help in understanding second language listening comprehension, interactive (integrative) processing, the use of strategies (learning strategies, metacognitive strategies, listening strategies and learners' use of listening strategies), types of listening and factors affecting listening were discussed. In the third chapter literature pertaining to the teaching of listening skills within the broad

theoretical framework of communicative language teaching was discussed. The focus was on studies related to the teaching of strategies (i.e. cognitive and metacognitive strategies), listening skills and various activities that could be employed during the three listening teaching phases, namely pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. The role of listening material and best practices for the teaching of listening skills in a foreign language were also discussed.

The research methodology and methods used to analyse the data was discussed in chapter 4. A pragmatic philosophical framework was used to guide the research undertaking. The study was conducted in three universities in Ethiopia which were purposively and conveniently sampled and a mixed method research design with a sequential approach was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Data analyse was done concurrently. Instruments used to collect primary data in order to answer the last four research questions included survey questionnaires (see Appendices A and B) and interview schedules for both lecturers and students (see Appendix C and D) as well as observation checklists and note taking for classroom and laboratory sessions (see Appendix E) in the three selected universities. A hundred and fifty eight 1st and 2nd year students from the English language departments at each of the universities and 78 English language lecturers from the three universities completed the questionnaire consisting of items related to their perception of the effectiveness of the pre-, while and post-listening phases of language teaching as well as the use of listening material. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two lecturers teaching EFL listening and six students from each university. In addition to this two listening lessons (taking place in a classroom set-up as well in the language laboratory) in each university were observed.

The SPSS statistical package was used to analyse and summarise data obtained from respondents by means of the questionnaires. Analysis of the data included descriptive statistics means, standard deviations, frequency counts and percentages to summarise survey items while inferential statistics included ANOVA, and Bonferroni tests. Tables were used to summarise quantitative data from the questionnaires and observations, while interview data obtained from students and lecturers were analysed using the thematic and sub-themes approach. Respondents'

specific statements and quotes were included in the discussion of qualitative data obtained by means of interviews. The qualitative data and the observations were used for triangulation purposes and to strengthen the analysis of quantitative results. Qualitative data obtained by means of semi-structured interviews were also used to answer the two research questions related to challenges experienced by lecturers and students in the effective teaching of EFL listening and suggestions for best practices.

In chapter 5 the data obtained were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The chapter was classified into sections and the response of the four components (the pre-listening phase, the while-listening phase, the post-listening phase, and the use of listening material) that could have an influence on the effectiveness of teaching listening were analysed. Results of scale reliability tests, and analysis of variance results were presented. Analysis of data obtained from interviews and classroom observations pertaining to the four components of teaching EFL listening and challenges related to EFL instruction were also presented in chapter 5.

Biographical data obtained by means of the questionnaires revealed that most of the lecturers were male while the majority of the students were female. As part of the biographical information students were asked to rate their own ability to listen in EFL. Only a small percentage of students (10.8%) rated themselves as very good in English listening ability while 33.5% rated themselves as good. The rest of the students (55.6%) rated themselves as average or below average.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Constructivism, which is currently a widely accepted philosophical view of learning and teaching, embraces the notion that students don't just absorb information, they actively try to make sense of it and, in the process, construct meaning and understanding. The teacher's role in this process is to act as a facilitator and guide. From this point of view listening is considered as an active process constructing meaning by means of attending to and processing aural input. This idea is also

supported by information processing theories stating that when learners construct meaning they, amongst others, use inputs from what they hear.

The understanding of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' processing helps the learner to understand the contribution to comprehension in different contexts and at different levels of language proficiency. Various studies in listening comprehension have been done in order to determine which of the two processes are used by skilled and less skilled listeners. Most researchers indicate that learners with limited second language competence depend heavily upon perceptual data (bottom-up processing) and bottom-up processing skills. Researchers agree that there is a considerable degree of interdependence between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' processing (see section 2.4). The one process is not more critical than the other.

To assist learners in developing listening ability in a foreign language, learning strategies are very important. The use of strategies makes learners competent and independent. In addition to learning strategies, the learners' ability to understand the mental and emotional processes in the learning has an important effect on listening abilities. Thus, learners need to be assisted to understand the listening process.

The teaching of effective listening skills can assist learners to capitalise on the incoming language input while it helps teachers and lecturers in facilitating the teaching process. The use of the communicative approach had a marked influence on the way in which listening was taught and is still being taught. A learner-centred approach is characteristic of the communicative approach.

Different studies indicate that there are factors that need to be considered when teaching listening. These include designing clear tasks; ensuring the use of active learning strategies; intensive and extensive listening; teaching the culture of the target language and teaching listening before testing it.

6.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The questionnaires were designed to determine students' and lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the pre-, while and post-listening phases as well as on the effectiveness of the listening materials used to teach listening in English foreign language.

The majority of the lecturers had a higher positive rating of the activities used during pre-, while and post-listening stages compared to students' ratings. They perceived this phase to be either highly effective or fairly effective (64.01% effective rating responses as opposed to 18.81% rather ineffective responses). A small number of responses (17.87%) were undecided. For the while-listening activities the lecturers perceive this phase to be effective (61.42% effective rating responses as opposed to 19.46% rather ineffective responses were received). Similarly, the lecturers perceived the post-listening phase to be effective as 57.78% effective rating responses were given as opposed to 19.27% rather ineffective responses. A large percentage (22.95%) of undecided responses was received. While 39.42% of students perceived the language material used to teach listening as effective, almost the same percentage (39.14%) of ineffectiveness responses were received. 21.43% were undecided. Results indicated that there were variations between lecturers' and students' responses on the use of strategies in the pre-, while and post-listening stage as well as the use of listening materials. The variation was attributed to self-reporting data from lecturers and the differences in students' English listening ability.

Based on the ANOVA tests the study verified that biographical attributes of type of respondent (lecturer or student) and gender influenced participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the components of the teaching of listening in EFL. Results from the Bonferroni tests showed that females consistently evaluated the teaching of EFL listening skills somewhat less positive than males with females constantly evaluating the four listening components as 'somewhat effective' and males as 'fairly effective'.

Observations and semi-structured interviews were used for triangulation purposes. Information obtained by means of interview questions confirmed what was found in

the quantitative part of the study, namely that lecturers perceived the teaching of EFL listening skills (i.e. pre- while and post-listening activities and the use of listening material) more positive than students. The post-listening stage was noted by both lecturers and students as the most challenging stage due to inadequate lesson time for doing post-listening activities. On the use of listening materials, most of the lecturers stated that they tried to use a variety of materials. Most of these materials are prepared locally by the teachers in their university. The lecturers regarded the use of language laboratories as interesting to students and felt that both laboratories and lecture sessions should be equally used while teaching EFL listening skills, taking into consideration that students differ on their social backgrounds. In contrast to the lecturers' perceptions, students indicated that they did not find the use of language laboratories to teach listening of much use.

The observation carried out in the three universities showed that the use of listening material was mostly poorly done. However, the majority of the lecturers stated that they use different materials like movies, listening to radio stations, tape recorders or cassettes, read passages, listen to music, and they also read stories.

The use of bottom-up and top-down strategies were found to be used inadequately in the teaching of EFL listening skills. Bottom-up listening strategies are used when a listener builds meaning from the sounds he or she hears. Top-down listening strategies are also known as knowledge-based processing which means that learners start with their background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Some lecturers tried to implement bottom-up strategies; however, data obtained during observation sessions revealed that lecturers insufficiently implemented bottom-up strategies in the three universities and that they did not take into consideration that most students were seldom or never exposed to English native speakers at all and had very little EFL background knowledge. During observations it was found that very few lecturers asked the students to critically think about their learning, as well as predict what they expected to hear (which requires use of prior knowledge).

Findings on the effectiveness of teaching EFL listening with regard to the methods and strategies used, as well as activities provided at each listening session, were found to be generally poor. Considering that students have poor background with regard to the speaking of English, lecturers need to revisit the strategies and activities used in the three phases of listening; that is, the pre-, while, and post-listening stages, to help the students understand and remember what they learnt. Based on the findings of the literature review and the empirical investigation in the preceding discussion above, the following model for the teaching of EFL listening is presented:

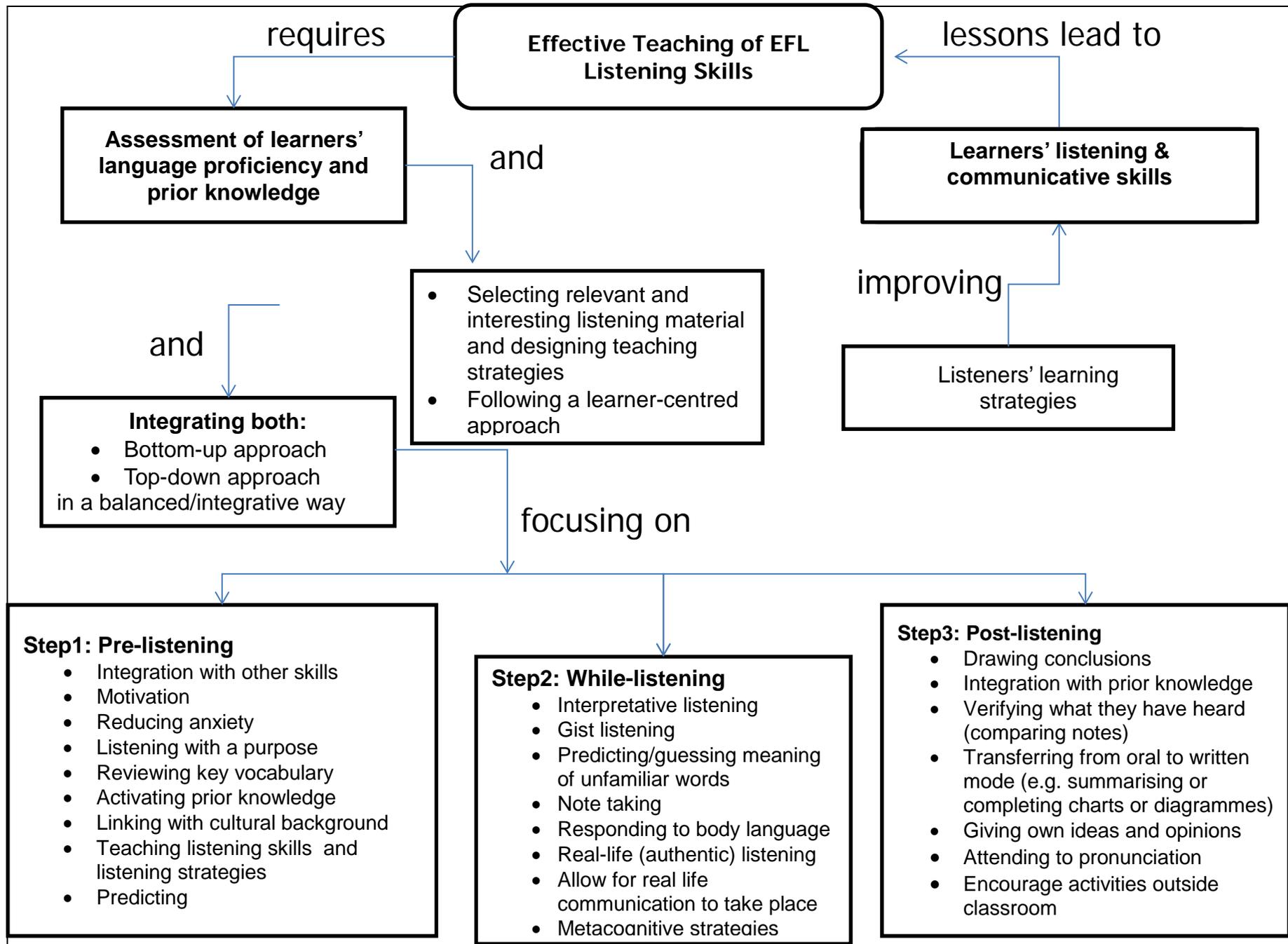


Figure 5.3: A model for effective teaching of listening skills

The model could be used in schools by teachers to teach their learners or it could also be used at university level when lecturers teach listening skills to their students. The model presented in Figure 5.3 shows that listeners' proficiency level and background information plays an important role in determining how EFL lecturers choose listening material that students would find interesting and that would appeal to both male and female students, to design appropriate instructional strategies and to plan for using a variety of teaching activities, methods and tasks for a English foreign language listening lesson. Listening comprehension could prove to be difficult if students are plunged into listening directly; thus, when designing instructional strategies, lecturers need to take the theory of bottom-up and top-down processing of information into consideration by, for example, focusing on linguistic information such as sounds, words, clauses and sentences of a passage (bottom-up processing) and relating that information to a wider communicative context (knowledge-based or top-down processing).

In EFL listening classrooms or language laboratories, lecturers and teachers should ensure a balanced approach in the use of both bottom-up and top-down strategies in the listening comprehension process (Rost, 2002:18-20; Richards, 2008:10; Cross, 2009:153; Lotfi, et al., 2012:2; Vandergrift, 2013:1). The extent to which teachers help learners to balance the use of the two approaches depends on learners' familiarity with the topic, content and the type of text (listening passage), and the purpose of listening (Richards, 2008:10).

Typical listening activities, tasks and listening materials that EFL lecturers design or use should follow a pedagogical sequence that includes pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening phases (Rost, 2002:18-20; Richards, 2008:10; Hu, 2012:283-284; Vandergrift, 2013:1.) The purpose of this sequence relate to schema theory (Hu, 2012:283-284) to effectively help improve the teaching of English listening.

The selection of listening passages and tasks employed during the three phases of listening should be motivating and encouraging enough for listeners to actively use individual listening strategies (Rost, 2002:20). Active use of listening strategies

engagement through practicing their English listening skills either in the classroom or outside not only improves students' listening skills and mastery of the English language, but also helps them to build their self-confidence, to improve their critical thinking and it enhances EFL communicative skills (Wu, 2010:140). Continuous monitoring of the learning process for EFL students provides useful feedback which could be used to inform the planning process leading to effectiveness in the teaching of EFL listening skills.

From the data obtained by means of two of the interview questions, challenges as well as suggestions for good practices to teach listening in EFL emerged. A number of challenges that affect the teaching of EFL listening in relation to lecturers, students and the institutions were identified.

As far as challenges related to the teaching of EFL listening skills, data obtained from students and lecturers could be categorised into three main themes with a number of sub-themes. The main themes identified were lecturer, student and institution-related factors. Lecturers' competence when the course was offered was highlighted as a key issue, that is, some lecturers were inaudible and inconsistent in the pronunciation of words and styles of speaking. Some of the challenges identified by the lecturers include lack of sufficient time to cover the content and to practice in the laboratory, lack of sufficient skills to teach EFL listening (methodology), and lecturers who are not up-date with regard to the teaching of EFL listening skills. This relates to accents and pronunciation, and styles of speaking in the classroom. Challenges experienced by students include their limited exposure to the English language and in particular to native English speakers, their consequent limited ability to listen properly to spoken English and the lack of opportunities in the lower grades to practice the language and to build their listening skills. Lack of enough prior knowledge about the language made it difficult for EFL lecturers to motivate students to acquire the culture of listening for specific information during laboratory sessions. Students also found it challenging that they had not developed a culture of listening to English media such as BBC, CNN and Aljazeera.

At the institutional level, issues such as lack of good working equipment like video recorders and computers and a lack of listening and reading material in the library

and limited up to date and interesting listening materials were mentioned as challenges to effective teaching of EFL listening. Time allocation for EFL listening lessons and effective management of the language laboratories was noted by both teachers and students as problematic. Time allotment and proper scheduling of EFL listening lessons were mentioned as essential for effective coverage of the course and in assisting students to acquire the language. The absence of this important aspect was experienced as challenging.

One of the questions students and lecturers had to answer during the interviews dealt with what they would regard as good listening teaching practices. Good practices that were identified as important while teaching EFL listening were grouped into three themes, namely lecturer, student and institution-related factors.

As far as lecturers are concerned, an understanding of students' background in order to be able to prepare classroom and laboratory activities that would take into consideration the students' listening ability and familiarity with the English language was regarded as good EFL listening teaching practice. Using bottom-up strategies to help beginner students struggling with the pronunciation of words, new vocabularies, and exposure to native speakers of English language on the one hand and using top-down strategies as students become more self-directed in language acquisition on the other hand was considered as good listening teaching practice.

A number of key practices that lecturers should embrace to ensure effective teaching of EFL listening were mentioned by the participants during the interviews. Being knowledgeable in the field and continuously updating their English language skills as well as their knowledge and skills with regard to the teaching of English as a foreign language was one of the key practices that was suggested. This would include seeking opportunities that provide training for EFL lecturers and laboratory assistants. Being creative by, for example, using the internet to find listening material (such as YouTube material or English songs) that students would find interesting and engaging and that would help them to practice their listening skills were also regarded as important. Designing tasks that would keep students engaged and expect them to engage in English language listening activities, not just inside but also outside their classroom, as well as assigning activities that would require

students to listen to different media to help them improve their listening skills were also regarded as good practices for teaching EFL listening. Making use of both laboratories and classroom teaching of EFL listening skills and allowing them enough time to practice listening skills and seeking departmental support to acquire up-to-date equipment and ensuring a conducive environment for teaching listening skills were further seen as aspects that could ensure effective teaching of listening.

Good practices that were suggested for students were to make an effort to practice listening and speaking in English with friends, classmates and other community members outside the classroom. Listening to different English media such as English radio programmes, English music and English TV programmes as far as possible were considered as good practice that would sharpen students' listening skills. Building a good vocabulary repertoire to ensure that learners understand and remember when they are listening to English conversations or listening passages were further regarded as good practice.

At the institutional level the provision of continuous training opportunities to assist lecturers and laboratory technicians to update their skills were considered as good practice that would ensure improved teaching and learning of listening skills. On the national level good practice would include the development of curricula that would help students to practice their English listening skills by means of the use of different media from an early stage and at all levels of English language teaching and providing for enough time in the curriculum to attend to the teaching of EFL listening skills. The provision of relevant material and up-to-date equipment as well as ensuring that listening lessons - especially those that take place in language laboratories - are presented in a quiet environment were also regarded as good practice that would improve EFL listening skills.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study and particularly the model for the effective teaching of listening skills (see Figure 5.3) the following recommendations are made with regard to the teaching and learning of listening in EFL. The recommendations

pertain to the lecturers, students, institutions of higher education, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and schools.

6.5.1 Recommendations for lecturers

With regard to lecturers a number of issues should be addressed. Lecturers need to:

- understand students' background and current knowledge of English,
- do an analysis of students' listening abilities and their backgrounds in EFL before the teaching of listening commences,
- plan the classroom and laboratory activities based on students' listening abilities in EFL and their familiarity with the language,
- continuously update their knowledge and skills with regard to the teaching of EFL and especially with regard to the teaching of listening in EFL,
- select listening material (listening passages) that would be interesting and appealing to both male and female students,
- be specifically trained to use bottom-up and top-down strategies correctly,
- continuously revisit the strategies and activities used in the three phases of listening, that is the pre-, while and post-listening phases to help the students understand and improve their English language skills,
- be well acquainted with the important issue of preparing students for listening activities by activating their pre-knowledge,
- pay special attention to their own pronunciation in English and expose students to the correct pronunciation that is used in videos or other forms of media that are used in the classroom,
- consider that post-listening activities are more than testing what students can remember and that activities should include reflection and checking students' comprehension,
- acquaint themselves with internet sites about the teaching of listening in a foreign language,
- know that both male and female students prefer that authentic materials be used in the classroom,
- be creative by using the internet to prepare materials that are engaging and motivating to students when they are practicing listening in EFL,

- be well informed about new research in the teaching of listening in a foreign language,
- know that female students are more critical of listening activities during the three phases of listening than the male students,
- provide enough time during listening activities to allow students to internalise what they have been listening to,
- design tasks that are motivating to students to use and develop their listening skills, and
- motivate students to use and develop their listening skills both inside and outside their classrooms.

6.5.2 Recommendations for students

As far as students are concerned the following recommendations are made. Students should:

- make an effort to practice listening and speaking English language outside classroom with friends, classmates and other members of the community,
- listen to different media on their own to sharpen their listening skills,
- make it their concern to build a repertoire of vocabularies to help them understand and remember what they have learnt,
- practice the listening texts in the language lab during their free times,
- record their own voices and compare theirs with the recorded cassettes in the lab so as to differentiate between the two, and
- have a positive attitude towards their ability and learning listening skills.

6.5.3 Recommendations for universities and other institutions of higher education

At the institutions' level it is recommended that:

- nationally, institutions should design ways to help students practice English listening through different media at all levels,

- provide opportunities for training to help lectures and laboratory technicians get up-to date information and skills related to the teaching of listening,
- provide relevant materials and up-to date equipment to facilitate course delivery,
- ensure easy access to internet sites, You Tube and other forms of technology where good examples of spoken English can be found in order for students to listen to well spoken English, and
- ensure courses that require a quiet environment, in particular, EFL laboratories that are located in areas that are free from noise and other interference.

6.5.4 Recommendations for the Ethiopian Ministry of Education

From the study certain recommendations that pertain to the Ethiopian Department of Education arose. These recommendations include the following:

- designing/preparing supportive teaching materials for all universities,
- frequent short and long term trainings for the lecturers,
- allocating uniform and enough time for the course though out the universities, and
- placing more emphasis on primary and secondary level language teaching, especially the teaching of EFL listening skills.

6.5.5 Recommendations for schools

It is important that teachers in schools are also informed about the findings of the research. Listening skills in EFL are first taught at school and it is thus recommended that teachers should be informed about the findings that arose from the research. It is of the utmost importance that listening teaching are emphasised at school level and that effective teaching of listening is ensured.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on only three universities; it would be beneficial to use more universities to get a larger sample that can allow for generalisation of results within the region.

Due to scarcity of resources, both quantitative and qualitative data collection were done sequentially and analysed concurrently. This study provided results that were based on aggregated data for lecturers and students. However, there is a need to consider the uniqueness of each university and comparisons could be made among the universities to document key elements that lead to success or those which hinder effectiveness of teaching EFL listening.

The research was done in government universities only. It is recommended the same study or comparing the effectiveness of teaching listening skills in private and government universities be undertaken.

6.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main aim of the research project was to assess the effectiveness of teaching of EFL listening skills as perceived by lecturers and students and how these perceptions can be used to improve the teaching of listening in Ethiopian universities.

It is hoped that this study has made a contribution to the body of knowledge on the teaching of listening and that the implementation of the recommendations will ensure more effective teaching of EFL listening skills in Ethiopian universities. The most important contribution of this study lies in the recommendations that were made. If these recommendations are implemented, it might help to improve the teaching of English foreign language listening skills in all Ethiopian educational institutions. This is important, but also challenging as can be seen by the following quote by Vandergrift and Goh (2009:407-408) is taken in consideration: "In spite of some recent advances, listening remains the least understood of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), making teaching and assessment complex

and challenging”. Improving students English foreign language listening skills will ultimately contribute to better English language proficiency of Ethiopian people.

This research undertaking was of personal value for me. Not only did it enhanced my knowledge of research methodology, but also improved my questioning and probing abilities. On top of that the study provided me with the knowledge how students learn EFL listening skills and how to effectively teach EFL listening skills. The major ‘take-home’ was that it reinforced my belief that students can improve their EFL listening skills when properly guided and assisted.

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APPENDIX A

LECTURER QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS TO ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS AT THREE ETHIOPIAN UNIVERSITIES

Dear Sir/Madam

The effectiveness of teaching English foreign language listening skills as perceived by lecturers and students at three Ethiopian universities

For the fulfilment of my doctoral study in Didactics at the University of South Africa, I am conducting a research study to investigate the perceived effectiveness of teaching listening skills to English foreign language students at three Ethiopian universities. As part of my study, I am now carrying out a survey to obtain information from university lecturers on their experiences with regard to the teaching of listening skills to students studying English as a foreign language.

I would be most grateful if you could assist me in my research by taking time to complete the questionnaire. Your response will assist me in determining how English Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers perceive the effect of their listening teaching lessons and how it compares with students' perceptions. It is hoped that the outcome of this research project will be of benefit in the improvement of the teaching and learning of English Foreign Language listening skills.

Your responses will be treated with confidentiality. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link participants to the study. Hard copies of the completed questionnaires will be stored in a secure place for three years before they will be destroyed. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Apart from completing my doctoral study, I will also write an article on the results of the research project. A copy of this article would be e-mailed to you on request. In addition, the thesis will be available on the web.

If you have any questions and/or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at **0911336007** at any time.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Edaso Mulu Genu

QUESTIONNAIRE TO LECTURERS

Purpose: This questionnaire is designed to gather data on lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching of listening skills to students studying English as a foreign language. The data to be collected through the questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only. Information that you provide will be treated as confidential.

Guidelines:

- Please follow the instructions carefully.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- When you are finished please hand the questionnaire back to the researcher or the assistant
- There are no right or wrong answers – please just give your honest opinion.
- You do not have to write your name or identify yourself in any way.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation!

Instruction: Please show your answer by circling the appropriate number on the right of each of the items.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC DATA

(FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)

			V1-3
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1. Gender

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your gender.

Gender		For office use only
Male	1	V4
Female	2	

2. Years of experience

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your experience in teaching listening skills to **university students**.

Years of experience		For office use only
1-10	1	V5
11-20	2	
21-30	3	
31 plus	4	

3. Age

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your age.

Age approximation		For office use only
25-35	1	V6
36-45	2	
46-56	3	
57 plus	4	

4. Qualifications

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your **highest** completed qualification.

Qualifications		For office use only
Bachelor degree	1	V7
Masters' degree	2	
Doctoral degree	3	

5. Number of students in your class

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate the average number of students in your class.

Years of experience		For office use only
Less than 40	1	V8
41-50	2	
51-60	3	
More than 60	4	

SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF EFL LISTENING SKILLS

Instruction: Each of the following items, focus on various aspects that could be applicable to the effective teaching of EFL listening skills. Each of the statements is accompanied by a 5 point scale. The key to each of the numbers is shown in the table below.

Keys: 1= *Highly effective*; 2= *Fairly effective*; 3= *Somewhat effective*; 4= *Not very effective*; 5= *Ineffective*

Please note: There are no right or wrong answers!

Please indicate how effective you regard each of the following aspects (items) for the teaching of English Foreign Language listening:

No	ITEMS	SCALE					For office use only
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Integrating the teaching of EFL listening skills with the teaching of reading, writing and speaking.	1	2	3	4	5	V9
2	Letting students think about the listening processes they are going to follow.	1	2	3	4	5	V10
3	Explaining to students what the purpose of the listening activity is before letting them listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V11
4	Implementing activities to stimulate students' background knowledge before letting them listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V12
5	Using EFL listening passages in which students would be interested.	1	2	3	4	5	V13
6	Using EFL listening passages which are a bit above learners' current level of understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	V14
7	Ensuring that students do not feel anxious during EFL listening lessons before letting them listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V15
8	Announcing the title/topic of the listening passage and letting students predict what the text may be about.	1	2	3	4	5	V16
9	Explaining unfamiliar key words and phrases that students would come across in the listening passage before letting them listen.	1	2	3	4	5	V17
10	Expecting students to listen for specific information, such as main and supporting ideas while listening to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V18
11	Letting students distinguish between facts and opinions while listening to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V19
12	Letting students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases that they come across in the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V20
13	Letting students to interpret and evaluate the tone of the message in the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V21
14	Letting students identify and interpret emotive and manipulative language used in the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V22
15	Letting students practice listening in simulated real-life situations (e.g. turn taking in conversations).	1	2	3	4	5	V23
16	Letting students respond to gestures, eye contact and body language while listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V24
17	Teaching students different types of listening skills (e.g. analytical, critical listening, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	V25

	before letting them listen to the listening passage.						
18	Letting students take notes while listening	1	2	3	4	5	V26
19	Explicitly teaching different listening strategies before letting students listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V27
20	Teaching students how to draw conclusions based on the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V28
21	Letting students integrate new information with their prior knowledge after they have listened to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V29
22	Expecting students to give their own opinion on the topic dealt with in the listening passage after listening to the passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V30
23	Letting students critically evaluate the listening passage afterwards.	1	2	3	4	5	V31
24	Letting students review their notes taken while listening by comparing their notes with those of other students.	1	2	3	4	5	V32
25	Letting students transfer information from oral to written mode (e.g. use information to label a diagramme).	1	2	3	4	5	V33
26	Asking questions to determine what students can remember from the listening text.	1	2	3	4	5	V34
27	Expecting students to pronounce the words they have heard as closely as possible to the passage they listened to on the tape recorder.	1	2	3	4	5	V35
28	Using the language laboratory to teach EFL listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5	V36
29	Letting students listen to mother tongue English speakers	1	2	3	4	5	V37
30	Making use of authentic listening passages (i.e. it should be real-life listening)	1	2	3	4	5	V38
31	Ensuring beforehand that students are motivated to listen effectively to the listening passage in English.	1	2	3	4	5	V39
32	Letting students listen for the gist of the message, instead of merely trying to remember information.	1	2	3	4	5	V40
33	Letting students communicate with each other while teaching EFL listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V41
34	Having the right equipment in the language laboratory.	1	2	3	4	5	V42
35	Making use of listening material such as songs, narratives and dialogues to teach listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V43
36	Making use of a variety of methods when teaching listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V44

APPENDIX B

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS TO ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS AT THREE ETHIOPIAN UNIVERSITIES

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If you have any questions and/or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at **0911336007** at anytime.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

EdasoMulu Genu

QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENTS

Purpose: This questionnaire is designed to gather data on lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching of listening skills to students studying English as a foreign language. The data to be collected through the questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only. Information that you provide will be treated as confidential.

Guidelines:

- Please follow the instructions carefully.
- Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- When you are finished please hand the questionnaire back to the researcher or the assistant
- There are no right or wrong answers – please just give your *honest* opinion.
- *You do not have to write your name or identify yourself in any way.*

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation!

Instruction: Please show your answer by circling the appropriate number on the right of each of the items.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC DATA

(FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)

			V1-3
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1. Gender

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your gender.

Gender		For office use only
Male	1	V4
Female	2	

2. Study year

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your year of study.

Years of study		For office use only
1 st year	1	V5
2 nd year	2	

3. Age

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate your age.

Age approximation		For office use only
18 years	1	V6
19 years	2	
20 years	3	
21 years and older	4	

4. Your ability to listen in English

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate how you rate your ability to listen in English.

Ability to listen in English		For office use only
Very good	1	V7
Good	2	
Average	3	
Poor	4	
Very poor	5	

5. Number of students in your class

Encircle the number provided in the blocks to indicate the average number of students in your class.

Years of experience		For office use only
Less than 40	1	V8
41-50	2	
More than 51	4	

SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF EFL LISTENING SKILLS

Instruction: Each of the following items, focus on various aspects that could be applicable to the effective learning of EFL listening skills. Each of the statements is accompanied by a 5 point scale. The key to each of the numbers is shown in the table below.

Keys: 1= Highly effective; 2= Fairly effective; 3= Somewhat effective; 4=Not very effective; 5=Ineffective

Please note: There are no right or wrong answers!

Please indicate how effective you regard each of the following aspects (items) for the effective learning of listening skills in English Foreign Language:

No	ITEMS	SCALE					For office use only
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Integrating EFL listening skills with reading, writing and speaking.	1	2	3	4	5	V9
2	The lecturer let me think about the listening processes I am going to follow.	1	2	3	4	5	V10
3	The lecturer explains the purpose of the listening activity to me before expecting me to listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V11
4	The implementing of activities to stimulate my background knowledge before letting me listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V12
5	Listening to EFL listening passages in which I am interested.	1	2	3	4	5	V13
6	Listening to listening passages which are a bit above my current level of understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	V14
7	Not feeling anxious while having to listen during EFL listening lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	V15
8	Providing me with the title/topic of the listening passage and letting me predict what the listening passage may be about.	1	2	3	4	5	V16
9	The explanation of unfamiliar key words and phrases that I would come across in the listening passage before letting me listen to the passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V17
10	Expecting me to listen for specific information, such as main and supporting ideas in the listening passage while listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V18
11	Letting me distinguish between facts and opinions in the listening passage while listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V19
12	Letting me guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases that I come across in the listening passage while listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V20
13	Expecting me to interpret and evaluate the tone of the message in the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V21
14	Expecting me to identify and interpret emotive and manipulative language used in the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V22
15	Practicing listening in simulated real-life situations (e.g. turn taking in conversations).	1	2	3	4	5	V23
16	Responding to gestures, eye contact and body language while listening to a listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V24
17	Having different types of listening skills (e.g. analytical, critical listening, etc.) explained to me before expecting me to listen to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V25
18	Taking notes while listening	1	2	3	4	5	V26
19	Having different types of listening strategies that I need to employ while listening being explained to me beforehand.	1	2	3	4	5	V27

20	Letting me draw conclusions based on the listening passage that I have listened to.	1	2	3	4	5	V28
21	Integrating new information with my prior knowledge after I have listened to the listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V29
22	Expressing my own opinion on the topic dealt with in the listening passage after listening to the passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V30
23	Critically evaluating the listening text that I have listened to.	1	2	3	4	5	V31
24	Reviewing my notes after the listening lesson by comparing my notes with those of other students.	1	2	3	4	5	V32
25	Transferring information from oral to written mode (e.g. using information to label a diagramme) after listening to a listening passage.	1	2	3	4	5	V33
26	Answering questions to determine what I can remember from the listening text.	1	2	3	4	5	V34
27	Pronouncing the words I have heard as closely as possible to the way they were pronounced in the listening passage that I have heard on the tape recorder.	1	2	3	4	5	V35
28	Learning to listen in the language laboratory.	1	2	3	4	5	V36
29	Listening to mother tongue English speakers.	1	2	3	4	5	V37
30	Listening to authentic listening passages (i.e. listening that typically is expected in real-life listening situations).	1	2	3	4	5	V38
31	Being motivated by my lecturer to listen effectively before the commencement of the listening activity.	1	2	3	4	5	V39
32	Listening for the gist of the message while listening, instead of trying to remember information.	1	2	3	4	5	V40
33	Communicating with fellow students when learning to listen.	1	2	3	4	5	V41
34	Having the right equipment available in the language laboratory.	1	2	3	4	5	V42
35	Learning EF listening skills by means of listening material such as songs, narratives and dialogues.	1	2	3	4	5	V43
36	Learning to listen by means of a variety of methods used by the lecturer when teaching listening.	1	2	3	4	5	V44

Thank you for your co-operation!

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS

1. What are the major challenges you face when teaching listening skills to EFL learners?
2. What do you think are the most important challenges that students face during the teaching of listening skills?
3. What are the most important aspects that one should keep in mind when teaching listening to EFL learners?
4. What kind of activities do you use most when teaching listening to EFL students?
5. How do you go about to activate learners' prior knowledge in order to facilitate comprehension of the message?
6. How do you think the teaching of listening skills to EFL students can be improved?
7. Do you think learners benefit more from learning to listen in the language laboratory than from listening skills taught by lecturers? Please explain your answer.
8. Is there anything else about the teaching of EFL listening that you would like to share with me?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

1. What are the major challenges you face in the EFL listening class?
2. What kind of activities used by your lecturer to teach listening skills, do you find the most beneficial?
3. Please describe a typical EFL listening lesson.
4. What listening strategies did your lecturer teach you?
5. What types of listening skills did your lecturer teach you?
6. To what extent do you think consciously about the strategies you follow when learning to listen in EFL?
7. What suggestions do you have for improving the teaching of listening skills?
8. To what extent does the lecturer take your existing knowledge into consideration when teaching listening skills?
9. How does the lecturer prepare you for the listening activity? Is the preparation sufficient?
10. Is there anything else about the teaching and learning of EFL listening that you would like to share with me?

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Direction: in the following numerical rating, indicate the degree to which the listening skills lesson conducted in the classroom/laboratory. I can use the numbers represent the following values: 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = average, 2 = poor and 1 = very poor

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
1	The lecturer integrates the teaching of EFL listening skills with the teaching of reading, writing and speaking before starting with the listening passage.						
2	The lecturer expects students to think about the listening process they are going to follow before commencing with the listening passage.						
3	The purpose of the listening activity is explained beforehand.						
4	Activities that stimulate students' background knowledge are implemented before the students listen to the listening passage.						

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
5	The students are interested in the listening passages that were chosen to teach EFL listening.						
6	The listening passages used are somewhat above students' level of understanding.						
7	The lecturer ensures beforehand that students are relaxed/not anxious during EFL listening lessons.						
8	The lecturer announces the title/topic of the listening passage and students get the opportunity to predict what the text may be about.						
9	Unfamiliar key words and phrases that students would come across in the listening passage are explained before letting them listen.						
10	Students are expected to listen for specific information, such as main and supporting ideas in the listening passage.						

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
11	Students get a chance to distinguish between facts and opinions while listening to the listening passage.						
12	Students have to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases from the listening passage.						
13	Students are requested to interpret and evaluate the tone of the message (e.g. aggressive) while listening to the listening passage.						
14	Students are requested to identify and interpret emotive and manipulative language used in the listening passage.						
15	Students get the opportunity to practice listening in simulated real-life situations (e.g. turn taking in conversations).						
16	Students have to respond to gestures, eye contact and body language while listening.						

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
17	Students are taught different types of listening skills (e.g. analytical, critical listening, etc) before they start listening to the listening passage.						
18	Students have to take notes while listening.						
19	Different listening strategies are taught before expecting students to listen to the listening passage.						
20	Students are expected to draw conclusions based on the information they heard in the listening passage.						
21	After listening to the listening passage, students are given activities to assist them to integrate new information with their prior knowledge.						
22	Students are expected to express their own opinion on the topic dealt with in the listening passage.						
23	Students are expected to critically evaluate the passage after listening.						

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
24	Students get chance to review their notes by comparing their notes with those of other students after listening to the passage.						
25	Students are requested to transfer information from oral to written mode (e.g. use information heard in the listening passage to label a diagramme).						
26	Students have to answer questions to determine what they can remember from the listening passage (knowledge questions).						
27	Students are requested to pronounce the words as closely as possible to the way they were pronounced in the passage they listened to on the tape recorder.						
28	Language laboratory was used effectively to teach EFL listening skills.						
29	Students listen to mother tongue English speakers through tape recorder						

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
30	Authentic listening passages (i.e. real-life type of listening, not just reading a passage and expecting students to listen) are used.						
31	Students are motivated to listen effectively in EFL (the lecturer ensured this before letting them listen to the listening passage).						
32	Students are expected to listen for the gist of the message portrayed in the listening passage, instead of merely trying to remember information.						
33	Students communicate with each other during the teaching of EFL listening.						
34	The equipment in the language laboratory is adequate and in working condition.						
35	Different activities and listening material such as songs, narratives and dialogues are used to teach listening.						

No	Observation items	1	2	3	4	5	Comments/Notes
36	A variety of methods are used during the teaching of listening.						

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW/OBSERVATION CONSENT FORM

I the undersigned voluntarily agree to participate in the interview on the effectiveness of teaching English foreign language listening skills or to be observed during a listening lesson in the classroom or in the laboratory. I have been informed and understand that the purpose of this study is to hold an individual interview to assess the effectiveness of teaching listening skills to English foreign language students and to observe how teaching of listening skills take place in the classroom and the language laboratory.

I understand my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that if I wish to withdraw from this study or to leave, I may do so at any-time and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from this study, I understand that this will have no effect on my relationship with the University or my study. I also understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by the law, and that my name in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher and the University. I understand that the study involves an individual interview that lasts 1 to 1:30 hours or less, which will be audio taped. I also understand that if the researcher decides to reuse the audiotapes for training purposes in the future the researcher will contact me prior to their use. I also understand that I will be observed in a classroom or language laboratory setup.

None of my experiences, evaluation or thoughts will be shared to anyone rather than the purpose mentioned and the information that I provide during the interview will be grouped with answers from other people so that I cannot be identified.

Declaration

I have read and understood this information and I agree to take part in the study.

Participant's Signature

Today's Date

APPENDIX G
ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE