

Investigating the Role of Literary Texts in Teaching Listening Skill: The Case of Grade 10 Students of Hasasa Secondary School

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the role of literary texts in teaching listening skill and find out an actual practice of grade 10 Hassasa Secondary School students in English language class of listening lessons. To achieve the objective quasi-experimental research design was employed for this study. The researchers utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods. Among the population of 960 grade 10 students, 96 students were selected as sample using systematic random sampling technique. In addition to this, six English language teachers who have been teaching in grade 10 also involved in the study using comprehensive sampling technique. Test, questionnaire, interview and textbook analysis were used as data collection instruments. Listening tests were the major tool in the study. Both experimental and controlled group students were given pre and posttests. The result of the post-test indicated that the performance of students in the experimental group was found to be statistically significant in the listening skill. Furthermore, the result of the questionnaire showed that the students have positive attitudes towards the use of literary texts in the listening activities. Moreover, the interview of teachers showed that teachers failed to manage the literary texts in teaching listening using the appropriate procedure. At the end, the analyses of textbook indicated that the coverage of skills in English textbook for grade 10 in literary texts focused more on developing reading and speaking skills rather than listening. Finally, it is recommended that literary texts enhance students listening skill in teaching English language. Teachers should increase students listening skill by using more literary texts in listening lessons and students should also engage themselves actively in the discussion to boost their listening skill.

Keywords: literary text, listening skill, experimental, controlled, tests

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Introduction

Background of the Study

The world is becoming global village; the English language appears to be suitable for international communication and it has become the universal language. By having good English language skills, it will be easier for humans to adapt to world developments and get broader information. English is one of the valid languages that can be understood by everyone around the world. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology and various motivational techniques in schools.

According to McKay (1982, 2001), Widdowson (1979) and Maley (2001), Rixon (1986), Robson (1989) and Rubin (1988) literature will play a role in developing all language skills due to the fact that it will promote knowledge about language, providing wide range of vocabulary usage and complex syntax. Literature provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of text. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students also become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of that potential themselves.

Collie and Slater (1987) stated that as there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. In addition to these four main reasons, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the class room context. Literature is authentic material. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts (i.e.travel timetables, city plans, forms, and pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles) are included with in recently developed course materials. Thus, in a classroom context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life /real life like settings.

Teachers can provide their students' with listening tasks that require learners to make an inference or guess the meaning of what they heard. They should also give purpose for the students in pre, while and post listening phases. Moreover, EFL teachers should adopt a dynamic, student-centered approach toward comprehension of listening tasks using literary work extracts.

Lazar (1993: 19) said that "Literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations." This is because literary texts are often rich in multiple levels of meaning and demand that the readers/ learner is actively involved in testing act' the unstated implication and assumptions of the text. In addition, McRae (1997) and Jalongo (1995) the use of literature in English language teaching and inclusion of literary texts foster the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. It is found that literary text provide wide scope to explore multidimensional use of the language if literary texts re well represented in textbook of English. To attain this, due consideration should be given for selecting literary texts for language teaching.

Haregewain (2008) on her study clarified that in Ethiopia, English language plays a significant role in the country's educational system especially, at the secondary and territory levels, English are a key to all subjects. This means that students coming to study at secondary schools and universities should have the necessary language skills in English in order to successfully accomplish the intended academic task. The position of English in secondary school has a double role to play that is, English as the language of instruction for all subjects except students' local languages.

Among the four macro language skills, listening is the first language skill that a baby acquires (Hoag, 1996; Holden, 2004). In the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language, the important role of listening is also recognized besides, facilitating the development of other language skills. Stephens and Brown (2000) and Zyngier (194) suggest that literary texts create interest and curiosity among students and provide students with a heightened involvement with literature.

Yitagesu (2017) deals with investigating the role of literary texts in developing students reading comprehension skill related to short stories. He recommended teachers should select literary texts and develop tasks that fit with level of students to teach reading skill through literature. Furthermore, Muluken (2008) also focused on the practice of teaching listening skill. And he forwarded that teachers should implement procedures and techniques of teaching listening proposed in the text book.

Therefore, the current study attempt to investigate the actual role of using literary texts in teaching listening skill and thereby to fill the gaps that cannot be addressed by other researchers mentioned so far.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of literary texts in teaching listening skill at grade 10 by focusing on students of Hasasa Secondary school. To achieve the general objective the following specific objectives were designed. These are:

1. To assess if literary texts enhance students' listening skill in teaching English language.
2. To examine the techniques used to teach listening skill with the help of literary texts.
3. To check the extent literary texts included in the textbook for teaching listening skill.

Significance of the Study

Teaching English language through literature is helpful to teach the language in a better way, by using extracts from short stories, poetries, novels and play. The study attempted to provide practical information for the field of teaching listening skill in English language using literary texts. Both students and teachers will get benefit for achieve the educational outcomes properly. Teachers and students also develop the habit of reading various genres of literature and utilize them in their language classroom. Doing this significantly boost their development of integrated language skills like reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and other aspects of language.

In addition, teachers can understand their students' interest and motivation towards using literary texts in teaching listening skill. It may also draw the attention of syllabus designers and materials writers about the importance of literary texts that enables students to raise their participation in the classroom.

Research Design and Methodology

According to Creswell (2007) research design is the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way. In doing this the research will ensure addressing the problem effectively. Hence, Quasi-Experiment research design was employed in this study. As the nature of study, the researchers would like practically to improve students' listening skill and helps to establish a systematic and logical association between manipulated factors and observed effects.

Mixed research approach (both qualitative and quantitative) was used in collecting as well as in analyzing the data. The use of mixed method provides a broader spectrum of ways to better understand complex research

problems in different contexts than could be done through either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone. The readers also get advantages of understanding vividly the issues.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The populations of the study were 960 students and 6 teachers who were learning and teaching English language for grade 10 in Hasasa Secondary School respectively. The researchers believe as they provide relevant data for the study about the role of literary texts in teaching English language listening skill. From these total population 10% (96) students were involved in the study using simple random sampling technique. On the other hand, all six teachers were taken using comprehensive sampling techniques since their number is manageable.

To achieve the objectives of the study, four instruments of data collection were utilized. Namely, test, questionnaire, interview and document analysis. The researchers carefully considered the review of related literature and objectives of the study to prepare the items in each instruments.

The pre and posttests as well as the listening text activities were prepared by taking students textbook and teachers guide for cross referencing besides considering various materials on the principles and procedures to be emphasized. In the same way the preparation of questionnaire and interview guideline were related to the research questions to be addressed within the study.

The validity and reliability of the instruments were checked before the collection of data. The data collected from teachers and students with the help of the four instruments were discussed and triangulated to show the results vividly.

Results and Discussion

Ten different listening texts/activities from different genres of literature (poem, short story, and novel) were included to use with the experimental group. The selection, grading and sequencing of the activities were given appropriate place to maintain progressive development in the level of difficulties of the listening texts/activities.

The researchers have made in-depth analysis on the data collected using the four different instruments as much as possible. This has been done after ten weeks of teaching the experimental group with the prepared material. The major points are presented below.

Table 1 Pretest Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		S.D	Variance
						S.D Error		
Pre-test control group	48	10	18	28	22	0.58	3.9	15
Pre-test experimental group	48	12	18	30	23	0.67	4.63	21.4
Valid N	48							

As it can be seen from the above table, the maximum score for control group was 28 and maximum score for experimental group was 30. As the result, the mean score for the control group was 22 and the mean score for the experimental group was 23. The descriptive statistics shows that the two groups have no significant difference in their pre- test scores.

Table 2 Posttest Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		S.D	Variance
						S.D Error		
Pre-test control group	48	10	18	28	22	0.66	4.53	20.5
Pre-test experimental group	48	13	25	38	32	0.7	4.7	22
Valid N	48							

As it is indicated in the table above, the mean result of the control group is 22 and for the experimental group 32. There is a significant difference in result between the groups which have learned listening skill through literary texts (experimental group) and the one who learnt with conventional method (control group). This means the result of the experimental group is better than that of the control group. Therefore, the researchers are confident enough to say that teaching English language through literary texts are the ways to develop listening skill of students.

On the other hand, the interview made with the teachers indicated that the majority of the teachers did not present the listening lesson on the student's textbook. As a reason they have mentioned that most of the listening lessons are non-literary text with long sentence structure, unfamiliar topic and which are boring for the students. As a matter of fact they usually jumped over some these lessons. The researchers also understood as the teachers did not properly implement phases of teaching listening skill like pre, while and post.

Student textbook and teachers guide analysis showed us there are different extracts from novel, short story and poem. But teachers did not use different techniques to implement them in the classroom while teaching listening skill. While they are teaching very few of them they focus only on the gist of the listening text by ignoring sub-skills of listening which assist the students to internalize the whole listening text. They did not

allow the students to work in group and pair to share their experiences and get constructive feedback from one another.

Furthermore, the researchers identified from the questionnaire filled by the students in experimental group as they are benefited from the use of different extracts in ten weeks' time and enhanced their listening skill. This can be clearly seen from the post test results too.

In general from the four tools used to collect data the researchers understand as teachers' effort to teach listening skills in general and the use of literary text and various techniques are rare. As a result the students are weak in comprehending listening texts. On the contrary, the students who were taught using literary texts for ten week showed significant change in their overall listening skill. Thus, the use of literary text extracts to teach listening skill is very important.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The summary of the major findings from the test result showed that the students in the experimental group made statically significant difference in the post test result in comparison to controlled group. From this it can be concluded that literary texts enhance students listening skill. Besides, as it can be seen from the questionnaire responses, the majority of the students have a positive response towards literary texts applied. Since teachers did not use various techniques of teaching and did not apply phases of teaching listening skills students did not get the required knowledge and skill to manage listening activities.

Although there are certain literary extracts are there in the students textbook more emphasis is given for reading and speaking skills. Even the teachers did not present them to help the students by modifying the existing ones or by supplementing with other texts. This indicated that the listening skill is given less attention by the teachers.

The study also confirmed that as there is no supplementary materials to teach listening skill. It is obvious that the use of audio and video materials assist the students in enhancing their overall listening skills when different extracts from literary genres used in the classroom. Thus, the use of different extracts in those ten weeks of teaching experimental group students asserted the same thing as the use of literary extracts are mandatory.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the researchers forwarded the following recommendations.

- Since listening is one of the macro-skills, teachers should enhance students listening skill by using pertinent literary texts in their classroom.
- Moreover, it is recommended that teachers should apply the three phases of teaching listening skill (pre, while, post) in the classroom in order to teach listening skill activities. Teachers are also expected to use dialogue, completing table, note-making, story-retelling and creating situation to assist students to be competent in their listening skill.
- Teachers should use student-centered methods of teaching and inspire the students' to boost their engagement as much as possible. Some listening lesson contents that have long sentences, unfamiliar topic, lack of students' interest, etc. should be modified and familiarized to students' level or standard, particularly literary texts related to culture and rituals.
- The listening lesson content of textbook should be accompanied with other teaching materials like audio/video cassettes and compact disc. An attempt should be done to maintain the balance from extracts of novel, short story, poem and play.
- Finally, textbook writers should include audio and video materials which appropriately fit the students' grade level with selected literary texts.

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