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Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

**University of Biskra
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of English**

**The Role of Laboratory-based Language Teaching
in Developing Students' Aural-Oral Skills:
An Experimental Approach
*Case Study: Second Year Students of English at Biskra
University***

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Magister in Language and Civilisation**

Board of Examiners:

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DEDICATION:

To my dear family,

To all the people who helped me to accomplish this work,

I dedicate this paper.

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This research paper could not have been accomplished without the invaluable contribution of many people.

At the very beginning, I benefited greatly from help, advice and encouragements of my supervisor: Dr Ghouar Amor. I really owe a great debt to him.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates one of the most controversial and problematic subjects in the domain of English language teaching. It originally deals with the teaching of aural-oral skills using laboratory material to second year students at the University of Biskra. The primary aim is to probe the effectiveness of language laboratory as a teaching aid in developing and improving students' listening and speaking abilities. The present paper consists of two main parts and each part includes three chapters.

The first part covers the theoretical aspect of the study. It generally presents a research on the nature of language skills and teaching aids, and more accurately it puts the aural-oral skills and language laboratory in focus. This theoretical foundation actually represents the review of related literature.

The first chapter is a sort of introductory work. It summarizes the viewpoints of language researchers concerning the nature of the receptive and productive skills (listening and reading, speaking and writing). It also looks at the different teaching aids (audio, visual, and audio-visual) and their placement in the context of foreign language teaching.

The second chapter introduces one of the most used teaching aid in TEFL; language laboratory. It establishes a historical overview of language laboratory and how it develops through time. The primary focus of this chapter is to describe almost all what is associated with this educational technology; its functions, procedures, types of installation, the teaching techniques and instructional material.

The third chapter examines the nature of the two skills under investigation; listening and speaking. It also introduces the most common activities used to teach the two skills in classroom and particularly in the language laboratory. Students' difficulties in learning these skills are also given specific attention.

The second part is devoted to the practical aspect of the study. It represents an actual application of what has been discussed earlier in the first part concerning the teaching of listening and speaking in the language laboratory. In this part we put the theory into practice in a form of fieldwork.

The fourth chapter paves the path for the experimental study. It represents a description, analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires' responses given by students

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and teachers. This in turn (questionnaires' responses) help us to design the experimental program and material aiming at improving students' aural-oral skills.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the experimental study. It includes the experimental instructional program, the scores obtained in the tests and the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results.

The sixth chapter introduces some teaching recommendation about the effectiveness of the language laboratory in improving students' listening and speaking skills. Of course, the suggested pedagogical implications based on what we think can be helpful for the oral expression teacher.

In fact, the study represents the personal perception and perspective of the researcher concerning the subject under investigation.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. A	Accuracy
2. A.A	Audio-Active
3. A.A.C	Audio-Active-Compare
4. CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
5. EFL	English as a Foreign Language
6. F	Fluency
7. FL	Foreign Language
8. I.C	Interactive Communication
9. Lab	Laboratory
10. L.L	Language Laboratory
11. L1	First language
12. L2	Second Language
13. N	Number of Subjects
14. O.E	Oral Expression
15. OHP	Overhead Projector
16. OHTs	Overhead Transparencies
17. P	Pronunciation
18. STT	Student Talking Time
19. T	Teacher
20. T.A	Teaching Aid
21. T.A	Task Achievement
22. TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
23. TT	Talking Time
24. X	Test Scores

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Appendix one

Students' questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims at demonstrating the role laboratory-based language teaching in developing aural-oral skills. It is designed to help you identify the difficulties you encounter in oral-expression module and particularly during the language laboratory practice. Your answers will be helpful and useful to our research work.

Please tick in the appropriate box or make full answers to express your opinion.

We thank you in advance.

Section one: background information:

1) Sex.: male

Female

2) Age:

3) The type of Baccalaureate you hold?

a- literary

b- scientific

c- technical

4) your choice of English was:

a- personal

b- imposed

5) If it is personal, why have you chosen to study English rather than other branches
(give the most important reasons).

.....
.....
.....

Section two: language skills and teaching aids:

1) From your experience in learning English at the university, which of the following skills you think is given much importance and attention by your teachers?

a- listening

b- reading

c- speaking

d- writing

2) as a foreign language student, which of the four skills is difficult (give the order of degree of difficulty, from the most difficult to the easiest)

.....

3) What are the difficulties you encounter in each skill (give two main ones)

The skill.	Difficulties.
Listening	
Reading	
Speaking	
Writing.	

4) Do you follow a methodology to deal with your difficulties?

Yes

No

5) If 'yes', to what extent do you think you have succeeded in doing so?

a- 25%

b- 50%

c- 75%

d- more than 75%

6) How often do your teachers use teaching aids in classroom?

a- very often

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

7) What kind of aids do they use?

a- visual aids (board, pictures, OHP)

b- audio aids (taped records, language laboratory)

c- audio- visuals (video tapes, computer)

d- others

8) Do you think that teaching aids are necessary and helpful in learning language skills?

Yes

No

Explain your answer:

.....
.....

9) Which kind of teaching aid you think is the most useful and effective in learning the four skills?

.....

10) What is your opinion about using the educational technology in foreign language teaching and learning?

.....
.....
.....

Section three: language laboratory:

1) Do you know what I language laboratory?

Yes

No

2) If 'yes', in which courses your teachers often use it?

.....

3) What do you feel when learning in the language laboratory?

.....
.....

4) How can you consider the difference between learning in a normal classroom and in the language laboratory?

a- quite different

b- little bit different

c- no difference at all

5) What do you find distinguishable in language laboratory that is not in the normal classroom?

.....
.....
.....

6) What is your attitude towards the language laboratory?

a- I like it

b- Neutral

c- I hate it

7) Do you encounter difficulties and problems in the language laboratory?

Yes

No

8) If 'yes', what are they?

.....
.....

9) Do you feel that your teachers use the language laboratory skillfully and appropriately?

Yes

No

10) How often your teachers vary the laboratory activities and tasks each session?

a- always

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

Section four: teaching listening and speaking

1) Which of the following module you like two much?

a- written expression

b- oral expression

2) If 'b', why? (give the main reasons)

.....
.....
.....

3) Do you think the hours allotted to the oral expression are sufficient?

Yes

No

4) How often your teacher(s) of pre-university level give you special courses to improve your aural- oral skills?

- a- often
- b- sometimes
- c- rarely
- d- never

5) Do your university teacher(s) of oral expression module give you a program at the beginning of the year?

- Yes
- No

6) Which skill is given much importance and attention by your oral expression teachers?

- a- listening
- b- speaking

7) How do you consider your speaking ability?

- a- good
- b- not bad (average)
- c- bad
- d- very bad

8) If 'bad' or 'very bad', it is because of what?

.....
.....
.....

9) How do you consider your listening ability?

- a- good
- b- not bad (average)
- c- bad
- d- very bad

10) If 'bad' or 'very bad', it is because of what?

.....
.....
.....

11) How do you think of teaching listening comprehension in the language laboratory?

- a- effective
- b- motivating
- c- boring
- d- I do not know

12) What is your favorite listening activity in the language laboratory?

.....

13) Do you think that language laboratory is also suitable for teaching speaking skill?

- Yes
- No

14) Have your teachers used it to teach you speaking practice?

- a- Sometimes
- b- occasionally
- c- never

15) What do you suggest for your teacher(s) to teach you in oral expression course?

And what kind of material should be used?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix two

Teachers' questionnaires

Dear colleague:

We are currently conducting an investigation on "the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing students' aural-oral skills. We shall be, therefore, very grateful to you if you take part in this questionnaire by answering the following questions. Please, tick in the appropriate box and answer whenever necessary.

May I thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section one: background information

1) Sex: male

Female

2) What is your qualification?

a- license; B.A

b- magister; M.A

c- doctorat; PH.D.

3) How many years have you been teaching English at the university level?

.....

4) What are the modules have you been teaching during these years?

.....

5) If you have taught oral-expression module, how many years have you been teaching it?

.....

6) Teaching oral-expression is:

a- personal choice

b- Imposed by the administration

Section two: language skills and teaching aids:

1) From your experience in teaching English, which of the following skills you think should be given much importance?

a- listening

b- Reading

c- Speaking

d- Writing

2) As a university teacher, which of the four skills you think is difficult to be taught?

.....

3) In which skill(s) you feel that your students are really involved?

a- receptive skills (listening and reading)

b- Productive skills (speaking and writing)

4) What are the most remarkable difficulties and problems your students encounter in learning the four skills?

The skill.	The difficulties.
Listening	
Reading	
Speaking	
Writing.	

5) Do you follow certain strategies to deal with these difficulties?

Yes

No

6) If yes, to what extent you think you have succeeded in treating these difficulties?

25%

50%

75%

More than 75%

7) How often do you use teaching aids in the classroom?

a- often

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

d- Never

8) What kind of aids do you often use?

a- visual aids (board, pictures, OHP...)

b- Audio aids (audio-cassette, the language laboratory)

c- Audio-visual aids (video tapes, computer)

9) Do you think that teaching aids are necessary in teaching the four skills?

Yes

No

10) Do you believe in using educational technology in foreign language teaching?

Yes

No

Section three: language laboratory

1) Have you experienced language laboratory-as a teaching aid- in your EFL teaching?

Yes

No

2) If yes, in which courses do you often use it?

.....

3) What do you think the role of language laboratory is?

a- effective teaching aid

b- boring

c- interesting and motivating

d- needless

4) Do you know all the functions of language laboratory and for what they stand for?

Yes

No

5) Do you know how to use them appropriately?

Yes

No

6) Among these laboratory operations (procedures), which one you often use?

a- audio-active (listen-respond)

b- audio-active-compare (listen-respond-record)

c- passive (listen only)

7) Do you support the idea of teaching drills in the language laboratory?

Yes

No

8) If yes, what is your purpose in teaching drills in the language laboratory?
.....

9) How much do think drills help FL students speak accurately and fluently?

a- very much

b- little

c- not at all

10) Have you tried to teach something else than drills?

Yes

No

Section four: teaching listening and speaking

1) How many groups you teach for the oral expression course?
.....

2) How many students do you have per group?
.....

3) How many hours per week are allotted to the oral-expression course?
.....

4) Do you think this time is sufficient for EFL students?

Yes

No

5) Do you follow any program in teaching oral expression module?

Yes

No

6) Do you give much attention to the teaching of listening or speaking? Explain
.....
.....
.....

7) From your experience in TEFL, what are the main difficulties your students encounter in listening-comprehension?
.....
.....
.....

...

8) Do you help your students overcome their listening problems?

- a- always
- b- Sometimes
- c- Never
- d- Where necessary

9) Where do you prefer teaching listening- comprehension?

- a- in classroom
- b- in the language laboratory

10) What type of activities do you use to help your students improve their aural abilities?

.....
.....
.....

11) How often do your students complain about the difficulty of the taped material and the activities that you provide in the language laboratory?

- a- very often
- b- sometimes
- c- rarely
- d- never

12) Have you found the language laboratory a well-suited tool for the teaching of the teaching of listening-comprehension?

- Yes
- No

13) As far as speaking skill is concerned, do your students suffer from the inability to express themselves orally?

- Yes
- No

14) What are the most remarkable difficulties your students encounter in their oral abilities?

.....
.....
.....

15) What types of activities you often suggest to improve EFL students' oral skills?

.....
.....
.....

16) Have you ever experienced teaching speaking skill using laboratory material?

Yes

No

17) What do you find different in teaching speaking in the language laboratory?

.....
.....
.....

18) Can you consider the language laboratory a well-suited tool for developing students' oral skills?

Yes

No

Appendix three:

University of Biskra
Department of English
Second year classes

Name:
Group:

Pre-test

The topic: Unusual Homes

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: picture interpretation

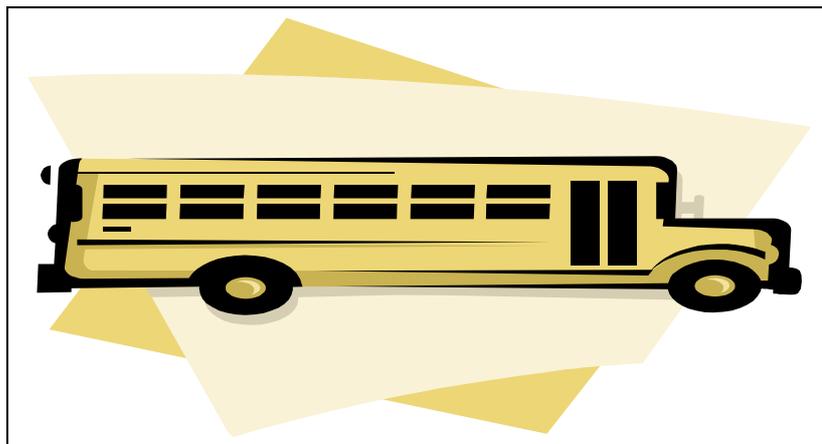
Work individually. Look at the photo of "unusual home" below (railway carriage), make a list of the possible advantages and disadvantages (two items each) of living in this home.

Advantages:

-
-

Disadvantages:

-
-



While listening: fill in the chart

Listen carefully to the recording and write down any advantages or disadvantages of living in a railway carriage that the speaker mentions. You will hear the passage twice.

	Advantages	disadvantages
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Post-listening: multiple choice questions

Because you have already listened to the recording, read and answer the following multiple choice questions basing on what you can remember.

Choose the best answer: A, B, C or D.

1- the speaker has lived in a railway carriage for about:

- a- ten years
- b- two years
- c- twenty years
- d- twelve years

2- the house is little scary at night because:

- a- it is isolated
- b- it is near the island
- c- it is not frequently used
- d- it is far from the town

3- she moved because

- a- she could not afford or a flat to rent
 - b- she is afraid of living in a rented house or flat
 - c- the rented houses are little bit insecure
 - d- the rented houses are cold and draughty
- 4- she has got:
- a- four children
 - b- five children
 - c- two children
 - d- no children
- 5- her children like the house because:
- a- there is lots of space outside for them to ply
 - b- they can renovate any thing
 - c- they can themselves decorate it
 - d- there is no danger of traffic or trains
- 6- before the winter, she:
- a- puts something on the curtains
 - b- puts thin curtains
 - c- puts thick curtains
 - d- puts no thing on the curtains
- 7- her children go to school by:
- a- bus
 - b- car
 - c- two buses
 - d- train

Section two: speaking

Strategy: acting from a script (dialogue)

Work with a partner; write a dialogue to act it out tackling the following points:

- discuss the possible advantages and disadvantages of living in the unusual homes
- expand the dialogue to talk about life in towns Vs life in countryside
- Suggest a solution for the housing problems in this country.

The tape script of the pre-test listening passage:

"Well, I suppose it's a bit unusual but I have lived in a railway carriage now for about two years. Um, it's a little scary at night because, well it's on an isolated part of the track and it's never used at all these days. And the surroundings, they're really a little bit grim. It's not it's not really that anything's ever happened there, it's just that you you always feel a little bit insecure and a bit frightened because it's so isolated. Um, I moved originally because, well, I couldn't afford a house or a flat to rent. And railway carriages, well they're cheap to buy. Um, they're cold and draughty in the winter, I have to say. Um we've got a very small bathroom with, well only very basic plumbing. Um the kitchen's pretty good, it's quite well equipped really, I suppose. Um the children like it. I've got four children and they all like it very much because, well, there's lots of space outside for them to play and well, there's no danger of traffic or trains or anything. And originally I mean I could never have afforded a garden so they're happy about that. Er...I haven't had to do much to it at all really not renovate anything very much, um just a little bit of decorating here and there. Er, I suppose I, well, I'll put thick curtains up before the winter and put some carpets in to keep it a little bit warmer, because I twill be very cold. Er, it is a very long way from schools and er and well all the services. It makes life a bit difficult. I mean I have to take two buses to take the kids to school and that's really not very easy."

Diana Pye, Simon Greenall (1996. 107).

Appendix four:

University of Biskra
 Department of English
 Second year classes

Name:
 Group:

First test:

The topic: The Language of Color

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: brainstorming

Here is a list of colors: red, blue, orange, green and yellow. Work in pairs and try to predict the effects of these colors i.e. how do you think they make people feel?

Color	Predicted effect
Red	
Blue	
Orange	
Green	
Yellow	
mauve	

While-listening: information search

You are going to hear a color analyst talking about colors and the effect they can have on people. While listening, fill in the following chart with the missing information.

Color	The effects of colors according to the color analyst
Red	Raises..... Quickens..... Increases the rate of
Blue	Slows down..... Stimulates.....
Orange	Is a strong.....stimulant Makes the viewer.....and
Green	Has a .....and.....effect Reduces.....
Yellow	Used to make.....-yours- to.....up coming sales
mauve	Brings out.....in people

Post-listening: multiple choice questions

Because you have already listened to the recording, read and answer the following multiple choice questions according to what you can remember. Choose the best answer: A, B or C.

- 1- scientific studies show that red raises:
 - a- the body pressure
 - b- the brain pressure
 - c- the blood pressure
- 2- the blue, by contrast, slows down:
 - a- body activity
 - b- brain activity
 - c- blood activity
- 3- orange encourages consumers to:
 - a- seat and run
 - b- eat and run
 - c- meet and run
- 4- men always remember:
 - a- the woman in red
 - b- the woman in pink
 - c- the woman in white
- 5- green has:
 - a- a calming and influencing effect
 - b- a calming and balancing effect
 - c- a calming and reducing effect
- 6- yellow is:
 - a- stimulating color
 - b- simulating color
 - c- stipulating color
- 7- the popular surge of mauve and violet is:
 - a- a reaction to the increasing number of sensitive women in modern office
 - b- a reaction to the increasing number of intuitive women in work office
 - c- a reaction to the increasing number of intuitive women in work force

Section two: speaking

Strategy: simulation (role-playing).

Work in groups of three using the following role cards:

S1: you are a color analyst and you are supposed to analyze the personality of **S2** according to the colors he prefers or wears. (The list of colors and their messages has been already given to you).

S2: you are the person under analysis. Tell the color analyst about your favorite colors and your impression towards them.

S3: you are a friend of **S2**; try to help the color analyst by giving him all what you know about the effects of colors on your friend. You can answer any question that your friend is unable to do.

The tape script of the first test' listening passage: Annie Broadhead (2000. 68)

Color analyst: "the effect of colors on our minds and bodies is a subject of increasing interest. Scientific studies show that red raises the blood pressure, quickens the pulse, and increases the rate of breathing. Blue, by contrast, slows down body activity and stimulates the mind. These facts, along with other scientific and empirical evidence, are already widely used by fashion and advertising industries for profit. Have you ever noticed that the popular fast-food chains have high energy colors such as orange in the interiors? Orange is not only a strong appetite stimulant, but it can also make the viewer impatient and restless, encouraging customers to 'eat and run'. Men always remember 'the woman in red' because that hue is the strongest and longest ray in the visible spectrum, making a greater impression on the retina, not to mention speeding up the emotions! Green, in the middle of the spectrum, has a calming, balancing effect. It can even reduce eyestrain, especially in a minty shade such as the one chosen by the hospitals in their operating and recovery rooms. Have you ever noticed a yellow flyer in your advertising paper and junk mail, this stimulating color was used on purpose to make eye contact-yours- to promote upcoming sales? In many modern office and professional decors there's a popular surge of mauves and violets. Is it a fad, or a revolution- a reaction to the increasing number of sensitive women in the work force? Violets and purples bring out the intuitive in people which is why they were identified with a spiritual –awakening in the sixties".

Appendix four:

University of Biskra
Department of English
Second year classes

Name:
Group:

Second test:

The topic: Communication

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: matching technique

Read the statements below. Decide what means of communication they are likely to refer to and who the speakers are (two items of each list are irrelevant).

Means of communication:

- letter
- cordless phone
- fax
- answer phone
- intercom unite
- computer
- telephone

Speakers:

- teenager
- Business person.
- school teacher
- policeman
- parent
- disabled person
- elderly person

Statements:

- 1- "It's essentially a professional tool, although it does come in handy now and again at home- for booking the annual holiday, that sort of thing".
- 2- "I spend hours chatting to my friends when I get fed up with being stuck at home. It makes my parents really mad"

- 3- "It's the only really civilized way of staying in contact with old friends. It's also a marvelous way of passing the time- which does pass slowly when you are retired, you know"
- 4- "Before I bought it, I used to get so frustrated when the phone rang when I was in the other room and I couldn't get to it in time. Because I'm confined to a wheelchair, it's an absolute lifeline for me. I take it with me all over the house and into the garden".
- 5- It saves me running up and down stairs to see he is still asleep"

statements	Means of communication	Speakers
1 Example	Fax	Business man
2		
3		
4		
5		

While-listening: tape script -writing

You are going to listen to a listening extract which is a message on an answer phone. Try to write down the whole script. The listening passage is recorded on your booth's tape recorder where you can do retracing (stop the tape, rewind it and replay any part). Concentration helps you grasp all the sentences of the listening passage.

A message on an answer phone:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Post-listening: speaking skill integration (imitation of a model)

After writing down your scripts on your worksheets, now, record the passage with your voices in an attempt to imitate the model. Your versions of the “message on an answer phone” will be captured for analysis and assessments (use only the following switches: record, play, stop, and rewind).

Section two: speaking

Strategy: telephoning

Create your own telephone conversations and practice them as interactive speaking activity. Then, record your versions on your own tape recorder (students' booth is provided with two headsets which permit the process of pairing two students in one machine and practice telephoning). You can repeat the recording till you achieve satisfaction.

The tape script of the second test' listening passage:

"Hi, Marry. Sorry I missed you this morning. I had to rush over the site. Trouble with the drivers. Can you cancel my appointments for this afternoon, please? Could you also tell them down in accounts that I won't be able to make it today? Try and fix something up for Thursday. If you need to contact me the site office number is **965 8849**. That's **965 8849**. I should be there till at least four. I'll try and stop by at the office before you leave. Thanks a lot. Bye.

Diana Pye, Simon Greenall (1996. 109)

Appendix five

University of Biskra
Department of English
Second year classes

Name:
Group:

Third test:

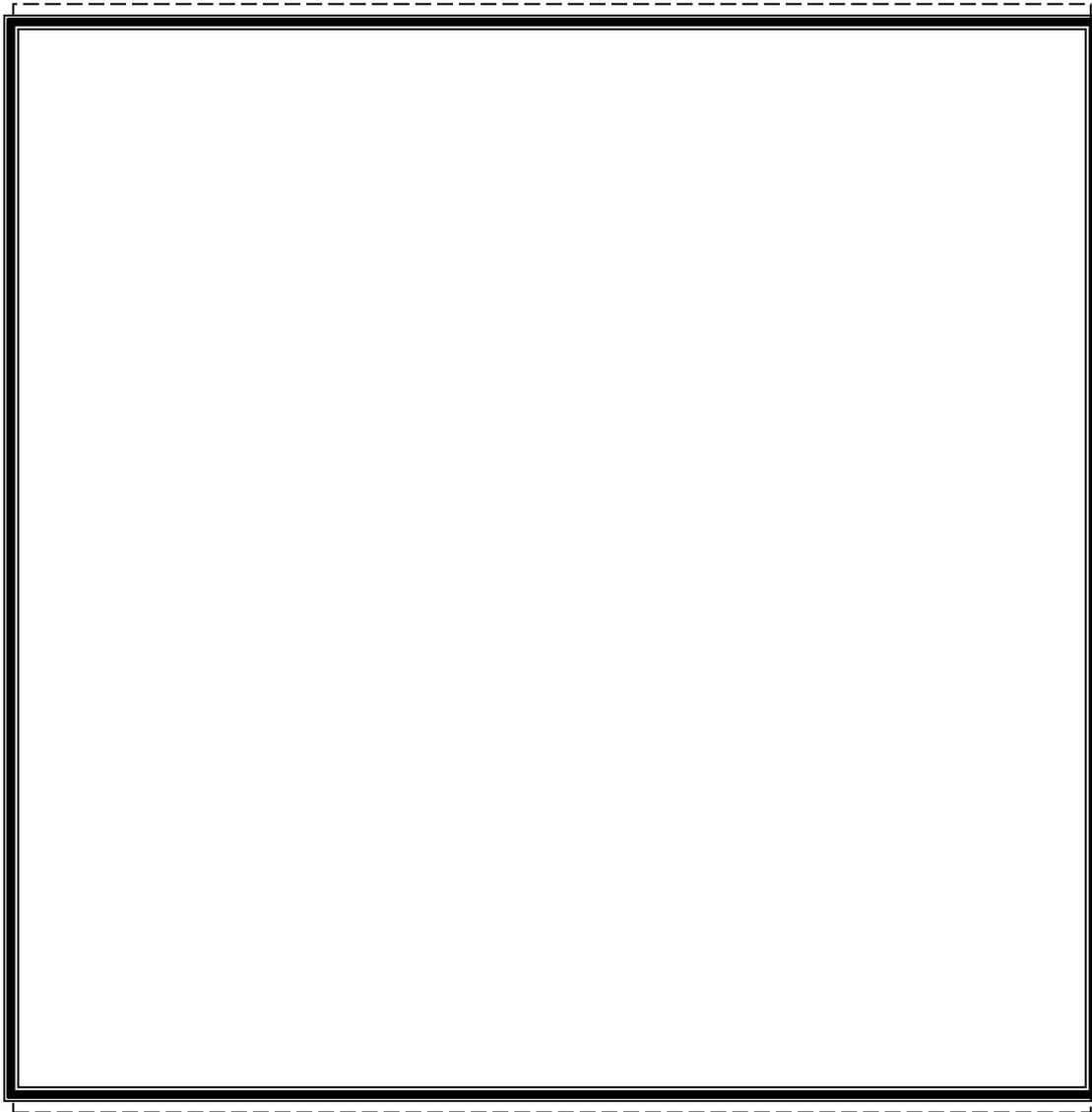
The topic: Leadership

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: matching technique

Match the following names with the pictures:

Indira Gandhi, Elizabeth 1, Cleopatra, Martin Luther King, Churchill, Genghis Khan, John F. Kennedy, Mao Tse Tung, De Gaulle, Gandhi.



While-listening: listening for specific information (information search).

Listen carefully to the recording (an interview consisting of two extracts talking about leaders and their characteristics) and fill in the gaps with the missing information (words, sentences...)

We have in the studio..... who has recently published a book on
.....

Many of the great leaders of the past were..... They were either.....
.....or dreaded

There were also the great who have changed the world.
.....leaders have a number of basic characteristics:

- They know exactly what they want
- They have very clear
- They work towards their goals no matter whatthey may come up against
- They show great powers of
- They believe that thejustifies
- Great leadership should express the.....of the
- All great leaders have to be.....

Post-listening: true-false statements.

Put F if the statement is false and T if the statement is true and correct the false one.

- 1- Take Genghis Khan, for example, he was not an outstanding warrior or military leader but he was a spiritual leader.
- 2- Luther and Gandhi are military leaders who have changed the world.
- 3- Great leadership is always identified with military models.
- 4- Churchill and de Gaulle were peacetime heroes.
- 5- Gandhi's purpose of freeing India was undeniably the popular will.

Section two: speaking

Strategy: role-play

Work in pairs.

Role cards

S1: you are the interviewer and your partner is your interviewee

S2: you are intended to be a very famous leader (make a simulation of any leader you know)

S1: ask **S2** about:

- His childhood and early family life
- How did he become a leader?
- What are his main achievements?
- What are his personality characteristics?....etc

S2: give explanation and clarification of all questions

Note: exchange roles to give **S1** the opportunity to speak.

The tape script of the third test' listening passage:

I: the subject of our program this afternoon is leadership. We have in the studio Graham Henshaw who is a historian and has recently published a book on the great leaders of our time.

Mr. H: hello

I: Mr. Henshaw. Perhaps you can tell us what, in your view, makes a really great leader?

Mr. H:

Well, to start with, I think we can learn a lot from history by studying the great men and women who've left their mark at different times- for both good and bad, I hasten to add. But, of course, many of the great leaders of the past were military chiefs, and depending on whose side you found yourself on, they were either national heroes or, er, dreaded tyrants. Take Genghis Khan, for example, he was undoubtedly an outstanding warrior and military leader, if you happened to be one of his followers, that is. But if you were unlucky enough to live in a country he plundered, you were more likely to see him as a dangerous madman. So you see, not every one is likely to see these so called great leaders in the same light.

I: but were all the great leaders of the past military chiefs?

Mr. H:

Oh no, of course there were also the great spiritual leaders who have changed the world. Men like Luther and Gandhi. But I think it is true to say that most people, even today, continue to identify great leadership with military models. I mean, just consider the criticisms our politicians get fired at them. How often do we hear them being compared unfavorably to wartime heroes such as Churchill or de Gaulle? Even though, the job at hand is very different. What good would military strategy be for dealing with unemployment? I'm pretty sure it would be of little use. So even though these models no longer bear any relation to the complex workings of the modern world, we still measure ministers or company directors against them.

I: can we say that there are some characteristics which all great leaders have in common?

Mr. H:

I think it is true to say that all successful leaders share a number of basic characteristics. For a start, they know exactly what they want to achieve, I mean they have clear objectives. Secondly, they never lose sight of their objectives and work towards them no matter what obstacles they may come up against. In this respect, they display great powers of concentration. The third common characteristic of the great leaders is that they tend to believe that the end justifies the means. Of course, you can easily see the danger here. What is the difference between the madman and the truly great leader? I think the difference lies in the fourth characteristic. Great leadership should express the will of the people and improve their lot. It doesn't just serve the personal ambition. In other words, it has to be for the common good. Take Gandhi, for instance, he may have unleashed destructive forces, but his main purpose of freeing India was undeniably the popular will. Finally, I think we have to add success to our list. To be considered great, the leader has to be successful. I can't think of many examples of unsuccessful great leaders!"

Diana Pye, Greenall (1996. 114-115)

Appendix six:

The assessment grid of oral performance

Scores	Fluency	Accuracy	Pronunciation	Task achievement	Interactive communication
04	Coherent spoken interaction with good speed and rhythm. Few intrusive hesitations.	Evidence of a wide range of structures and vocabulary. Errors minimal in number and gravity.	Little L1 accent. L1 accent not obtrusive. Good mastery of English pronunciation features.	The tasks are dealt with fully and effectively. The language is appropriate to each task.	Contributes fully and effectively throughout the interaction.
03	Occasional but noticeable hesitations, but not such as to strain the listener or impede communication.	Evidence of a good range of structures and vocabulary. Errors few in number and minor in gravity. These errors do not impede communication.	Noticeable L1 accent having minor difficulties with some pronunciation features. These do not strain the listener or impede communication.	The tasks are mostly dealt with effectively but with minor inadequacies of execution or language.	Contributes with ease for most of the interaction, with only occasional and minor difficulties.
02	Fairly frequent and noticeable hesitations. Communication is achieved but strains the listener at times.	Fairly frequent errors and evidence of restricted range of structures and/or vocabulary. These do not prevent communication of the essential message.	Obvious L1 pronunciation features with major defects. This may strain the listener and/or make comprehension of detail difficult.	One or more of the tasks are dealt with in a limited manner. The language is often inappropriate. Redirection may have been required at times.	Contributes effectively for some of the interaction, but fairly frequent difficulties.
01	Disconnected speech and/or frequent hesitations impede communication and strain the listener.	Frequent basic errors and limited range of structures and/or vocabulary impede communication and strain the listener.	Heavy L1 pronunciation and widespread difficulties with English features impede communication of the message and strain the listener.	Inadequate attempts at the tasks using little appropriate language. Requires major redirection or assistance.	Difficulty in maintaining contributions throughout. may respond to simple or structured interaction but obvious limitations in freer situations

Taken from: Diana Pye, Simon Greenall (1996. 99)

الملخص:

يعتبر مقياس التعبير الشفهي أحد أهم المقاييس التعليمية لطلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة. يحاول الطلبة في هذا المقياس اكتساب و تعلم مهارتي الاستماع و المحادثة اللتان تعتبران أهم مكونين للتواصل الفعال و الهادف. ولأن التعبير و التواصل باللغة الأجنبية (الإنجليزية) هو هدف و غاية كل طالب, كان لزاما على أستاذ المقياس استعمال مختلف الوسائل التعليمية المتاحة لبلوغ هذا الهدف. من بين هذه الوسائل, نجد ما يسمى ب "مخبر اللغة" الذي يعد أكثرها شيوعا و استعمالا.

من هذا المنطلق أردنا من خلال بحثنا أن نسلط الضوء على مخبر اللغة ودوره في تنمية و تطوير مهارتي الاستماع و المحادثة عند طلبة السنة الثانية- قسم اللغة الإنجليزية- بجامعة بسكرة. وانطلاقا من فرضية أن الطالب الذي يستطيع استيعاب اللغة الشفهية للناطقين الأصليين بها هو الذي يستطيع التحدث و التواصل بها. وعلى هذا الأساس, طرحنا الإشكالية التالية:

إلى أي مدى يمكن اعتبار مهارة الاستماع للغة الشفهية للناطقين الأصليين بها في مخبر اللغة تجربة لغوية حقيقية تساعد على تطوير مهارة المحادثة و التواصل؟ و إلى أي مدى يمكن اعتبار مخبر اللغة وسيلة تعليمية فعالة تساعد الطالب على تطوير مهارتي الاستماع و المحادثة باللغة الأجنبية (الإنجليزية)؟

أما هدف هذا البحث فهو تبيان أن مهارة الاستماع ليست عملية غير حيوية كما يعتقد الكثير من معلمي اللغة الأجنبية, والتأكيد على دور مخبر اللغة في تدريس مقياس التعبير الشفهي.

إن المنهج التجريبي الذي اعتمده في هذه الدراسة أمكننا من معرفة أهم المشاكل التي يواجهها الطالب و الأستاذ في مقياس التعبير الشفهي. ولهذا حاولنا في الأخير اقتراح بعض الحلول لهما, و التي قد تساعد في تسهيل و تفعيل العملية التعليمية لهذا المقياس.

Appendix one

Students' questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims at demonstrating the role laboratory-based language teaching in developing aural-oral skills. It is designed to help you identify the difficulties you encounter in oral-expression module and particularly during the language laboratory practice. Your answers will be helpful and useful to our research work.

Please tick in the appropriate box or make full answers to express your opinion.

We thank you in advance.

Section one: background information:

1) Sex.: male

Female

2) Age:

3) The type of Baccalaureate you hold?

a- literary

b- scientific

c- technical

4) your choice of English was:

a- personal

b- imposed

5) If it is personal, why have you chosen to study English rather than other branches (give the most important reasons).

.....
.....
.....

Section two: language skills and teaching aids:

1) From your experience in learning English at the university, which of the following skills you think is given much importance and attention by your teachers?

a- listening

b- reading

c- speaking

d- writing

2) as a foreign language student, which of the four skills is difficult (give the order of degree of difficulty, from the most difficult to the easiest)

.....

3) What are the difficulties you encounter in each skill (give two main ones)

The skill.	Difficulties.
Listening	
Reading	
Speaking	
Writing.	

4) Do you follow a methodology to deal with your difficulties?

Yes

No

5) If 'yes', to what extent do you think you have succeeded in doing so?

a- 25%

b- 50%

c- 75%

d- more than 75%

6) How often do your teachers use teaching aids in classroom?

a- very often

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

7) What kind of aids do they use?

a- visual aids (board, pictures, OHP)

b- audio aids (taped records, language laboratory)

c- audio- visuals (video tapes, computer)

d- others

8) Do you think that teaching aids are necessary and helpful in learning language skills?

Yes

No

Explain your answer:

.....
.....

9) Which kind of teaching aid you think is the most useful and effective in learning the four skills?

.....

10) What is your opinion about using the educational technology in foreign language teaching and learning?

.....
.....
.....

Section three: language laboratory:

1) Do you know what I language laboratory?

Yes

No

2) If 'yes', in which courses your teachers often use it?

.....

3) What do you feel when learning in the language laboratory?

.....
.....

4) How can you consider the difference between learning in a normal classroom and in the language laboratory?

a- quite different

b- little bit different

c- no difference at all

5) What do you find distinguishable in language laboratory that is not in the normal classroom?

.....
.....
.....

6) What is your attitude towards the language laboratory?

a- I like it

b- Neutral

c- I hate it

7) Do you encounter difficulties and problems in the language laboratory?

Yes

No

8) If 'yes', what are they?

.....
.....

9) Do you feel that your teachers use the language laboratory skillfully and appropriately?

Yes

No

10) How often your teachers vary the laboratory activities and tasks each session?

a- always

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

Section four: teaching listening and speaking

1) Which of the following module you like two much?

a- written expression

b- oral expression

2) If 'b', why? (give the main reasons)

.....
.....
.....

3) Do you think the hours allotted to the oral expression are sufficient?

Yes

No

4) How often your teacher(s) of pre-university level give you special courses to improve your aural- oral skills?

- a- often
- b- sometimes
- c- rarely
- d- never

5) Do your university teacher(s) of oral expression module give you a program at the beginning of the year?

- Yes
- No

6) Which skill is given much importance and attention by your oral expression teachers?

- a- listening
- b- speaking

7) How do you consider your speaking ability?

- a- good
- b- not bad (average)
- c- bad
- d- very bad

8) If 'bad' or 'very bad', it is because of what?

.....
.....
.....

9) How do you consider your listening ability?

- a- good
- b- not bad (average)
- c- bad
- d- very bad

10) If 'bad' or 'very bad', it is because of what?

.....
.....
.....

11) How do you think of teaching listening comprehension in the language laboratory?

- a- effective
- b- motivating
- c- boring
- d- I do not know

12) What is your favorite listening activity in the language laboratory?

.....

13) Do you think that language laboratory is also suitable for teaching speaking skill?

- Yes
- No

14) Have your teachers used it to teach you speaking practice?

- a- Sometimes
- b- occasionally
- c- never

15) What do you suggest for your teacher(s) to teach you in oral expression course?

And what kind of material should be used?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix two

Teachers' questionnaires

Dear colleague:

We are currently conducting an investigation on "the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing students' aural-oral skills. We shall be, therefore, very grateful to you if you take part in this questionnaire by answering the following questions. Please, tick in the appropriate box and answer whenever necessary.

May I thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section one: background information

1) Sex: male

Female

2) What is your qualification?

a- license; B.A

b- magister; M.A

c- doctorat; PH.D.

3) How many years have you been teaching English at the university level?

.....

4) What are the modules have you been teaching during these years?

.....

5) If you have taught oral-expression module, how many years have you been teaching it?

.....

6) Teaching oral-expression is:

a- personal choice

b- Imposed by the administration

Section two: language skills and teaching aids:

1) From your experience in teaching English, which of the following skills you think should be given much importance?

a- listening

b- Reading

c- Speaking

d- Writing

2) As a university teacher, which of the four skills you think is difficult to be taught?

.....

3) In which skill(s) you feel that your students are really involved?

a- receptive skills (listening and reading)

b- Productive skills (speaking and writing)

4) What are the most remarkable difficulties and problems your students encounter in learning the four skills?

The skill.	The difficulties.
Listening	
Reading	
Speaking	
Writing.	

5) Do you follow certain strategies to deal with these difficulties?

Yes

No

6) If yes, to what extent you think you have succeeded in treating these difficulties?

25%

50%

75%

More than 75%

7) How often do you use teaching aids in the classroom?

a- often

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

d- Never

8) What kind of aids do you often use?

a- visual aids (board, pictures, OHP...)

b- Audio aids (audio-cassette, the language laboratory)

c- Audio-visual aids (video tapes, computer)

9) Do you think that teaching aids are necessary in teaching the four skills?

Yes

No

10) Do you believe in using educational technology in foreign language teaching?

Yes

No

Section three: language laboratory

1) Have you experienced language laboratory-as a teaching aid- in your EFL teaching?

Yes

No

2) If yes, in which courses do you often use it?

.....

3) What do you think the role of language laboratory is?

a- effective teaching aid

b- boring

c- interesting and motivating

d- needless

4) Do you know all the functions of language laboratory and for what they stand for?

Yes

No

5) Do you know how to use them appropriately?

Yes

No

6) Among these laboratory operations (procedures), which one you often use?

a- audio-active (listen-respond)

b- audio-active-compare (listen-respond-record)

c- passive (listen only)

7) Do you support the idea of teaching drills in the language laboratory?

Yes

No

8) If yes, what is your purpose in teaching drills in the language laboratory?
.....

9) How much do think drills help FL students speak accurately and fluently?

a- very much

b- little

c- not at all

10) Have you tried to teach something else than drills?

Yes

No

Section four: teaching listening and speaking

1) How many groups you teach for the oral expression course?
.....

2) How many students do you have per group?
.....

3) How many hours per week are allotted to the oral-expression course?
.....

4) Do you think this time is sufficient for EFL students?

Yes

No

5) Do you follow any program in teaching oral expression module?

Yes

No

6) Do you give much attention to the teaching of listening or speaking? Explain
.....
.....
.....

7) From your experience in TEFL, what are the main difficulties your students encounter in listening-comprehension?
.....
.....
.....

...

8) Do you help your students overcome their listening problems?

- a- always
- b- Sometimes
- c- Never
- d- Where necessary

9) Where do you prefer teaching listening- comprehension?

- a- in classroom
- b- in the language laboratory

10) What type of activities do you use to help your students improve their aural abilities?

.....

.....

.....

11) How often do your students complain about the difficulty of the taped material and the activities that you provide in the language laboratory?

- a- very often
- b- sometimes
- c- rarely
- d- never

12) Have you found the language laboratory a well-suited tool for the teaching of the teaching of listening-comprehension?

- Yes
- No

13) As far as speaking skill is concerned, do your students suffer from the inability to express themselves orally?

- Yes
- No

14) What are the most remarkable difficulties your students encounter in their oral abilities?

.....

.....

.....

15) What types of activities you often suggest to improve EFL students' oral skills?

.....
.....
.....

16) Have you ever experienced teaching speaking skill using laboratory material?

Yes

No

17) What do you find different in teaching speaking in the language laboratory?

.....
.....
.....

18) Can you consider the language laboratory a well-suited tool for developing students' oral skills?

Yes

No

Appendix three:

University of Biskra
Department of English
Second year classes

Name:
Group:

Pre-test

The topic: Unusual Homes

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: picture interpretation

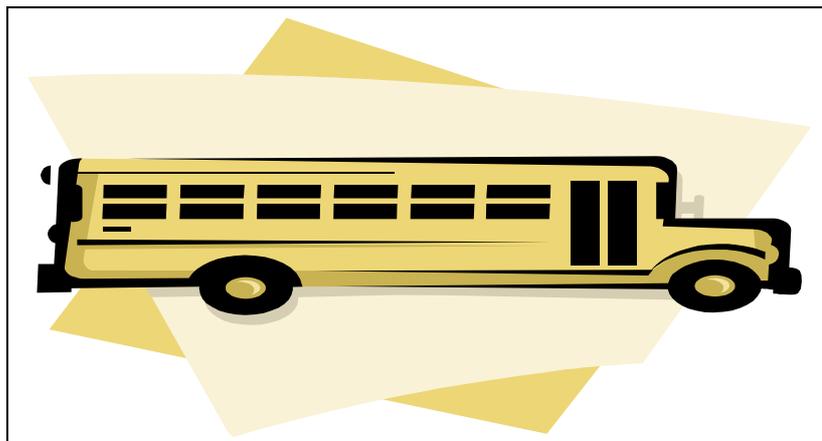
Work individually. Look at the photo of "unusual home" below (railway carriage), make a list of the possible advantages and disadvantages (two items each) of living in this home.

Advantages:

-
-

Disadvantages:

-
-



While listening: fill in the chart

Listen carefully to the recording and write down any advantages or disadvantages of living in a railway carriage that the speaker mentions. You will hear the passage twice.

	Advantages	disadvantages
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Post-listening: multiple choice questions

Because you have already listened to the recording, read and answer the following multiple choice questions basing on what you can remember.

Choose the best answer: A, B, C or D.

1- the speaker has lived in a railway carriage for about:

- a- ten years
- b- two years
- c- twenty years
- d- twelve years

2- the house is little scary at night because:

- a- it is isolated
- b- it is near the island
- c- it is not frequently used
- d- it is far from the town

3- she moved because

- a- she could not afford or a flat to rent
 - b- she is afraid of living in a rented house or flat
 - c- the rented houses are little bit insecure
 - d- the rented houses are cold and draughty
- 4- she has got:
- a- four children
 - b- five children
 - c- two children
 - d- no children
- 5- her children like the house because:
- a- there is lots of space outside for them to ply
 - b- they can renovate any thing
 - c- they can themselves decorate it
 - d- there is no danger of traffic or trains
- 6- before the winter, she:
- a- puts something on the curtains
 - b- puts thin curtains
 - c- puts thick curtains
 - d- puts no thing on the curtains
- 7- her children go to school by:
- a- bus
 - b- car
 - c- two buses
 - d- train

Section two: speaking

Strategy: acting from a script (dialogue)

Work with a partner; write a dialogue to act it out tackling the following points:

- discuss the possible advantages and disadvantages of living in the unusual homes
- expand the dialogue to talk about life in towns Vs life in countryside
- Suggest a solution for the housing problems in this country.

The tape script of the pre-test listening passage:

"Well, I suppose it's a bit unusual but I have lived in a railway carriage now for about two years. Um, it's a little scary at night because, well it's on an isolated part of the track and it's never used at all these days. And the surroundings, they're really a little bit grim. It's not it's not really that anything's ever happened there, it's just that you you always feel a little bit insecure and a bit frightened because it's so isolated. Um, I moved originally because, well, I couldn't afford a house or a flat to rent. And railway carriages, well they're cheap to buy. Um, they're cold and draughty in the winter, I have to say. Um we've got a very small bathroom with, well only very basic plumbing. Um the kitchen's pretty good, it's quite well equipped really, I suppose. Um the children like it. I've got four children and they all like it very much because, well, there's lots of space outside for them to play and well, there's no danger of traffic or trains or anything. And originally I mean I could never have afforded a garden so they're happy about that. Er...I haven't had to do much to it at all really not renovate anything very much, um just a little bit of decorating here and there. Er, I suppose I, well, I'll put thick curtains up before the winter and put some carpets in to keep it a little bit warmer, because I twill be very cold. Er, it is a very long way from schools and er and well all the services. It makes life a bit difficult. I mean I have to take two buses to take the kids to school and that's really not very easy."

Diana Pye, Simon Greenall (1996. 107).

Appendix four:

University of Biskra
 Department of English
 Second year classes

Name:
 Group:

First test:

The topic: The Language of Color

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: brainstorming

Here is a list of colors: red, blue, orange, green and yellow. Work in pairs and try to predict the effects of these colors i.e. how do you think they make people feel?

Color	Predicted effect
Red	
Blue	
Orange	
Green	
Yellow	
mauve	

While-listening: information search

You are going to hear a color analyst talking about colors and the effect they can have on people. While listening, fill in the following chart with the missing information.

Color	The effects of colors according to the color analyst
Red	Raises..... Quickens..... Increases the rate of
Blue	Slows down..... Stimulates.....
Orange	Is a strong.....stimulant Makes the viewer.....and
Green	Has a .....and.....effect Reduces.....
Yellow	Used to make.....-yours- to.....up coming sales
mauve	Brings out.....in people

Post-listening: multiple choice questions

Because you have already listened to the recording, read and answer the following multiple choice questions according to what you can remember. Choose the best answer: A, B or C.

- 1- scientific studies show that red raises:
 - a- the body pressure
 - b- the brain pressure
 - c- the blood pressure
- 2- the blue, by contrast, slows down:
 - a- body activity
 - b- brain activity
 - c- blood activity
- 3- orange encourages consumers to:
 - a- seat and run
 - b- eat and run
 - c- meet and run
- 4- men always remember:
 - a- the woman in red
 - b- the woman in pink
 - c- the woman in white
- 5- green has:
 - a- a calming and influencing effect
 - b- a calming and balancing effect
 - c- a calming and reducing effect
- 6- yellow is:
 - a- stimulating color
 - b- simulating color
 - c- stipulating color
- 7- the popular surge of mauve and violet is:
 - a- a reaction to the increasing number of sensitive women in modern office
 - b- a reaction to the increasing number of intuitive women in work office
 - c- a reaction to the increasing number of intuitive women in work force

Section two: speaking

Strategy: simulation (role-playing).

Work in groups of three using the following role cards:

S1: you are a color analyst and you are supposed to analyze the personality of **S2** according to the colors he prefers or wears. (The list of colors and their messages has been already given to you).

S2: you are the person under analysis. Tell the color analyst about your favorite colors and your impression towards them.

S3: you are a friend of **S2**; try to help the color analyst by giving him all what you know about the effects of colors on your friend. You can answer any question that your friend is unable to do.

The tape script of the first test' listening passage: Annie Broadhead (2000. 68)

Color analyst: "the effect of colors on our minds and bodies is a subject of increasing interest. Scientific studies show that red raises the blood pressure, quickens the pulse, and increases the rate of breathing. Blue, by contrast, slows down body activity and stimulates the mind. These facts, along with other scientific and empirical evidence, are already widely used by fashion and advertising industries for profit. Have you ever noticed that the popular fast-food chains have high energy colors such as orange in the interiors? Orange is not only a strong appetite stimulant, but it can also make the viewer impatient and restless, encouraging customers to 'eat and run'. Men always remember 'the woman in red' because that hue is the strongest and longest ray in the visible spectrum, making a greater impression on the retina, not to mention speeding up the emotions! Green, in the middle of the spectrum, has a calming, balancing effect. It can even reduce eyestrain, especially in a minty shade such as the one chosen by the hospitals in their operating and recovery rooms. Have you ever noticed a yellow flyer in your advertising paper and junk mail, this stimulating color was used on purpose to make eye contact-yours- to promote upcoming sales? In many modern office and professional decors there's a popular surge of mauves and violets. Is it a fad, or a revolution- a reaction to the increasing number of sensitive women in the work force? Violets and purples bring out the intuitive in people which is why they were identified with a spiritual –awakening in the sixties".

Appendix four:

University of Biskra
Department of English
Second year classes

Name:
Group:

Second test:

The topic: Communication

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: matching technique

Read the statements below. Decide what means of communication they are likely to refer to and who the speakers are (two items of each list are irrelevant).

Means of communication:

- letter
- cordless phone
- fax
- answer phone
- intercom unite
- computer
- telephone

Speakers:

- teenager
- Business person.
- school teacher
- policeman
- parent
- disabled person
- elderly person

Statements:

- 1- "It's essentially a professional tool, although it does come in handy now and again at home- for booking the annual holiday, that sort of thing".
- 2- "I spend hours chatting to my friends when I get fed up with being stuck at home. It makes my parents really mad"

- 3- "It's the only really civilized way of staying in contact with old friends. It's also a marvelous way of passing the time- which does pass slowly when you are retired, you know"
- 4- "Before I bought it, I used to get so frustrated when the phone rang when I was in the other room and I couldn't get to it in time. Because I'm confined to a wheelchair, it's an absolute lifeline for me. I take it with me all over the house and into the garden".
- 5- It saves me running up and down stairs to see he is still asleep"

statements	Means of communication	Speakers
1 Example	Fax	Business man
2		
3		
4		
5		

While-listening: tape script -writing

You are going to listen to a listening extract which is a message on an answer phone. Try to write down the whole script. The listening passage is recorded on your booth's tape recorder where you can do retracing (stop the tape, rewind it and replay any part). Concentration helps you grasp all the sentences of the listening passage.

A message on an answer phone:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Post-listening: speaking skill integration (imitation of a model)

After writing down your scripts on your worksheets, now, record the passage with your voices in an attempt to imitate the model. Your versions of the “message on an answer phone” will be captured for analysis and assessments (use only the following switches: record, play, stop, and rewind).

Section two: speaking

Strategy: telephoning

Create your own telephone conversations and practice them as interactive speaking activity. Then, record your versions on your own tape recorder (students' booth is provided with two headsets which permit the process of pairing two students in one machine and practice telephoning). You can repeat the recording till you achieve satisfaction.

The tape script of the second test' listening passage:

"Hi, Marry. Sorry I missed you this morning. I had to rush over the site. Trouble with the drivers. Can you cancel my appointments for this afternoon, please? Could you also tell them down in accounts that I won't be able to make it today? Try and fix something up for Thursday. If you need to contact me the site office number is **965 8849**. That's **965 8849**. I should be there till at least four. I'll try and stop by at the office before you leave. Thanks a lot. Bye.

Diana Pye, Simon Greenall (1996. 109)

Appendix five

University of Biskra
Department of English
Second year classes

Name:
Group:

Third test:

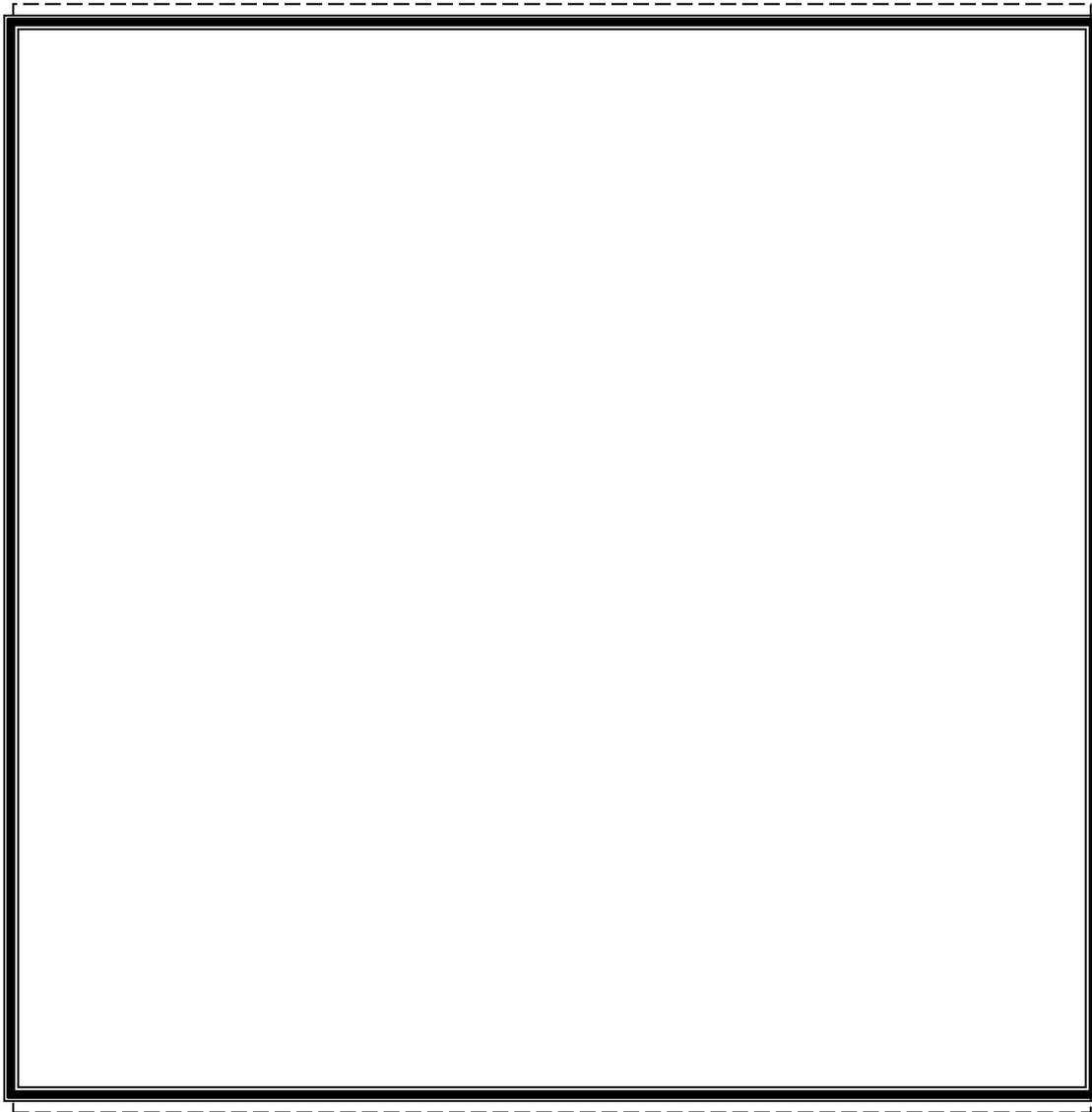
The topic: Leadership

Section one: listening comprehension

Pre-listening: matching technique

Match the following names with the pictures:

Indira Gandhi, Elizabeth 1, Cleopatra, Martin Luther King, Churchill, Genghis Khan, John F. Kennedy, Mao Tse Tung, De Gaulle, Gandhi.



While-listening: listening for specific information (information search).

Listen carefully to the recording (an interview consisting of two extracts talking about leaders and their characteristics) and fill in the gaps with the missing information (words, sentences...)

We have in the studio..... who has recently published a book on
.....

Many of the great leaders of the past were..... They were either.....
.....or dreaded

There were also the great who have changed the world.
.....leaders have a number of basic characteristics:

- They know exactly what they want
- They have very clear
- They work towards their goals no matter whatthey may come up against
- They show great powers of
- They believe that thejustifies
- Great leadership should express the.....of the
- All great leaders have to be.....

Post-listening: true-false statements.

Put F if the statement is false and T if the statement is true and correct the false one.

- 1- Take Genghis Khan, for example, he was not an outstanding warrior or military leader but he was a spiritual leader.
- 2- Luther and Gandhi are military leaders who have changed the world.
- 3- Great leadership is always identified with military models.
- 4- Churchill and de Gaulle were peacetime heroes.
- 5- Gandhi's purpose of freeing India was undeniably the popular will.

Section two: speaking

Strategy: role-play

Work in pairs.

Role cards

S1: you are the interviewer and your partner is your interviewee

S2: you are intended to be a very famous leader (make a simulation of any leader you know)

S1: ask **S2** about:

- His childhood and early family life
- How did he become a leader?
- What are his main achievements?
- What are his personality characteristics?....etc

S2: give explanation and clarification of all questions

Note: exchange roles to allow **S1** the opportunity to speak.

The tape script of the third test' listening passage:

I: the subject of our program this afternoon is leadership. We have in the studio Graham Henshaw who is a historian and has recently published a book on the great leaders of our time.

Mr. H: hello

I: Mr. Henshaw. Perhaps you can tell us what, in your view, makes a really great leader?

Mr. H:

Well, to start with, I think we can learn a lot from history by studying the great men and women who've left their mark at different times- for both good and bad, I hasten to add. But, of course, many of the great leaders of the past were military chiefs, and depending on whose side you found yourself on, they were either national heroes or, er, dreaded tyrants. Take Genghis Khan, for example, he was undoubtedly an outstanding warrior and military leader, if you happened to be one of his followers, that is. But if you were unlucky enough to live in a country he plundered, you were more likely to see him as a dangerous madman. So you see, not every one is likely to see these so called great leaders in the same light.

I: but were all the great leaders of the past military chiefs?

Mr. H:

Oh no, of course there were also the great spiritual leaders who have changed the world. Men like Luther and Gandhi. But I think it is true to say that most people, even today, continue to identify great leadership with military models. I mean, just consider the criticisms our politicians get fired at them. How often do we hear them being compared unfavorably to wartime heroes such as Churchill or de Gaulle? Even though, the job at hand is very different. What good would military strategy be for dealing with unemployment? I'm pretty sure it would be of little use. So even though these models no longer bear any relation to the complex workings of the modern world, we still measure ministers or company directors against them.

I: can we say that there are some characteristics which all great leaders have in common?

Mr. H:

I think it is true to say that all successful leaders share a number of basic characteristics. For a start, they know exactly what they want to achieve, I mean they have clear objectives. Secondly, they never lose sight of their objectives and work towards them no matter what obstacles they may come up against. In this respect, they display great powers of concentration. The third common characteristic of the great leaders is that they tend to believe that the end justifies the means. Of course, you can easily see the danger here. What is the difference between the madman and the truly great leader? I think the difference lies in the fourth characteristic. Great leadership should express the will of the people and improve their lot. It doesn't just serve the personal ambition. In other words, it has to be for the common good. Take Gandhi, for instance, he may have unleashed destructive forces, but his main purpose of freeing India was undeniably the popular will. Finally, I think we have to add success to our list. To be considered great, the leader has to be successful. I can't think of many examples of unsuccessful great leaders!"

Diana Pye, Greenall (1996. 114-115)

Appendix six:

The assessment grid of oral performance

Scores	Fluency	Accuracy	Pronunciation	Task achievement	Interactive communication
04	Coherent spoken interaction with good speed and rhythm. Few intrusive hesitations.	Evidence of a wide range of structures and vocabulary. Errors minimal in number and gravity.	Little L1 accent. L1 accent not obtrusive. Good mastery of English pronunciation features.	The tasks are dealt with fully and effectively. The language is appropriate to each task.	Contributes fully and effectively throughout the interaction.
03	Occasional but noticeable hesitations, but not such as to strain the listener or impede communication.	Evidence of a good range of structures and vocabulary. Errors few in number and minor in gravity. These errors do not impede communication.	Noticeable L1 accent having minor difficulties with some pronunciation features. These do not strain the listener or impede communication.	The tasks are mostly dealt with effectively but with minor inadequacies of execution or language.	Contributes with ease for most of the interaction, with only occasional and minor difficulties.
02	Fairly frequent and noticeable hesitations. Communication is achieved but strains the listener at times.	Fairly frequent errors and evidence of restricted range of structures and/or vocabulary. These do not prevent communication of the essential message.	Obvious L1 pronunciation features with major defects. This may strain the listener and/or make comprehension of detail difficult.	One or more of the tasks are dealt with in a limited manner. The language is often inappropriate. Redirection may have been required at times.	Contributes effectively for some of the interaction, but fairly frequent difficulties.
01	Disconnected speech and/or frequent hesitations impede communication and strain the listener.	Frequent basic errors and limited range of structures and/or vocabulary impede communication and strain the listener.	Heavy L1 pronunciation and widespread difficulties with English features impede communication of the message and strain the listener.	Inadequate attempts at the tasks using little appropriate language. Requires major redirection or assistance.	Difficulty in maintaining contributions throughout. may respond to simple or structured interaction but obvious limitations in freer situations

Taken from: Diana Pye, Simon Greenall (1996. 99)

الملخص:

يعتبر مقياس التعبير الشفهي أحد أهم المقاييس التعليمية لطلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة. يحاول الطلبة في هذا المقياس اكتساب و تعلم مهارتي الاستماع و المحادثة اللتان تعتبران أهم مكونين للتواصل الفعال و الهادف. ولأن التعبير و التواصل باللغة الأجنبية (الإنجليزية) هو هدف و غاية كل طالب, كان لزاما على أستاذ المقياس استعمال مختلف الوسائل التعليمية المتاحة لبلوغ هذا الهدف. من بين هذه الوسائل, نجد ما يسمى ب "مخبر اللغة" الذي يعد أكثرها شيوعا و استعمالا.

من هذا المنطلق أردنا من خلال بحثنا أن نسلط الضوء على مخبر اللغة ودوره في تنمية و تطوير مهارتي الاستماع و المحادثة عند طلبة السنة الثانية- قسم اللغة الإنجليزية- بجامعة بسكرة. وانطلاقا من فرضية أن الطالب الذي يستطيع استيعاب اللغة الشفهية للناطقين الأصليين بها هو الذي يستطيع التحدث و التواصل بها. وعلى هذا الأساس, طرحنا الإشكالية التالية:

إلى أي مدى يمكن اعتبار مهارة الاستماع للغة الشفهية للناطقين الأصليين بها في مخبر اللغة تجربة لغوية حقيقية تساعد على تطوير مهارة المحادثة و التواصل؟ و إلى أي مدى يمكن اعتبار مخبر اللغة وسيلة تعليمية فعالة تساعد الطالب على تطوير مهارتي الاستماع و المحادثة باللغة الأجنبية (الإنجليزية)؟

أما هدف هذا البحث فهو تبيان أن مهارة الاستماع ليست عملية غير حيوية كما يعتقد الكثير من معلمي اللغة الأجنبية, والتأكيد على دور مخبر اللغة في تدريس مقياس التعبير الشفهي.

إن المنهج التجريبي الذي اعتمده في هذه الدراسة أمكننا من معرفة أهم المشاكل التي يواجهها الطالب و الأستاذ في مقياس التعبير الشفهي. ولهذا حاولنا في الأخير اقتراح بعض الحلول لهما, و التي قد تساعد في تسهيل و تفعيل العملية التعليمية لهذا المقياس.

INTRODUCTION

Many educators and language researchers have engaged in an attempt to clarify some of the basic issues in teaching /learning process. Certain controversial subjects, such as "language mastery", "proficiency level" and "communicative skills" are frequently put under extensive investigation. Their main objective is to arrive at some common, clear and precise points that can hopefully help language teachers and learners to set the ground for their educational objectives. Most of the emerged points shape the beliefs and attitudes of those educators and language researchers towards the teaching /learning process.

As approaching language proficiency level and communicative skills is the primary aim of learners, it became an urgent necessity for language teachers to exert themselves to the utmost of their power to benefit fully from the works of language researchers. In the context of TEFL, the necessity became really a priority simply because learners' need to communicate using the target language is undoubtedly their ultimate objective.

In fact, almost all language instructional approaches promote the integration of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) in ways that reflect natural language communication, outside and inside the classroom. Outside the classroom, listening is used twice as often as speaking, which in turn is used twice as reading and writing (Rivers: 1981). Inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most often used skills (Brown: 1994). Depending on these facts and throughout the different courses I have carried out as teacher of oral expression module for English classes at the University of Biskra I have recognized that in order to be a good communicator, one needs to be skilled in both listening and speaking. Although "this interdependence has not always been appreciated by language teachers and course designers, who have often separated off listening and speaking as discrete parts of language competence" (Ann Anderson and Tony Lynch.2000.15).

Practically, in all the classes I have taught, I have recognized that the most effective spoken performances come from learners who are skilled in listening. Learners, who have experienced success in simple listening comprehension tasks, are more likely to have necessary self-confidence to begin and sustain a conversation and support their competence in speaking skill. The main problem of learners who have shown less effective spoken performances is that they are not used to every day EFL being spoken naturally. Many of them lack self-confidence in listening activities especially in language laboratory. This problem leads to learner's failure to understand the language they hear. Therefore, it

becomes an obstacle to communicate and interact when speaking. Some learners feel that their teacher has not given them opportunities to practice both sets of skills (listening and speaking) and to integrate them in conversation. Hence, we are now in a better position to state the following questions:

To what extent can listening in language laboratory be a real language experience which can help learners of English at the University level to develop and reinforce their speaking skill? And

To what extent can laboratory-based language teaching have a significant degree of effectiveness in developing students' aural-oral skills?

Researchers noticed that for many EFL students, learning to speak accurately and fluently in English is a priority. It is the skill by which they are frequently judged while first impressions are being formed. The main method of exposing students to spoken English (after the teacher) is through the use of taped material which allows learners to listen to a variety of speakers on a variety of topics in a variety of genres such as: dialogues, interviews, lectures, stories...etc.

Listening to appropriate tapes in language laboratory provides exposure to spoken English, so that students get vital information not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about pronunciation, intonation, pitch and stress.

Listening through taped instructional material in language laboratory is a way to bring different kinds of speaking into the classroom to help the learner to understand as well as to perform well while speaking English.

In another hand, the lack of this exposure to spoken English contributes to underachievement in speaking skill. Learners who are not used to listen to authentic spoken English (taped instructional material) are typically limited to the voice of their teacher with his own idiosyncrasies. Thus, authentic spoken language presents an obstacle for these learners to understand language as it is used by its native speakers and obviously leads to ill-performance in speaking.

The aims of this research are:

- To show that listening in language laboratory is not a passive action as most teachers think. It is a very active, vital process and an important part of L2 teaching which enhance the speaking skill.

- To show that audio tapes in language laboratory is still the most convenient means of capturing the voice of learners for better analysis and evaluation to provide necessary feedback to reinforce their aural-oral skills.
- To suggest some teaching recommendation concerning the use of language laboratory to develop and integrate listening and speaking skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. CHOICE OF THE METHOD:

The present research paper is a study investigates the role and the effectiveness of laboratory-based language teaching in developing learners' aural-oral skills at the University level. This means that the researcher expects one variable (the independent) to influence the other (the dependent). In this case, the independent variable is the laboratory instructional material and the dependent variable is the aural-oral tests' scores of learners.

So, the study which explores the strength of relationships between two variables requires using the experimental method. It is the appropriate way of gathering data in terms of surveying students through questionnaires and tests of language proficiency (listening and speaking skills' proficiency, in this case). The experimental method is also used to guarantee the maximum of validity and reliability. In this respect, D. Nunan (1999) maintains that:

"Experiments are designed to collect data in such a way that threats to the reliability and validity are minimized."

P. 47

However, the experimental method can not be successfully applied with such a study unless adequate care should be taken to control the extraneous variables which might affect the results of the study such as mental abilities and aptitudes. Random assigning of subjects in both groups (experimental and control) and administering a pre-test and post-test could put the researcher in a better position to argue that the differences in tests' scores are due to the experimental treatment. Nunan (1999) says:

"If you carry out the procedures already described, that is, randomly assigning your subjects to either the control or experimental group, and administering a pre and post-treatment test, then you could reasonably claim to have carried out what is known as a "true experiment"

P. 27

2. THE POPULATION AND THE SAMPLING OF THE STUDY

Conducting an experimental study on about 180 students, the entire population of second year students in the department of English at the University of Biskra during the academic year: 2004-2005, is really ambitious, time consuming and difficult to control. Most language researchers argued that sufficient data can be obtained through the study of a sample of the population.

Therefore, the sample of the study consists of two groups formed by the administration records on the basis of alphabetic name order with the total number of forty students. The sample's participants share the university learning experience (one year of the study in the department of English). They used to receive three hours per week devoted to oral expression course in which listening and speaking are supposed to be practiced both in classroom and language laboratory. What the sample does not share is their educational background (they came from different streams; literary, scientific and technical).

The sample is divided into two randomly assigned and equal groups to fulfill the requirements of the experimental method (experimental and control group). The experimental group consists of 20 subjects (16 females and 04 males), and the control group also consists of 20 students (14 females and 06 males).

3. DATA GATHERING TOOLS

To obtain sufficient and subject-supporting data that provide adequate evidence on the appropriate way to carry out this investigation, the common research techniques to do so are the "elicitation techniques". Following Nunan (1999),

"Elicitation is a range of procedures for obtaining speech samples and other data from subjects. Such procedures may range from administration of standardized tests through to questionnaires and interviews"

P. 230

Therefore, the main data gathering tools used in this study are the questionnaires, administered to second year students and their teachers of oral expression module, and the tests designed for learners to obtain necessary data about their aural-oral skills' proficiency level by means of the observation grids.

3.1 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires are indeed the popular and widely used means of collecting data; hence we used such tool to obtain different perspectives about the subject through students and teachers' opinions and standpoints concerning the items under investigation. They aim at giving students and teachers the opportunity to reveal their difficulties and barriers in the learning-teaching of listening and speaking in language laboratory in particular.

Although "the construction of valid and reliable questionnaires is a highly specialized business" (Nunan: 1999. 143), a piloting phase has been done to avoid any pitfalls (unclear instructions, ambiguous layout, inappropriate way of asking questions...). Before administering the questionnaire to the 90 participants, it was first piloted to a group of students (20 students) to ensure a well-construction of the questionnaires. As far as teachers' questionnaires are concerned, we intended to have our colleagues and teachers' comments and opinions for the well-constructing, wording and layout of the questionnaires items.

3.2 OBSERVATION GRIDS OF TESTS

Testing students' aural-oral proficiency is another way to collect required data for the study. It was based on tasks and activities designed to develop students' level in speaking and listening. The tests were scored regularly to observe students' performance progress.

Observation grids aim at comparing the means of both groups, so that a clear and insightful evaluation of the effectiveness of the introduced material (language laboratory instructional material) can be done. In fact, according to these observation grids and the interpretation of results, we made our conclusions concerning the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing second year students' aural-oral skills.

PART ONE:

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

LANGUAGE SKILLS AND TEACHING AIDS

INTRODUCTION

All the conventional approaches to language teaching have emphasized the necessity of teaching the so called 'four macro skills' (listening, reading, speaking and writing), but with different priorities. Language teachers are supposed not only to teach these skills but also to facilitate learning them using what is called 'teaching aids'.

Thus, in this chapter we shall put our general theme "the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing aural /oral skill in its context. Since speaking and listening are among the four language skills, and language laboratory is one of the classroom' teaching aids, we shall have an overview of all skills (receptive and productive) and the different ways they are taught and learnt, then the various available teaching aids (visual, audio and audiovisual) and the appropriate techniques of using them in language classroom to teach the above skills.

1. LANGUAGE SKILLS

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) requires exposing students to the so called 'four skills': listening, reading, speaking and writing. The aim is to develop learners' abilities in receiving and producing language oral and written discourses. If the learner has mastered these four skills successfully, that means that he/she can receive and understand language discourses as well as he/she can produce and convey messages "accurately and fluently" (Ur, 2000)

Language skills are divided into two broad categories: receptive and productive skills.

1.1 RECEPTIVE SKILLS

According to Jeremy Harmer (2001.199), "receptive skills are the ways in which people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear."

This process of extracting meaning is linked to the two skills: reading and listening. In spite of the differences between the ways they are taught and learned, they require a complete deploy of the so called 'schematic knowledge' to approach the process of comprehension. In another word, making a sense of any discourse we see or hear involves 'pre-existing knowledge' or more accurately 'schema'. The term has been defined by Cook (1989) as follows:

"[...] Mental representations of typical situations...used in discourse processing to predict the contents of the particular situations which the discourse describes."

In Tricia Hedge (2000.190)

Current researches into the reading and listening processes have demonstrated that particular words, discourse patterns or contexts activate the pre-existing knowledge (schema in the mind of the reader or listener). Thus, schematic knowledge helps us to recognize what we see or hear for it fits into patterns that we already know.

Harmer (2001) presented the example of a British reader who reads the newspaper headlines "England in six-wicket collapse" he/she will guess that the England cricket team has failed in an international match. This certainly indicates that the reader's guess is based on his pre-existing knowledge of how English newspapers headlines are formed. It is based also on his understanding that wicket is a cricketing term and his previous knowledge that England has not been doing well in the sport lately.

The above example shows that understanding a piece of written or spoken discourse requires much more than just knowing the language. Our schematic knowledge helps us to identify the topic or the idea being talked about so that good readers and listeners have such receptive skills that allow them to perceive and understand the discourse as it progresses.

1.1.1. TEACHING RECEPTIVE SKILLS

EFL students and teachers usually face particular problems when dealing with receptive skills. These problems as viewed by Harmer (2001) are those of language, topic, the task and the expectation they have of reading and listening.

Language: the basic problems of language are those of sentence length (C. Wallace, 1992) and number of unfamiliar words in the text (W. Underwood, 1989). The most efficient ways to address the problem of language- according to Harmer (2001) - are:

- Pre- teaching vocabulary: the aim is to remove some obstacles of comprehension which they are likely to encounter.
- Extensive reading and listening: this can help students to develop their language patterns and be more positive about reading and listening. It certainly promotes their comprehension skills and enriches their vocabulary bank and normally their schematic knowledge.
- Authenticity: authentic material in FL teaching is the only way to bring the natural language of native speakers to the classroom and get students to contact directly with the real language that they have to work hard to understand.

Topic: if students encounter unfamiliar topic, they will certainly show less success than expected in learning receptive skills. The lack of engagement will appear as a major hindrance to successful reading or listening in the case of unfamiliar genre or uninteresting topic. To deal with this problem, teachers need to choose appropriate topics and use different genres so that students will show a full engagement. Questionnaires, interviews and the reaction of students to the previous topic can be a good procedure to achieve teacher's aim. Teachers also need to include different topics across a variety of lessons so that they can possibly meet the maximum of students' different interests and needs. To make the chosen topic interesting and create motivation, Harmer (2001) states:

"[...] we can get students engaged by talking about the topic, by showing a picture for prediction, by asking them to guess what they are going to see or hear on the basis of few words or phrases from the text, or by having them look at headlines or captions before they read the whole thing"

P. 206

Thus, by varying topics and genres and creating the interest, we are automatically activating students' schemata before they read or listen.

Comprehension tasks: successful teaching and learning of receptive skills depend widely on the right choice of comprehension tasks. Students usually complain that certain tasks in listening or reading are likely to be testing than teaching. Harmer (2001) confirms that:

"Sometimes such tasks appear to be testing the students rather than helping them to understand. Although reading and listening are perfectly proper medium for language and skill testing, nevertheless, if we are trying to encourage students to improve their receptive skill, testing then will not be appropriate way of accomplishing this."

P.207

The appropriate way to teach comprehension tasks is the one which makes the task activating students' expectations and motivating their abilities of grasping the meanings from spoken or written messages. Activities like "fill in gaps" forms on the basis of a listening tape, or solving reading puzzles can help students to improve their receptive skills in comprehension tasks.

Dudley- Evans and T.F Johns (1981: 37-39) suggested two patterns of activities to deal with comprehension tasks:

- Global understanding pattern which involves questions to check students' understanding of the main points without referring to their notes.
- Understanding of detail pattern which is like "global understanding" but with referring to some points in the lecture like the examples given during the lecture.

The level of the task raises another problem. To avoid activities and tasks that are either too difficult or too easy, teachers have to bridge between the task and the text. They can make from a difficult text an easy task. For instance, we get beginners to listen to one of the Shakespeare's plays (Hamlet) and ask them simple questions like: how many people are speaking? We can also give an extract from Thomas Hardy's "the woodlanders" and ask them to find verbs in the infinitive form. In this way, we can make a balance between the difficulty of the text and the ability to achieve the task.

Students' attitude towards written or spoken texts and tasks is usually negative. EFL teachers always hear the phrase "sir, it is too difficult"; here, it is the job of the teacher to resolve such negative expectations and attitudes by choosing the right level in terms of

language, text and task in both reading and listening skills. By doing this procedure successively, we probably erase the previous attitudes and expectations and thus creating new conditions for further engagement.

1.1.2 READING SKILL

Most teachers probably agree that: "reading is a complex skill, that is to say it involves a whole series of lesser skills" (Geoffrey Broughton, C. Brumfits and others, 1980.89).

The first skill is what Allan Davies and A.G Widdowson (1974) call "reading ability". They classified this ability into three stages: decoding (recognizing characters and symbols as same or different), structuring (combining written characters to make words, phrases and sentences) and interpretation (matching words and sentences as sounds with their meanings). Linguistically speaking, the three stages of reading ability can be related to the three linguistic levels: decoding stage to the phonological level, structuring to the syntactic and interpretation to the semantic level. These stages are overlapped to shape the reading skill ability.

EFL teachers get students to read texts for many reasons. According to Harmer (1998), many EFL students read for study purposes or for pleasure. In both cases, reading helps them in language learning.

"At the very least, some of the language sticks in their minds as part of the process of language acquisition, and if the reading text is especially interesting and engaging, acquisition is likely to be more successful"

P. 68

Reading texts can help them to improve their writing skill, vocabulary and pronunciation. It can also inspire teachers and students with further interesting topics for discussions, imaginative ideas and fascinating lessons.

In the course of teaching reading skill, we have to distinguish between "top-down" and "bottom-up" processes. In the former, the reader gets an overview of the text to obtain the general idea. It also called "skimming". The latter refers to the way in which the reader focuses on every word and sentence to build up a whole understanding of the text. It is also called "scanning".

EFL teachers should encourage students to engage in the reading process by exposing them to both extensive and intensive reading (the only difference between the two kinds is that the extensive reading is chosen by students on their own for further improvement and pleasure, whereas intensive reading is chosen by the teacher and it is under his control).

In order to carry out a successful extensive reading, students should read only what they can understand. Since one of the main aims of the extensive reading is pleasure, there is no need to struggle with a difficult text to understand every word it involves. Extensive reading helps students to be more positive about reading process. Richard R. Day and Julian Bamford (1998) stress that:

"If set up and carried out appropriately, extensive reading not only helps students learn to read in their second language, but also leads them to enjoy reading. This encourages them to continue reading long after formal study of the second language is over".

Preface XIII-XIV

In order to carry out a successful intensive reading in EFL classroom, teachers need to create interest in the text and task. They also need to determine the purpose of the students' reading and give them clear instructions about how to achieve it and the time they will take to accomplish it. While reading, teachers can observe the progress, give extra time if needed or providing an immediate feedback. Harmer (2001) explains:

"While students are reading we can observe their progress since this will give us a valuable information about how well they are doing individually and collectively, and will tell us whether to give them some extra time or, instead, move to organizing feedback more quickly than we had anticipated"

P. 213

Both intensive and extensive reading should appropriately meet the different levels of teaching reading (elementary, intermediate and advanced).

1.1.3. LISTENING SKILL

The common belief about listening is that it is passive, neglected and taken for granted skill. Yet it is vital, active and complex skill (G. Broughton and others.1980, T. Hedge.2000, A. Anderson and T. Lynch.1988, M. Rost.1994).

In the TEFL context, the meaning of the word listening differs from one teacher to another (A. Anderson and T. Lynch.1988.63). Yet many teachers agree that listening skill involves sub-skills or components employed during listening practice in second language instructions. Michael Rost (1994. 142) draws up a particular list of components:

- Discriminating between sounds.
- Recognizing words.
- Identifying stressed words and grouping of words.
- Identifying functions (such as apologizing) in conversations.
- Connecting linguistic cues to paralinguistic cues (intonation and stress) and to non-linguistic cues (gestures and relevant objects in the situations) in order to construct meaning.
- Using background knowledge and context to predict and then to confirm meaning.
- Recalling important words, topics and ideas.
- Giving appropriate feedback to the speaker.
- Reformulating what the speaker has said.

Like in reading skill, students in listening should deploy all these sub-skills to reach successful listening. In this sense, Rost (1994) states:

"Successful listening involves an integration of these component skills. In this sense, listening is a coordination of the component skills, not the individual skills themselves. This integration of these skills constitutes a person's listening ability"

P.142

FL teachers teach listening for many reasons. They mainly expose their students to spoken language to give them opportunities to hear native speakers' language with all different varieties and accents (Harmer, 1998.97). The second main reason to teach listening especially through tapes is that it is a good factor that helps students to acquire different patterns of language. Harmer (1998) writes:

"Listening to appropriate tapes provides such exposure and students get vital information not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, pitch and stress."

P. 89

No one can deny the role of listening instruction in EFL classroom. This is simply because listening is vital in the FL teaching for it provides "input" for the learner. It is due to this input learning FL effectively begins. Authentic listening material exposes students to the natural language of native speakers. Rost (1994) writes:

"Authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to attempt to understand language as it is actually used by native speakers".

P.141

Like teaching reading, there are certain principles behind the teaching of listening. The major principle is the tape recorder that the teacher uses for listening activities. It should have a good speaker and a good motor speed in order the tape not to go faster or slower and to be heard all around the class.

Teacher's preparation is very vital principle when teaching listening for:

"Teachers need to listen to the tape all the way through before they take it into class. That way, they will be prepared for any problems, noises, accents etc, that come up. That way, they can judge whether students will be able to cope with the tape and the tasks that go with".

Harmer (1998. 100)

Creating interest and activating motivation while doing listening tasks depends on the teacher's right choice of topic, level and task. Teachers can also exploit listening texts to the full (harmer, 1998.100) by using different applications and varying kinds of study.

As with the reading skill, listening also involves the two different aspects: "bottom-up and top-down" processes. Tricia Hedge (2000) defines the former as follows:

"In the bottom-up part of listening process, we use our knowledge of language and our ability to process acoustic signals to make sense of sounds that speech presents to us. In other words, we use information in the speech itself to try to comprehend the meaning".

P.230

In top-down process, the listener bridges his previous knowledge with the text using certain "contextual clues" (T. Hedge, 2000) such as: speaker(s), topic, setting...etc. it is the employ of schematic knowledge in the spoken text.

EFL teachers should encourage students to engage in the listening process by involving them in both extensive and intensive listening.

What is important for extensive listening is that it gives the learners the chance and the choice to develop their listening skill, improve their language abilities and enjoy themselves. It is usually taken outside the class and done for its own sake. Extensive listening material can be found in recordings of stories and other texts taken from books and magazines, and informally recordings from radio and television where spontaneous conversations can be a good resource for advanced learners.

Teachers can carry out an effective extensive listening in EFL classes by providing appropriate tapes in different levels and genres across variety of topics to be organized, then, as a small library available for students. They can encourage extensive listening by asking students to perform certain tasks. Students can report what they have recently listened to, evaluate the level of difficulty and summarize the content of the tape. The aim of such tasks "is to give students more and more reasons to listen" Harmer (2001.229)

As far as intensive listening is concerned, many EFL teachers prefer to use taped material. They certainly agree that there are numerous advantages in using audiotapes. It is the easiest way for teachers to bring into the classroom a variety of voices (male, female, different ages, different accents) on a variety of topics in a variety of genres (dialogues, interviews, lectures, stories and poems). In some teaching situations it may be the learner's only opportunity to hear native speakers, and to hear FL-speaking voices other than the teacher's.

Another way to carry out a successful intensive listening is what Harmer (2001.230) named 'live listening' which can take many forms. Teachers' reading aloud to a class can be really an enjoyable activity to deal with live listening for it allows students to hear the spoken version of the written text. Story-telling, holding a conversation with a colleague and live interviews are also effective tools for live listening. Although, live listening is not a substitute for audiotapes but it provides another perspective for intensive listening.

Generally speaking, extensive and intensive listening are vital aspects of listening process which are intended to be appropriately carried out with different levels (elementary, intermediate and advanced) across variety of lessons.

1.2. PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

Any successful communication requires a well-built structure of discourse (written or spoken) in order to be well received and appropriately perceived by listeners or readers. According to Harmer (2001), Written discourse particularly has to be both coherent (following the sequence of ideas and points) and cohesive (connecting ideas across phrases and sentences), whereas spoken discourse (speech) appears to be more spontaneous, disorganized and "considerably more chaotic" (Harmer. 2001. 246) for speakers do not pay attention to use organized language structures as writers do.

Shared Schemata make spoken and written communication efficient (i.e. it helps participants to communicate effectively). Harmer (2001) states:

"When people with similar cultural and linguistics backgrounds get together they speak to each other easily because they know the rules of conversation in their language and their shared culture. When they write to each other they obey certain conventions [...] our shared schemata helps us to communicate successfully"

P.246

Holding a conversation with someone of similar cultural and linguistic background demands following certain socio-cultural rules in terms of formality, the level of language (high or low), distance and closeness of participants...etc. these cultural habits justify the differences between man and woman talk, high and low social status, behaviors and other speech acts varieties. To hold a successful conversation also requires what is called "turn taking" in which participants recognize verbal and visual signals and it allows them to finish or to take a speaking turn.

In writing, we have to follow certain rules too. They clearly appear in internet chatting, newspapers, application letters...etc.

In any communication (written or spoken), five parameters are systematically demonstrated: participants, genre, setting, channel (vehicle) and the purpose. These parameters vary from one situation to another; giving a lecture (genre) to students

(participants) in a classroom (setting) to clarify certain facts (purpose) is different from performing a play (genre) in a theatre (setting) to the audience (participants) using a microphone (channel) for entertainment (purpose). Writing has parameters too. Writing a letter to a friend requires kind of language unlike the newspapers' language and unlike the one of formal letters or essays...etc.

The genre of the audience determines the kind of language, style and the way the writer or speaker should use. This obviously depends on the ability of the writer or the speaker to change his/her style and language to meet the needs of the audience.

1.2.1. TEACHING PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

The aim of teaching productive skills is to reach a communicative purpose rather than practicing language for specific points. Thus, language drills in speaking and writing sentences to practice grammar points are not productive skills for they have no communicative value. Hedge (2000) confirms that speaking – as a productive skill- should be practiced within the context of communicative approach:

"As communicative approaches have developed, teachers have been concerned to ensure that students not only practice speaking in a controlled way in order to produce features of pronunciation, vocabulary and structure accurately, but also practice using these features more freely in purposeful communication."

P. 261

Hence, FL teachers have to believe that the extent of success in language learning program depends basically on freely practicing tasks either in spoken or written productions. In this sense, Harmer (2001.250) states that the freer the task the greater the chance of seeing how successful a language learning program has been.

The teaching of productive skills in FL classroom aims at assessing students' oral and written performance. Teachers can assess their students' work using comments (saying "good" or "not exactly" or writing something like "a very interesting composition" or "the topic is a bit mixed up because the sequence of events is not clear"), marks and grades and reports (sent to student, school or parents for further improvement and progress of students' language production).

As in receptive skills, EFL students feel that producing language discourses (spoken or written) is difficult particularly with activities and tasks of communicative purpose. In this case, the role of teacher is very significant for they have to help students to manage and perform this kind of tasks according to their language level. Making students aware of the determined purpose of the task can help them to get better results in language production. Above all, teachers should build up students' confidence step by step to enhance their fluency in speaking and creativity in writing. They also need to be aware of the level of language, topic and genre for they may create barriers in front of students' improvement and progress in productive skills.

The major problems facing EFL students in language production are those of language, topic and genre (Harmer 2001,252).

Language: when expressing themselves, students encounter the barrier of words and grammar. This, of course, makes a very mixed up writing process and non-spontaneous speech.

To deal with this problem, two main steps should be taken into consideration:

- Supply key language: before engaging students in spoken or written tasks, teachers have to provide them with phrases or questions that will help them to perform the task successfully.
- Plan activities in advance: such activities like a warm-up to use the new language points. They bridge between the new supplied language points and the students' ability to use them fluently and accurately.

What should be taken into account is that these supplied key language points and activities should fall at the communicative purpose.

Topic and genre: uninteresting topics create lack of engagement and prevent students to invest their language production. Unfamiliar genre does the same thing too. Teachers, then, may expect failure in students' language production unless they follow certain procedures of avoiding such a failure:

- Choosing interesting topics (interviews and questionnaires are very efficient ways to know the favorite topics of students).
- Creating interest in the topic (group work can be a good way to create the interest).
- Varying topics and genres (variety is a vital way to meet the students' needs and interest).

- Providing necessary information (the aim is to clarify the way writing or speaking tasks should be carried out).

1.2.2. WRITING SKILL

There is no doubt that many FL teachers and learners see writing skill as the most complex process to deal with. It requires employing variety of strategies and activities. Hedge (2000) states the different activities involved in the writing process:

"It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers."

P. 302

It is, thus, the outcome of organized, systematic and interrelated procedures that any FL writer should follow in order to reach a successful piece of writing.

Like reading process, Allen Davies and H. G. Widdowson (1974) distinguish three main stages in the writing process: manipulation, structuring and communication.

Students whose first language writing system is different from the one foreign language are certainly encountering difficulties in manipulating the shapes of FL letters. At the initial stage of learning, Arab students whose writing system is right-to-left find difficulties when writing, for example, in French left-to-right system.

Structuring stage bears extra difficulties to FL students. It is the stage of training and composing at the sentence level. A .Davies and H. G Widdowson see that difficulties to write efficiently in L1 certainly lead to failure in L2 writing.

Yet, the real difficulty appears in the communication stage. "It is associated with the circumstances in which written communication takes place and the social purposes it serves"

(A. Davies and H. G Widdowson: 1974.178).

In this sense, Geoffrey Broughton and others (1980) consider writing process as both individual and social activity or more accurately "private and public":

"When we write, unlike when we talk, we are engaged in an activity which is usually at the same time both private and public. It is private because the act of composition is by its nature solitary, but it is public in that most writing is intended for an audience..."

P.116

Just like teaching reading and listening, teaching writing as a basic language skill is a very vital factor in FL students' language development. Foreign language teachers are supposed to teach writing for many reasons: to provide students with appropriate and efficient ways, to write different writing genres (letters, reports, essays, stories, etc) and to make them aware of writing's special conventions (punctuations, paragraph construction, style differences, etc).

What should be taken into account, when teaching writing, are the background and the level of students. Harmer (1998) states:

"[...] the type of writing we get students to do will depend on their age, interest and level. We can get beginners to write simple poems, but we probably won't give them an extended report on town planning to do [...] it's all a question of what language the students have at their command and what can be achieved with this language"

P.80

Then, when producing a piece of writing, students should follow an overlapped set of steps. Harmer (2001. 258) presents the White and Arndt's process writing model which include the following stages:

- Drafting
- Structuring (ordering information, experimenting with arrangements, etc)
- Reviewing (checking context, connections, assessing impact, editing)
- Focusing (that is making sure you are getting the message you want to get across)
- Generating ideas and evaluation (assessing the draft and/or subsequent drafts)

When the teacher asks his students to write, he should deploy all his usual roles (controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, tutor, and observer). Yet, his most

important roles in teaching writing are those suggested by Harmer (2001); i.e. motivator, resource and feedback provider.

As far as the tasks that stimulate writing are concerned, Ur (2000) suggests variety of tasks including: book report, book review, instruction sheet, narrative, personal story, describe a view, describe people, answer a letter, job application, news report, describe process and film music.

Generally speaking, writing is the vital space for students to immortalize ideas and feelings and get an original piece which reflects their genuine level of language.

1.2.3. SPEAKING SKILL

What should be firstly mentioned is that many TFL researchers agree that speaking is the most complex and important skill which deserves more attention in teaching any foreign language (T. Hedge. 2000, P. Ur. 2000, M. Bygate. 1987).

Ur (2000), for example, declares that speaking skill is the most important skill in the course of teaching and learning a foreign language:

"Of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing; and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested to speak."

P.120

Many FL students do believe that learning to speak is an urgent priority. It is the skill by which they are usually judged. People often ask such a question "can you speak English, French...?" But not "can you write, read English, French ...?", and the following statements are very common: "he/she speaks English very well."; "he/she speaks American/British English."

In fact, it is the most complex skill to teach for it involves network of elements linked to each other. Speaking fluently, according to Harmer (2001) requires not only knowledge of language features but also the ability to process information and language.

As far as language features are concerned, FL students have to master some language elements and practice them away from language drills for better improvement in their spoken productions. These elements are the following:

- Connected speech: to speak effectively in any FL, students need to produce connected speech rather than individual phonemes. This can be successfully achieved through the right application of assimilation, elision, linking r, and weak forms' rules. For instance, instead of saying: "I would have been", he/ she say: "I'd've been".
- Expressive devices: the ability to convey meanings in face to face interaction requires changing pitch and stress, vary volume and speed and using paralinguistic signs.
- Lexis and grammar: different functions of communication (greeting, apologizing, agreeing, expressing surprise, etc.) are vital elements of spontaneous speech. Teachers can get students to use these functions in different contexts and at different steps of any interaction.
- Negotiating language: it is like a channel between the listener and the speaker to get clarification and show the structure of their discourse.

Mental and social processing determines the success of language production too. It involves three main elements contributing in the ability to process information and language.

- Language processing: Harmer (2001) presents a good explanation of language processing. He states:

"Effective speakers need to be able to process language in their own heads and put it into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that are not only comprehensible, but also convey the meanings that are intended."

P. 271

It is the act of retrieving words and phrases from one's memory and as a result "the words are being spoken and as they are being decided and as they are being understood" (Bygate: 1987.11)

- Interacting with others: in any interaction, participants (speakers and listeners) have to be not only language processors but also language communicators. This means that effective speaking involves effective listening, sharing information and turn-acting.
- (On-the-spot) information processing: it is obvious that we make a response to others' feelings and their speech, we need also to process the information we

receive the moment we get it. This kind of processing is instant and culture-specific.

Classroom speaking activities differ from one teacher to another, yet currently and the most widely-used activities fall at "the communicative end of the communicative continuum" (Harmer. 2001).

- Acting from a script is one of these activities in which the teacher can ask his students to act out scenes from a play, course book's conversations or students written dialogues in front of the class. What should be taken into account when acting out is giving students the adequate time to rehearse their dialogues before asking them to perform. Teachers should also pay attention to students' used stress, intonation and speed.
- Carrying out a discussion is a very common speaking activity in language classrooms. Teachers can prepare a topic for discussion to give his students a chance to express their own opinions in front of the class. The formal debate, in which students prepare arguments either with or against various topics, has the ability to enhance students' speaking skill. Most teachers may complain that discussion activities are facing failure. In this sense, Harmer (2001) explains:

"One of the reasons that discussions fail (when they do) is that students are reluctant to give an opinion in front of the whole class, particularly if they cannot think of any thing to say and are not, anyway, confident of the language they might use to say it. Many students feel extremely exposed in discussion situations"

P. 272

Thus, to avoid this failure, teacher needs to prepare his students in advance to the topic, determine clearly his aim in doing such an activity and give appropriate time to think of ideas and language expressions. His success in doing so depends largely upon his ability to change his attitudes to errors and mistakes, in addition to his progressive help and encouragements.

- Another speaking activity, which most teachers do believe that it falls at the communicative end of the communicative continuum, is the communication games. They are frequently done between two students in terms of an information gap (a puzzle to solve, describe and draw activity, describe and

arrange or find similarities and differences between pictures). All these activities depend on both fluency and accuracy. The teacher here has to take into account the determined aim, the level and students' interests.

- Simulation and role-play activities are of great benefits for students because they are likely to bring the outside world into the classroom and use all the common expressions and language structures of various situations. Simulating real-life situations (invitations, business meetings, interviews, friends' talk, etc) needs a full engagement of students in taking the role of a character (with all his thoughts ideas and feelings) different from themselves. The aim of role play activities is to enhance general oral fluency and train students for different language expressions and language structures in a variety of situations. In addition to that, they decrease the level of hesitation and help shy and passive students to be more dynamic and effective in class.

Teaching speaking to EFL students helps them express their opinions and ideas on a variety of topics in a variety of situations fluently and accurately. The role of the teacher is to assist them to develop certain "communication strategies" (Bygate: 1987) and prepare students' speaking abilities for their further careers. He should teach not only speaking in isolation but also to combine it with activities that increase their communicative competence including grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Speaking is intended to be taught in parallel with listening for better improvement of students' both receptive and productive skills.

All in all, the teaching of productive and receptive skills is an overlapped process; the two feed each other in a number of ways. Reception can be a part of production (the child speaks the language he hears). This kind of interrelation is obvious and clear in conversations where listening and speaking mixed together, writing also depends on what we read, etc. thus, teachers need to teach the four skills in parallel and should not have their students practice skills in isolation.

2. TEACHING AIDS

There is no doubt that teaching L1 or L2 requires using what is called 'teaching aids'. They are tools or equipment used not only to explain language meaning and construction but also to facilitate learning process. Most teachers consider them as a source of motivation for they create interest and make the course more dynamic.

Teaching aids are divided into three main categories: visual, audio and audio-visual.

2.1. VISUAL AIDS

The traditional narrow meaning of the term 'visual aids' refers to all things teacher can bring into the classroom to help him doing his job. S. Pit Corder suggests another broad definition of 'visual aids' as follows:

"Any thing which can be seen while the language is being spoken may be a visual aid [...] every thing belonging to or brought into the classroom, animate or inanimate, is a potential visual aid –teachers, boys, girls, pets, plants, cloths, furniture, materials, objects; everything that anyone is seen to do, any movement he makes, any action he performs – laughing, crying, smiling, working, acting, misbehaving, attending or not attending- all are potential visual aids; the moment any member of the class or the teacher begins to speak in English, the whole classroom and its contents are instantaneously converted into potential visual aid".

In H. G Widdowson (1974.211)

In this sense, visual aids are related to a very broad category of teaching aids which includes all what can be seen in the classroom while language is presented (participants, objects, media, behavior, etc). Yet, we are not going to deal with all these kinds since they represent the very broad meaning of the term 'visual aid'. What are going to be discussed bellow are the most common visual aids available to FL teachers (known as teaching equipments).

2.1.1. THE BOARD

The majority of language teachers use black/white board in their classrooms for it is perhaps the most useful of all visual aids in language presentation and practice. R V White (1985) writes:

"The blackboard is your most important visual aid. Most classrooms have either a blackboard and a chalk, or a whiteboard and a felt-tip pen. The board can be used for presenting drawings, diagrams and language. It is important to develop skill and technique in using the board.

P.40

Teachers use black/white boards for a variety of different purposes:

- It is usually used to write new and unfamiliar words that students have not understood or seen before. It helps students to remember the new points.
- It is very useful as an explanation aid, for example, showing the relationship between passive and active voice by drawing arrows.
- Showing the position of stress and intonation, writing up phonetic and phonemic transcriptions and grouping words according to their meaning or grammatical function by using different colors for different aspects of language.
- Boards can be used for drawings, diagrams and tables to facilitate comprehension and keep students' attention.
- Building up dialogues and paragraphs by putting an incomplete text on the board and elicit completion from students. It is a good way to involve the whole class in the task, and get students participate by giving their suggestions and writing a fill-in item to complete the given dialogue or paragraph.
- Different games can be played in the classroom using the board such as: spelling game, cross word puzzle, etc.
- Teachers can stick things on the board like: pictures, charts, posters, etc to be seen by the whole class.
- As far as teaching language skills is concerned, teachers can use the board as "a worksheet for listening and reading comprehension" (RV White. 1985).

Unfortunately many teachers do not use the board appropriately. To exploit the board effectively, Mary Underwood (1991:81) presented some suggestions for language teachers on the way they make full use of the board as effective as possible:

- Write clearly and in large enough letters for every thing to be legible from all parts of the class.
- Don't jot words and phrases down at random all over the board.
- Avoid speaking at length while you are writing on the board with your back to the class.
- If you ask students to copy something you have written, stand or sit well away from the board and wait quietly for them to do so.
- Don't use colors which don't show up well on the board (white is best on a blackboard, red is very difficult to see, yellow is hard to see on a whiteboard).

In fact, the board is very useful and important visual aid if teachers make full use of it (RV White. 1985, Harmer.2001, Adrian Doff.1992) by developing good basic techniques and skills of writing on the board and organizing the layout of what they write. In addition to that, teachers can use the board for simple drawings (faces, figures, places, vehicles, etc) to create the interest and motivation in the course.

2.1.2. PICTURES AND IMAGES

In language classrooms, teachers use pictures and images as one of the most important and useful visual aids. They can be drawn, taken from books, magazines, newspapers or photographs to be used effectively in different ways.

Picture flashcards are used with lower-level students to practice certain language drills and they are used as cues to get students' responses. What makes picture flashcards different from the board is that:

"Picture flashcards have the advantage that the teacher can prepare them at his leisure at home. In this way, they can be made more attractive and colorful and can include details impossible to include in a hastily drawn blackboard picture."

(Peter Hubbard and others: 1991. 114).

Teachers can use pictures for a variety of communication games. Harmer (2001) presents such communication activities like 'describe and draw' where one student describes a picture and his partner has to draw the picture without looking at the original

one. 'Story telling' activity can successfully be done by giving to each member of a group different picture that shows a separate stage in the story and they have to work together to find out what the pictures are telling (picture interpretation's activity).

The common use of pictures and images is for the presenting and checking the meaning so that the easiest way to explain, for example, the meaning of 'skyscraper' is to show a picture of it. Teachers can use them as a 'warm up' to get students' predictions of what is coming next in the lesson. Showing a picture to students and ask them to guess what it shows is a very powerful way to engage them in the task depending on their own prediction and interpretation.

Carrying out a discussion using pictures is a very wonderful technique to make the whole class participates and each student can give his own view about the given topic according to his perception of the picture and the questions of the teacher. In this sense, Harmer (2001) states:

"Pictures can stimulate questions such as: what is it showing? How does it make you feel? What was the artist's/photographer's purpose in designing it in that way? Would you like to have this picture in your house? Why? Why not? How much would you pay for the picture? Is the picture a work of art?"

P.136

Pictures are used not only for simple language tasks but also for creative language use (Harmer.2001) such as: writing a description of a picture, inventing a conversation taking place between two people in a picture, role- play activities, etc.

What should be taken into account when selecting and using pictures for language classroom activities is the appropriateness of the picture for the determined aim, the level of students and their needs. They have to be visible and big enough so that all students can see the necessary details.

Thus pictures, like the board, are very useful visual aid if teachers make full use of them using certain skills and techniques according to their teaching functions so that students learn better and improve their language abilities.

2.1.3. THE OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

The OHP is considered as one of the most versatile piece of teaching aids. It is so widely used since they are easy to carry around and they do not require high technical knowledge. In addition to that, they are used with small classes as well as with large ones. Janina Skrzypczynska (1990) writes:

"One of the most useful and flexible aids in foreign language teaching is an overhead projector (OHP). It can support any presentation where clear, bold and effective visuals are needed."

In Forum (April 1990. 46)

Before using the OHP, the practice is very essential for the teacher in order to become an expert in using it appropriately when presenting lessons in language classroom. Mary Underwood (1991) declares that it is really worthwhile mastering the use of OHP for its enjoyable benefits. The teacher, when using it, will surely discover that:

- There is no chalk-dust to put up with.
- Material can be prepared in advance, can be kept and used in later lessons.
- He/ she can cover part of what is on the OHP transparency with a piece of card or paper, and present the information as he wants (by covering some of the transparency with a piece of paper, he can blank out what he does not want the students to see).
- He can use the material that he has already used before whereas he may have wiped it off the board.
- New teachers can benefit from the pre-prepared material on the OHP where they can get every thing organized in advance and thus less mistakes to be done in front of students.

One of the most significant steps in using the OHP is the preparation of the overhead transparencies (OHTs). Skrzypczynska (in Forum: April 1990) suggests three ways to do so: by means of an infra-Red copying machine, hand drawn transparencies and overlays.

Newspapers, magazines and journals can provide language teachers with an excellent pictures and drawings to be used as OHTs. This can be done easily on an infra-Red copying machine where the teacher can use magazine article illustrated with a picture to make three transparencies: one presents the picture, another only the headline of the article and the third for the article itself. When showing the picture, the teacher can ask his

students to guess what the article may be about. Then he can show the headline's transparency to have more information about the article and keep asking students what the article is about. He can also provide more speaking activities by discussing the article and its different related topics.

If the teacher does not have such copying machine, he can prepare his transparencies by himself. He can draw different scenes showing objects, actions, events, etc to practice vocabulary and grammar activities. He uses these scenes not only for vocabulary and grammar practice but also for written descriptions, narrations, dialogues and even for oral discussions.

When he wishes to add more details to his completed transparency, the teacher can use the overlays (additional transparencies on top of the original transparency) to show further ideas points to extend the original theme.

Mary Underwood (1991) advises language teachers, when using the OHP, to produce good transparencies by following these steps:

- Do not write within 3 cm of the edges.
- Put a piece of lined paper under the transparency to guide your writing.
- Remember that in a large room, your handwriting will need to be about twice 'normal' size.
- Use different colored pens to distinguish your points.
- If you want to use pictures, draw very simple ones or trace outlines, if they are large enough, from books, etc.
- Do not overfill your page (think how few words there are on the most striking advertisements)

Although OHPs are extremely useful and important pieces of visual aids, they have some problems too. They need electricity and they are ineffective when they are up against normal light coming in from windows and doors. In addition to that, they need a big projector square on the wall or screen to make the image seen by the whole class. If language teachers take these 'few' problems into consideration, then the OHP is really an extremely versatile and useful piece of teaching equipment.

Bits and pieces such as realia (real or life like items), language cards, rods, etc can be also used as visual aids and brought to language classroom to help both the teacher and the learner in the course of teaching-learning process.

Generally speaking, all learning theorists assumed that visuals develop comprehension skill and improve learners' abilities of storage and information recalling.

They, I mean visuals, create motivation and enhance understanding levels too. They are really significant and useful for language teacher if he makes a full use of them.

2.2. AUDIO AIDS

Audio material proved its efficacy in teaching languages particularly for L2 learners because it is the only way to bring the natural language of native speakers into the classroom to be used for different purposes and by different people.

Audio aids, like visuals aids, are very useful resources available for language teachers not only to facilitate learning but also to make the course interesting and motivating.

2.2.1. AUDIO CASSETTE/ TAPE RECORDER

The first thing coming into someone's mind, when talking about audio aids, is the audio cassette and the tape recorder. The use of audio tapes is essential in FL classes since they help students to improve their receptive skills particularly listening and enhance their abilities in oral productions. Marsha Chan (2004) says:

“The use of audiotape is essential in the oral skills classes. For receptive skills development, the tape player is the easiest way for students to listen to a variety of speakers on a variety of topics in a variety of genres – dialogues, interviews, lectures, stories, songs and poems-. For productive skills, the audiotape recorder is currently the most accessible piece of voice recording equipment”

In www.suburstmedia.com

The purpose of EFL teachers to use taped material, as one of the most useful teaching aids in language classrooms, is to allow their students to practice and develop their skills mainly listening skill because audiotapes offer students the opportunity to hear different voices of native speakers in a variety of situations and places.

In addition to that, taped material can be effectively used to bring sound effects into the classroom to be used as cues for drills and sound stories (Peter Hubbard: 1991).sound stories consist of sounds which suggest something happening when taken together. Allan Malley and Allen Duff suggest an example to show what sound stories are:

“Airport lounge – bustling noises- ‘FAG announces the departure of flight FAG 61 to New York and Los Angeles. Passengers are requested to proceed to gate number 20...’ – feet –more bustle- whine of jet engines- feet on tarmac, upstairs into plane- ffff of seats being sat on- *please fasten your seat-belts and do not smoke until we are air born’....*”

In Peter Hubbard and others (1991.123)

Teachers can exploit sound stories to develop students' vocabulary and their writing ability through different activities and tasks such as: writing a composition, based on sound effects, guessing what is happening and where the sounds take place. They can include a dialogue between two or three people talking about something in the place where the sounds are.

For jigsaw listening, the teacher need more than one tape recorder (usually three), then he divides the class into three groups and each group listens to their special tape. Finally, they exchange the information they have found out. The groups can be given different parts of a story or problem to solve so they exchange the information until they discover the whole story or find a solution to the given problem.

Jigsaw listening is really an excellent and enjoyable task to integrate the four skills (listening to the tape, writing down the grasped information, reading the other group's part and writing it dawn and speaking to each other and to other groups using L2)

Tape recorder is used not only to play back previously recorded material but also to make recordings in the classroom particularly of the students themselves. The teacher can record them during a discussion, dialogue, storytelling, etc to evaluate their speaking skill and provide further remedial work and needed feedback.

Like other teaching aids, taped material chosen for use in class should be interesting, motivating and natural as much as possible (it should include redundancies, imperfect speech of real life, hesitation, connected speech, etc). In this sense, Mary Underwood (1991) states:

“Most teachers are not able to choose what material to use. But if *you* are in a position to make that choice, be sure to listen to as large a part of any recording as you can before making up your mind”

P. 84

She advises language teachers to be sure that:

- The recording is really clear, not just for one person to listen but for use in large classroom.
- It fits the right level of the students.
- It is easy to use (there is a clear division between exercises and sections).
- It should provide a good language work.
- It should contain a suitable content for students.
- It is interesting and motivating.

Before playing the recording, the teacher should determine precisely the purpose, the instructions and activities of the listening task.

What should be finally mentioned is that audiotapes improve not only students' listening ability and skill but also their reading ability; the teacher can allow them to read the related printed material while listening to the recording. They can also do pronunciation work by imitating the model.

Generally speaking, taped material is really an available teaching tool for language teachers to provide their students with a significant source of authentic material.

2.2.2. THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

Other educational equipment that is available for the promotion of receptive and productive skills is the language laboratory.

The modern language lab has from ten to twenty booths, each equipped with a tape deck, headphones, microphones and now computers. It is built in such a way to allow students to work on their own, they can be paired, grouped with other students, interact with each other through their headphones and microphones.

The most significant advantage of language lab is the opportunity for students to be independent and work alone on their own. Mary Underwood (1991) declares that:

"If your class is working in a language laboratory, most students will be able to concentrate for a little longer. This is partly because they are, as it were, 'alone', and partly because they feel less threatened when they are able to control their own machines and go back if they miss something".

P.85

Language lab is really seen as an opportunity for students to work on their own pace and in their own way. Teachers thus should not keep on interrupting them and intervening unnecessarily while they are working but to guide them and facilitate their learning.

Since privacy is one of the most significant advantages of language lab, students can talk to each other through their microphones, record onto the tape, wind and rewind tapes without disturbing each other. The teacher can also talk to individual students in the lab from the consol and hold a private conversation. Another function of the language lab is the noticeable help to train students. They can listen to what they say and how they say it. They can correct and improve their pronunciation by comparing it with the correct original version on the tape so that they can discover the differences and be aware of them. After a period of training, they will certainly improve their listening skill and their pronunciation.

It can be said that language lab undoubtedly brings a significant innovation to the teaching-learning environment. It is available to teach the four skills if the teacher is able to use it effectively and appropriately. Language laboratory is able to act as a strong motivator for students as well as a powerful aid for teachers.

Language laboratory and all its related topics will be discussed in a more detailed way in the second chapter.

2.3. AUDIOVISUAL AIDS

They can be considered as the integration of audio and visual aids. They basically bring the potentiality of sound and image into the language classroom so that they offer extra dimensions to language teaching and learning. Here, we are going to cite some of them.

2.3.1. VIDEOTAPES

If *you* have a video recorder and video camera, the same attention and care should be taken about their use as for audio recorder system. Video is really potential, powerful and useful educational equipment for it brings the outside world into the classroom and exploits both audio and visual aids at the same time. Language teachers can benefit from the fact that all students are accustomed to gaining knowledge about the world from TV. He can use videotapes as a versatile teaching aid. In this sense, Marsha Shan (2004) states:

"Videotape is a step up from audiotape. First of all, playing recorded tapes provides the audiovisual information that helps students observe, understand and imitate oral communication, from language expressions and sentence structure to lip shape, facial expressions, gestures and distance between speakers, not to mention other cultural, behavioral and sociological aspects of language."

www.sunburstmedia.com

The use of videotape in foreign language classrooms has become a common feature in recent years. Most teachers do believe that it adds an extra dimension to the teaching – learning experience. In addition to all advantages of audiotapes, video does have more. It allows students not only to hear language but to see it through speakers' gestures and facial expressions. All these visual clues- or what Jeremy Harmer (2001) calls 'paralinguistic features'- help students in comprehension and "seeing beyond what they are listening to, and thus interpret the text more deeply" (Harmer: 2001. 282).

Besides seeing language in use, video material conveys native speakers' cultural identities through their way of life, habits and attitudes. Students can discover, for example, typical British body language when doing or saying something or the American way of speaking to particular people. It is really a vehicle to transmit other countries' culture and bring it actually into the classroom.

Teachers can ask their students to make their own videos using their personal video camera. This actually allows them to create something memorable and enjoyable where he can communicatively use the language.

For the above reasons, students show a high level of interest when using the video in the classroom. It basically creates motivation and makes the course more interesting and attractive. Like audio material, the choice of video material should be matched to the students' level, needs and purpose.

Although these advantages, video material have considerable drawbacks such as poor quality tapes and disks, bad viewing conditions, boring stop and start process, the length of extracts and the lack of control and the risk of making students passive viewers.

It is necessary to mention that teachers can use video for a variety of tasks and activities using a wide range of teaching techniques (viewed techniques and listening techniques).

So they are invited to exploit all its advantages to improve students' performances in different language skills.

2.3.2. COMPUTERS

The use of computers in language teaching is very recent and it continues to increase at an extraordinary speed. Currently, the main uses of computers in language teaching include the following:

- **Reference:** teachers can send their students to the computer center (either Internet or CD/ DVD-ROMS) where there are already a number of popular encyclopedias specially for teaching languages (L1, FL, SL) or general facts in different domains (history, geography, science, literature...) . These research materials can do all the sorts of tasks and project works, offer available course books' references, provide a wide range of interesting topics your students are really looking for. In addition to that, there are also a number of FL dictionaries which offer definitions, spoken pronunciation of words and practice exercises and activities.

- As far as **Internet** is concerned, both teachers and students can greatly benefit from all what it offers. Harmer (2001) states:

"The greatest potential for the computer as a reference tool is, of course the internet, where, by accessing directories and search engines (such as 'AltaVista', 'Google', and 'Hotbot '), users can look for information on just about any subject under the sun"

P. 146

The effective way of navigating the net is to know the appropriate methods and techniques of doing so in order to avoid surfing the useless websites. When going with your students to the Internet centre, you have to keep an eye on what they are doing because they may become distracted by what they find there, and thus will not concentrate on the original task.

The availability of these research materials (CD/ DVD-ROMS and Internet) is not limited only to study conversations and texts, to do grammar and vocabulary activities, listening to texts but also to test students' language level particularly through Internet in which they can send their answers of activities to the examination' centre

Moreover, computer based teaching offers opportunities to teach different skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking). A high writing ability, for example, can be successfully achieved through 'Word processor' and 'E-mail exchange'.

Indeed, using computers and Internet in language teaching has changed the nature of information gathering and the traditional ways of teaching and learning.

Generally speaking, all teaching aids both traditional and modern are tools of great value and an extraordinary resource for language teachers if they exploit them appropriately as much as possible. They can really facilitate teaching-learning process and make it more interesting and motivating especially when teachers take into account their students' needs, level and purposes. If so, learners can fully engage and effectively become interested in all what the teacher says or writes. It is the role of both teacher and learners to make these aids useful and versatile educational equipments that add basically extra dimension for teaching-learning experience.

CONCLUSION

The discussion above indicates that the four macro skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) interact with each other in a natural way that is why most presented tasks involve more than one skill, i.e. a number of skills are interwoven into complex language activity. We have concluded that receptive and productive skills will be successfully taught and learnt if the teacher takes into account the level, needs and purposes of his students, and tries to create the interest and motivation when teaching them. As far as teaching aids is concerned, the above discussion shows that all the educational equipments either traditional or modern are of great value if they are appropriately used.

We can not leave this chapter without indicating the great role of teaching aids in facilitating learning and teaching language skills and making the course more interesting and motivating. If the teacher takes into consideration these two elements, he will certainly achieve his ultimate aim which is his students' fluency and accuracy in using the language.

CHAPTER II

LANGUAGE LABORATORY

INTRODUCTION

To discuss the role of laboratory- based language teaching in developing aural /oral skills, we should first introduce the concept of “language laboratory” as a classroom audio aid in language teaching with all its related topics.

In this chapter we shall first give a historical overview of language laboratories and how they are gradually developed to reach such an important status in teaching /learning foreign languages. We will, then, make a detailed description of language laboratory with all its characteristics, functions and types of installations. Finally, we are supposed to show the relationship between language laboratory and audio-lingual method and discuss the role and value of the audio lingual drills pattern in developing the students' mastery of the target language.

1. A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE LABORATORY

The use of educational technology in language learning is not a current issue. It traces its origins back to the early audio inventions (Thomas Edison’s phonograph 1877). Foreign language teachers welcomed this audio device and used it in regular language classrooms as well as for self study at home and have immediately adopted other advances in audio technology such as magnetic tape and digital media. The early period of phonograph (1877-1645) was characterized by a heavy use of articles on phonetics and pronunciation text books in an attempt to teach proper foreign language based on native speakers models. Ralf Waltz is usually credited with coining the term “language laboratory” (L.L for abbreviation) in 1930. many terms appeared at that period refer to language laboratory such as: “phonetics laboratory”, “language studio”, “conversation laboratory”, “work shop” and “language disothèque”.

Language laboratory became the common term of laboratories after 1946- the year which is considered to mark the beginning of the modern L.L movement- yet the other terms were still in circulation and new ones were introduced such as “sound rooms”. The

difference between “phonetics laboratory” and L.L was the individual booths or carrels to provide sufficient acoustic isolation for students to work individually.

The invention of magnetic tape, the development of audio lingual method and the success of ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) method in teaching foreign languages gave a birth to L.L boom. Undoubtedly the 1960’s were the golden years of L.L; they had been installed not only in colleges and Universities but also in secondary schools due to the generous federal (state) support. Hundreds of articles published in school news letters journals such as: “The Modern Language Journal”, “Language Learning”, “Hispania”, “The French Review” and the “German Quarterly”. Some publications were really bulwark of language laboratory like “The Audio-visual Language Journal” (founded in Britain in 1962), “The International Review of Applied Linguistics-1963-” and “Foreign Language Annals- 1967-”. What is known as “programmed instruction” (i.e. drills and repeated exercises) appeared in this period. B.F Skinner, Robert Glazer and the pioneer Ralf Tyler were involved in this movement.

The 1970’s and the early 1980’s were a period of malaise for the language laboratory as a result of its integral relation with audio-lingual approach which L.L were originally intended to support. Yet vocal defenders continued publishing their books

(Dakin’s the language laboratory and language learning 1973, Stack’s the language laboratory and language teaching 1971 and Ely’s bring the lab back to life 1984.

A renaissance for the L.L Started in 1983, the year after *Time* magazine named the computer “machine of the year” and a new term appeared in language learning “CALL”

(Computer Assisted Language Learning) to announce a new era of laboratory- based language teaching.

All in all, language laboratory is unquestionably a unique audio resource in educational technology. It has never been an issue whether to use it or not, but it has been a question of how to use it.

N.B: a more detailed study of the history of language laboratory and the research of its effectiveness is available in the following web site:

www.aect.org/edtech/19.pdf.

2. WHAT IS LANGUAGE LABORATORY?

Following Stone, Lee Ann (1991):

“Technically, a language laboratory is an instructional technology tool consisting of a source unit that can disseminate audio materials to any number of students at individual seats or carrels”.

In WWW. ERIC digest.com

As it is mentioned in the first chapter, the modern L.L has between ten or twenty booths, each equipped with a tape deck, headphones (or ear phones), microphones and now computers.

Stone Lee Ann (1991) categorized laboratories into three levels. The first level labs allow students to listen passively to audio material emanating from a single source unit (usually through headsets or headphones). In this level students are exposed to programmed instruction (drills and repeat activities), “but they are not able to self- monitor through feedback from headsets”. The second level labs offer an extra option which is the “self-monitoring” by adding a microphone to the headset. In these two levels, the only audio source is the teacher’s console which provides activities and assignments to deal with at the same rate for all students. As far as the third level labs are concerned, students are provided with a tape recorder, video monitor and/or computer at each booth. Thus students have access to the full range of controls including playback, record and review.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE LABORATORY

When dealing with the special characteristics of L.L, Harmer (2001) presents three characteristics that distinguish labs from other teaching aids.

- **Double track:** The design of tapes permits students to listen to one track on their tapes and record on other. Thus they can listen to the original recording as well as to what they have themselves recorded.
- **Teacher access:** Any L.L has a console and /or computer terminal controlled by the teacher who can not only listen to individual students but can also talk with them using microphones and headsets. Joining booths in pairs or groups is very possible in modern laboratory. This later has computers in each booth which “allow

teachers to read what students are writing and make corrections individually” (Harmer: 2001.42).

- **Different modes:** The teacher has the ability to decide whether or not to have all students working at the same time and speed from his console when listening to the master tape. In computer-equipped labs, he can also get them watching a video in their individual monitors.

Another mode for using the same material in L.L is to record the proposed tape onto each individual booth and have the students working with the same material but at their individual speed. If *your* lab is equipped with mechanical grouping option, you can certainly divide the class into pairs or groups and give them different material to work with.

Laboratories naturally offer certain facilities for both teacher and students whereas the ordinary classroom is unable to offer. As it is previously mentioned, L.L enables the student to work on his own pace in terms of listening, recording, playing back, checking mistakes by comparing his version with the model and connecting his teacher without interrupting his fellows.

Julian Dakin (1973) summarizes the facilities of working in labs that can't be found in normal classes:

- Each learner can work all the time
- Each learner can work at his own pace
- Each learner can work on his own material
- Each learner is responsible for his own performances
- Each learner receives individual attention from the teacher

All these facilities demonstrate the most important characteristic of language laboratory which is the individualization, privacy and autonomy of learning.

4. FUNCTIONS OF THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

According to Edward M. Stack (1971.04) language laboratory does not function unless the student can:

- Hear the tape distinctly
- Stop, rewind and replay the tape at any time
- Work at his own pace
- Select his own material freely

And it does not do too unless the teacher can:

- Listen to individual students without disturbing them
- Communicate with the student
- Control the programs when he so desires

Conventionally, most labs offer these functions according to its type (simple or complex) and its cost (expensive equipment certainly provides more options and functions). Stack (1971) proclaims that:

“Practically all varieties of language laboratories have these functions as their goals. Some schools can afford to do them all, some must be satisfied with less. The more costly the laboratory is, the more functions may be included.”

P.04

In fact, the matter of cost is not so important for labs to have all these functions. Reasonable cost labs do also function if the teacher knows how to use it in a right and appropriate way.

These functions are the following:

4.1. CLARITY OF SOUND REPRODUCTION

The fully equipped lab should provide “clear, undistorted, full frequency reception of sound at the student’s earphones” (Stack. 1971). It is probably easy and possible for FL student to hear and grasp all the nuances of speech if the material he is listening to is “faithfully” recorded and transmitted to him.

The original tape should be made under professional studio conditions in which undesirable noise is excluded so that the transmission of the sound can be done in a good conditions and manners. The same procedures should be followed when making copies from the original tape to maintain the clarity and quality of the sound. All these conditions should be taken into account to offer the most important requirements of the language laboratory which is the clarity of the sound reproduction.

4.2. RETRACING

By tracing, Stack (1971) means the ability of the student to stop the tape, rewind it and replay any part. Retracing enables students to practice sounds by re-hearing them and do imitation. The re-hearing step is very important to move to the advanced step which is the practice by imitation.

Stack (1971) calls these steps “frames”. In this respect, he writes:

“In machine-teaching techniques, it is axiomatic that a student does not advance a step until he has mastered the previous one. Each step is called “frame”, and if a student does not succeed in a frame, a teaching machine will automatically provide remedial work.”

P. 05

The basis of machine-teaching technique like the language laboratory is the gradual process in which the student follows a linear program (step by step process). Moving to the advanced step is closely related to the successful performance in the previous frame. Remedial work is automatically provided if the student does not succeed in doing so. As far as L.L is concerned, the student has a total access to repeat the defective frame until he succeeds.

Retracing then is the mechanical capacity to use all the functions and facilities of the equipment.

4.3. SELF-PACING

Following Stack (1971), the term self-pacing refers to the student’s ability to work on his own pace and speed. The student who does much retracing in language laboratory is considered as a slow worker. He does not move to the new frame unless he satisfactorily masters the previous ones. A student who does less retracing is called fast worker; he works rapidly to move quickly to the next frame or to the next tape. According to Stack, the slow worker (spends much time working on a tape) “will be the better language student”. In this process, the student is a judge at the same time; he listens to the tape at his own speed and moves from one frame to another whenever he believes that his performed utterances are appropriately and accurately practiced. His reference in this process is the model version of the master tape.

The successful self-pacing process is strongly related to the appropriateness of the equipment. This means that the student must have a complete control over his own tape i.e. he can do retracing and change the tape if he so wants fluently and easily without any restriction or problem.

4.4. MATERIAL SELECTION

In L.L, it is the teacher who has the right to choose tapes or video programs depending on the level, the interest and the purpose of his students. The student has the opportunity to select the laboratory material only in the case of retracing and self-pacing processes.

All in all, the type of laboratory installation (will be discussed in the coming sections) determines the kind of material selection, who can do it and how.

4.5. MONITORING

According to Stack (1971.06):

“Most laboratories enable the instructor to listen to any individual as he works with the tape program”. This ability is called “monitoring”. It is usually done for three purposes:

- To correct errors in procedure
- To correct linguistic errors
- To evaluate and grade

The supervision of the monitor (teacher) in language laboratory is certainly a good procedure to improve his students' performances. Monitoring allows the teacher to listen to any student without disturbing his mates.

4.6. INTERCOM

Intercom means the ability of the teacher to communicate and interact with individuals to provide the necessary comments, correction and feedback. The teacher's desk includes a switch called “intercom” which connects him with any student whom he desires to intercommunicate with .

4.7. PROGRAM CONTROL

It is one of the most important facilities of the language laboratory. It permits the teacher to control and supervise the selected program. Program control switch is also located at the teacher's console.

4.8. CONSOLE:

Stack (1971) defines it as follows:

“[...] is a desk-like control center containing one or more tape decks (sources) to play tapes to the whole class ...”

P. 06

The main console's switches as cited by Stack are the following:

- **Distribution switches:** to direct the recorded program to the selected student booths.
- **Monitoring switches:** to enable the instructor to listen to individual student.
- **Intercom switches:** to allow the teacher to intercommunicate with any individual student in a two way conversation.
- **Group-call switch:** for announcements to all students in the lab either they are listening to a particular program or just to give particular instructions about the program.

5. STUDENT'S EQUIPMENT

In a conventional language laboratory, each student has his own equipment:

A booth: any conventional L.L provides the student with a semi-private enclosure called “a booth” .According to Stack (1971):

“The booth provides both *acoustic* and *psychological* privacy; the first to reduce noise interference with his work and the second to give him confidence”.

A tape recorder: it is mainly used for self-pacing and retracing. Moreover, it allows the student to record his voice, listen to his responses and compare his version with the model.

Headset: it is a combination of earphone and microphone. Earphone is naturally used to listen to the selected material or to hear the recorded voice. Microphone is used to transmit the student own voice to the tape for the sake of recording. Headset is really a good laboratory device that provides good conditions for private listening and speaking.

6. LABORATORY OPERATIONS

Stack declares that there are four (04) main operations and procedures. Each procedure requires different equipment that can be determined by the teacher's objectives. The difference among procedures is often based on the student's control over the equipment. In this sense, Stack (1971) says:

“The differentiation among the procedures is based on the degree of freedom the student has to select tapes, work individually with control of rate of progress, and record his own voice”

P.08

Thus, these operations or procedures, in order of increasing flexibility, are the following:

- Broadcast (group- study)
- Combination (broadcast plus some individual recorders)
- Library (students handle tapes or cassettes)
- Dial-access

6.1. THE BROADCAST OPERATION

It can be used in both ordinary classroom and conventional language laboratory. From his console, the teacher has the total choice to select the program for the students to hear. It is so suitable for advanced level students especially when they use the lab for group study (all students hear and respond at the same time). The teacher, here, is the supervisor, monitor and evaluator of students work. Monitoring takes place during a broadcast; the teacher listens to the student's responses, grades it and move to the next student.

6.2. LIBRARY OPERATION

In this procedure, the student is able to choose any one of hundred tapes –if they are available- as he so wishes. It is actually an opportunity for students to work at their own pace depending on their own choice.

Stack (1971) states:

“[...] he takes the tape to his booth and plays it as an individual, regardless of what others are hearing. This permits true *self-pacing* and *self-correction* by retracing. He may also record his own voice for comparison with the master track”

P.08

In fact, library procedure is the best way for students to do self-pacing and retracing without any supervision or interruption of the teacher. He can also select his own material from previous lessons, current lessons and future ones which can be found on the shelves of the tape library. It is usually used in the universities and high schools. As in conventional lab, students in library operation are linked to the teacher's console with all its switches (monitor, intercom, all-call and even broadcast program). Library operation really offers maximum of individualization.

Some devices should be provided to make library operation or procedure successful. These devices (equipments) are: tape recorder, stock of pre-recorded tapes, individual isolation booths and a special maintenance room. Thus, library operation requires a special L.L room (it can't be installed in an ordinary classroom)

6.3. DIAL-ACCESS OPERATION

It is another different laboratory procedure, may be more sophisticated than the two previous ones. Stack (1971) states:

“Dial-access provides automatic instantaneous selection of lessons by a telephone-type dial or touch-tone. The student receives a broadcast from one of many remote automatic sources. In this form he may practice, but can not stop the tape to replay portions, and he can not work at his own pace.”

P.09

Its sophistication appears in the ability to include many of the advantages of library operation. The only way to make dial-access procedure benefits from the features of library operation is by joining a student booth with an individual remote student deck so that he can receive and control a copy of broadcast lesson. He may then enjoy self-pacing and retracing as in library procedure. Dial-access operation also enables students to a broadcast lesson of his choice by dialing a code number from his booth. Stack (1971.3) presents an example to show how dial-access operation works:

Language	lesson	dial number
French 101	23	11
French 101	24	15
German 101	43	13
German 201	17	12
Spanish 102	27	17
....etc.	...etc.	...etc.

The source room contains (x) number of automatic tape decks, so that a student dialing 11 activates the first, 12 the second and so on. The code numbers are arbitrary.

The teacher can distribute this directory on papers at each booth or write it on the blackboard. If a student wishes to activate language (x), lesson (y) which is not on the directory, he must demand it from the laboratory assistant who will look for and activate it for him on an auxiliary source deck. This special source is called “demand broadcasting”.

Dial-access operation is not always advantageous. Stack says that:

“Only the first student to dial will hear the tape from the beginning and receive the explanatory instructions; only he will benefit from the careful planning of the patterning.”

P.14

This means that if the student (A) arrives first at the laboratory, he dials first the language and the number he wishes. He then listens to the tape from the beginning, but student (B) who arrives later on dials the same code, he unfortunately will join (A) at the arrived point without benefiting at least from the instructions. Stack believes that this problem is not so serious since students have proved to be quick to “catch on” to patterns.

The complexity of these procedure requires a special complex L.L in which several laboratory rooms, central control room, automatic tape deck source rooms, editing studios, dubbing room and video tape room should sufficiently provided to make this kind of laboratory operation successful and efficient.

In some schools, the laboratory is not sufficiently equipped with individual tape decks in each booth. Here, the teacher is able to use a combination between library operation and broadcast procedure. The fully equipped booths for library operation in which self-pacing and retracing are suitable, whereas the other laboratory booths are supposed to work with the broadcast program (using the console’s tape source).

7. OTHER TERMINOLOGY

There are some terms related to the lab operation:

Audio-active or (listen-respond) A-A for abbreviation: this technical term is implicated to *broadcast operation*. It is an activity in which the student hears the tape and responds into the microphone. All console's functions are available but student's recorder is not provided.

Audio-active compare or (listen-respond-record) A-A-C for abbreviation: in this activity the student is able to use the tape recorder. It is basically like Audio-active plus the student capability of *self-pacing* and *retracing* (having a tape recorder).

Other operations (library and sometimes dial-access) are also A-A-C whereas the combination procedure works with A-A-C in the fully equipped booths and A-A throughout.

Passive: refers simply to listening with no microphone, no recorder and no console's functions except a broadcast.

8. TYPES OF LABORATORY INSTALLATION

The physical installation of L.L is quite variable because of the varieties of electronic equipment and devices used in the installation system.

Stack (1971) presents six (06) types of laboratory installation; each one offers certain facilities that differ from the other and have particular features that the other one may have not. These principle classes are: conventional, remote, dial, electronic classroom, mobile and portable.

8.1. CONVENTIONAL LABORATORY

It is defined by Stack (1971) as follows:

“The conventional laboratory is a room set aside primarily for language learning through the use of electronic devices. It has individual booths separating the students from each other both visually and acoustically. The control panel is located at the console, where there are tape decks, distribution switches, and switches for monitoring and intercommunication (to individual booths) and for all-call and group-call (to all students or group of students). A network of wiring connects the booths with the console and associated equipments”

P.19

Most schools and Universities use this type of laboratory installation because it contains most of L.L functions (the above mentioned functions). Most of the common switches are available in this laboratory.

Program distribution: the teacher’s desk (console) of a conventional L.L is located in front of students' booths (figure 01). It usually contains two or more tape sources. For group-study broadcast, the teacher can determine the students and the program to be listened to through distribution switches. Program distribution falls into two categories: *row switching* and *booth switching*.

As far as *row switching* is concerned, there is one switch in the console for each row of booths. The teacher can send the selected program from a given tape playback decks (tape resource) to the determined row(s) of booths. Obviously, row switching allows all students in the same row to receive the same program and work at their own pace (independently).

In *booth switching*, it is the teacher who decides which tape program to deal with and which student will receive it. According to Stack, this kind of distribution is too complicated because of the large number of switches that probably complicates the teacher’s work. He prefers the use of row switching. He writes:

“The use of row switching has an advantage over booth switching in this respect. Although booth switching offers great flexibility, there is a limited number of tape resources. It is simpler to place students in a single row to receive the same program from one source (using row switching) than to seat them in a checker board pattern and be forced to set perhaps ten times as many switches to achieve the same distribution result.”

P.20

What makes row switching more preferable and desirable than booth switching is the simplicity of its program distribution, the economy of time and effort in using it and the efficiency of its results and the ease of its operation. Teachers usually tend to use what is simple and easy to be dealt with in order to obtain better outcomes and make students interact with them and with each other easily, effectively and fluently. It is clear enough that obtaining such results within few minutes is better than spending much time for the same results.

What is wonderful in conventional L.L program distribution is its ability to make a combination between the flexibility of booth switching and the simplicity of row switching by having *booth switching* with *row override*.

“ this means that there is an individual switch for each booth, but at the end of the row of switches there is a row switch which allows a program to be sent to the entire row of booths without setting the individual switches “

(Stack: 1971.21)

Monitor and intercom: the monitoring and intercommunication switches for each student are also provided in the conventional L.L console. As it is mentioned previously that monitoring switch permits the monitor (teacher) to listen to the students work. It is also important to take into account that there must be no click or other noise on the line to disturb and distract students and the teacher as well. Student’s listening volume should not change when the teacher uses the monitoring switch.

The intercom switch is used to speak directly to the individual in his booth. When this switch is activated, the student’s listening volume is either muted or completely cut out so

that the student can hear his teacher's voice clearly without the interference from the program being listened to. By this way, the student can reply without disturbing any student in the lab.

All-call: conventional lab's console contains an *all-call* switch. Its function is to speak to all students at once. It is generally used for general announcements or particular instructions.

Group-call: when *your* students are listening to a particular selected program, then activating *group-call* (or *program-call*) switch is suitable to make *your* announcements or instructions.

Enunciator: sometimes called "teacher-call". It is a bottom in the student's booth used to attract the teacher's attention. When a student has a question, he can press the bottom and this will light a signal light at the console.

The fact that some conventional language laboratories are provided with visual projections like films and slides is another dimension for the lab to be more practical, useful and rich. The teacher, then, can channel the sound of the film through one of the laboratory audio channels to the students. Modern labs are provided with extra accessories such as: tape library room, recording studio, maintenance room, and even a satellite classroom.

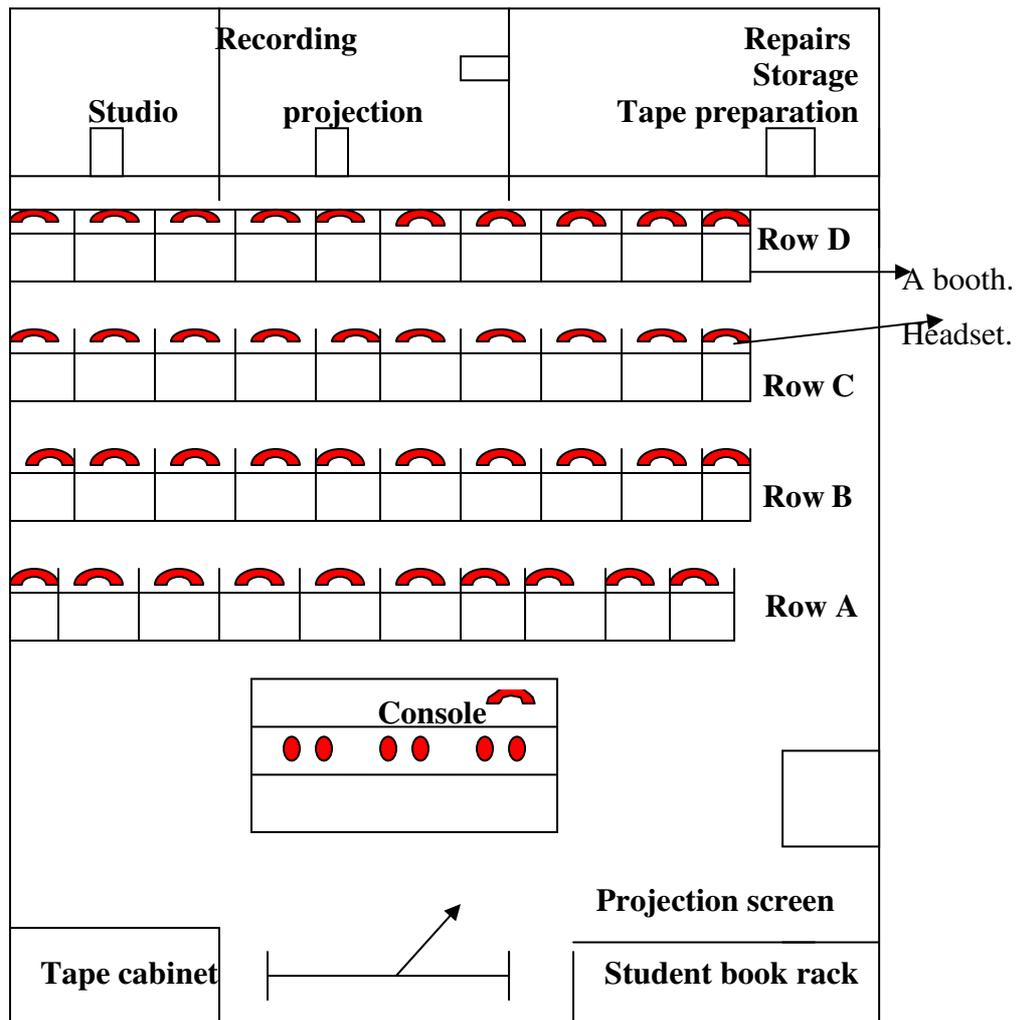


Figure 01: Conventional Laboratory Plan

8.2. REMOTE-CONTROLLED LABORATORY (REMOTE FOR SHORT)

Following Stack (1971),

“The remote-controlled laboratory frees the student from having to thread tape on a local (in-booth) recorder, yet allows him to control a specific tape deck located elsewhere”

P. 22

Although this kind of laboratory installation is little bit different from the conventional lab, it is still installed in a permanent conventional laboratory room. It is usually characterized by more complex electronic devices, extra rooms to set up the remote tape deck racks, tape collection and other accessories.

Student's equipment (controls): what is noticeable in remote lab is that the student's own tape recorder is not located in his booth but it has been removed from the carrel and mounted on a framework called "rack" in a separate recorder room. Although the tape recorder is now removed from the student's booth, he is still able to control the tape movement through push bottoms that are located in front of him. The push bottoms include volume control, headset and indicator of the tape's consumed time. So, he can play, stop and rewind as he so desires. Thus, he can enjoy all the functions of library operation (A-A-C)

Remote recorder: remote controlled recorders are mounted in a separate recorder room. Students then can have a total ability to work with different laboratory operations (library operation and broadcast procedure)

The student can work on the library system (A-A-C) if he requests to do so. He can then do self-pacing, retracing, and he can record and hear his own responses for self evaluation. This operation can be done with the help of the laboratory assistant who loads a student's machine with the requested tape.

Broadcast and conversion program can be appropriately activated. At first, the master lesson will be broadcasted to all students who will record it on their remote decks (decks are loaded with a blank tape).

Conversion step means that the first broadcast is converted from broadcast (A-A) to library (A-A-C). Now, each student has the master lesson recorded on his recorder; he then can do retracing and self-pacing at his own.

Advantages: Stack (1971.24) presents three main advantages of the remote-controlled laboratory:

- The student is freed from handling tape
- Maintenance problems are reduced as students can not damage the tape decks
- Semi-automatic operation of the laboratory, without much supervision, is possible.

8.3. DIAL LABORATORY

Dial laboratory works with dial-access operation. Its equipment is usually more sophisticated, complex and expensive than conventional laboratory. Therefore, it requires several full-time technicians, an engineer, and a student laboratory assistant. It generally depends on broadcast operation which allows students to work with audio-active response

(A-A). Other media (video and computer) can be added to this system so that the teacher can dial any tape (audio or video) to bring the broadcast into the laboratory.

Dial laboratory usually occupies an architectural space larger than conventional L.L. According to Stack (1971), it necessarily needs:

“...some of much larger capacity, individual study carrels using loud speakers, classrooms having dial-access to program,..., recording studio, tape processing rooms for dubbing and editing, central control rooms housing the banks of automatic tape decks and the switchgear associated with the dial (telephone-like) switching, television studios for video taping programs, photographing laboratories for providing visual aids, private consultation rooms, offices and other service areas.”

P .25

In fact, all these sophisticated and complex laboratory equipments are offered by dial laboratory in order to broadcast the tape programs through dialing in a more efficient, versatile and more attractive manner. It exposes students to various media systems and the facilities provided by modern educational technology. In addition, it may avoid many problems related to other laboratory installations.

The console: the console is found in every laboratory room. It includes all conventional functions (monitoring, distribution switches, intercom, group-call and all-call). In dial-access lab, the distribution is usually activated from a special room called “control room”.

The teacher may dial any tape he wants and distribute the signal to all students in the room.

Control room: it means the area that houses the switching system and remote automatic tape decks (Stack: 1971.27). The control room includes both audio tape and video tape systems. It is basically characterized by “expandability feature” which means that dial-access L.L has the ability to extend its number of booths, number of available programs and also its geographical space.

Students can work with dial-access operation (it is mentioned previously) by selecting the code of the lesson he wants to receive.

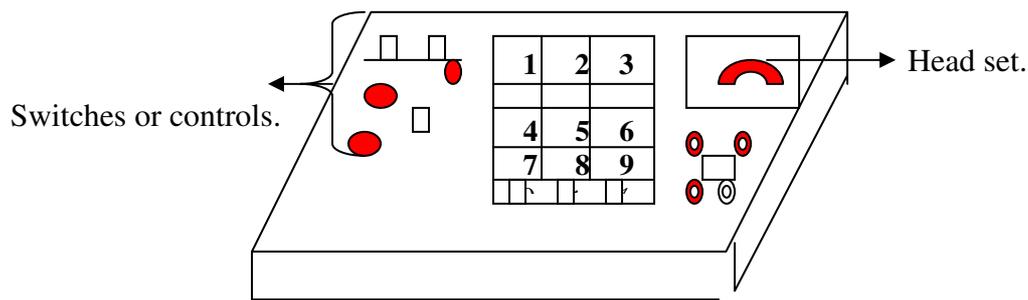


Figure 02: Student Controls, Dial Laboratory

Editing room: many operations are done in editing room such as: processing of masters and operational copies of tapes on professional tape recorders and copying machine (dabbers). In addition, the collection of masters may also be stored in editing room.

Students equipments: like the two other laboratories, dial laboratory provides conventional listening booths, headsets and sometimes controls for remote recorders. Unlike the others, it includes a dial or touch-tone selector for a student which works with both operations: audio-active (A-A) and audio-active compare (A-A-C) if there is a student' tape recorder. So the student can automatically receive the broadcast via dialing what he so desires.

Dial laboratory offers extra options such as: remote controls for record; the student then works with the A-A-C procedure. Video monitor is possibly installed in dial lab for audio-visual programs. Automatic testing responder (multiple choice responses) can also be found in this L.L.

Generally speaking, these are the most common types of laboratory installation. Other types like: electronic classroom (suitable for both ordinary classroom and L.L), mobile laboratory (a console on wheels with storage space for headsets), wireless laboratory (lab in which the wires connecting the sources are replaced with radio transmitters) and portable laboratory (like mobile lab but for carrying not wheeling) are also common but with less use.

9. LANGUAGE LABORATORY AND TEACHING DRILLS

9.1. LANGUAGE LABORATORY AND AUDIO-LINGUAL APPROACH

It has been claimed that the language laboratory owed its existence to the recognition that the primary medium of language is oral and the spoken form of language is central and necessary to effective communication. This theory of language came to be known as structural linguistics which is based on the tenet of “speech is language”. The so called “audio-lingual approach” emerged in 1950’s as a new orientation of language teaching. It adopted the principles of structural linguistics in teaching languages. This approach has been introduced by William Molten who proclaimed its principles. He states:

“Language is speech, not writing....language is a set of habits...teach the language, not about the language...A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say...”

(In Richards and Rodgers: 1995. 49-50).

In other words, it is assumed that language teaching should focus on mastery of speech (phonological and grammatical structures). Among the central methodological principles of audio-lingual approach is that foreign language learning is a process of mechanical habit formation which is particularly based on memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills (i.e. dialogues and drills are the basis of audio-lingual classroom practices). Teachers then are supposed to teach the use of structures through pattern practice using certain instructional materials just to develop language mastery in the learner.

Foreign language teachers depend heavily on tape recorders and audiovisual equipment in audio-lingual courses to provide accurate models for dialogues and cues needed for drills and exercises. Thus audio-lingual method stresses the use of language laboratory in foreign language teaching for many reasons.

Richards and Rodgers (1995) states:

“A language laboratory may also be considered essential. It provides the opportunity for further drill work and to receive controlled error –free practice of basis structures...A taped lesson may first present a dialogue for listening practice, allow for the student to repeat the sentences in the dialogue line by line, and provide follow-up fluency drills on grammar or pronunciation”

P.57

This means that audio-lingual method tends to establish a great relationship with language laboratory as an essential instructional material by means of repetition drills. It really provides a convenient means of hearing and responding to audio-lingual drills. Thus, the audio-lingual classification of language skills priority in teaching is: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Stack (1971) considers the two first skills as *audio-lingual skills* and the other ones as *graphic skills*. According to him, “the graphic form of language must be considered secondary in that it is an attempt to represent the spoken word” (P.117).

Language laboratory is certainly a means of teaching audio-lingual skills before graphic skills and providing the facilities for systematic, accurate, and fluent practice of audio-lingual linguistic habits in terms of pattern drills and repetition exercises.

9.2. LABORATORY PATTERN DRILLS

We saw in the previous section that L.L is a drill instructional material. It enables students to practice the basic structural patterns of language and engage in a correct, accurate and fluent communication in the target language (Stack. 1971, Dakin. 1971).

Following Stack (1971):

“Audio-lingual drills incorporate usable, mechanical and linguistic structuring. This structuring enables the student to obtain intensive systematic (albeit mechanical) practice which he can adapt to real conversation later”

P.120

In this sense, drills are intended to train students to engage in a useful communication by helping him master the basic structural patterns of the target language. The student is given a model (structure) and has to imitate it as closely as he can. Then he has to repeat it until he masters the given language structural pattern (grammatical, phonological...). Audiolingualists assume that drills are not merely a pure repetition; they may lead to an effective communication and systematic formation of speech habits.

The layout of laboratory drills depends on a given text (sentences, utterances or structures) which provides a cue and a number of responses. Higgins and Windsor Lewis (1970) present a way of treating laboratory drills:

“First, the student hears the cue and two or three responses as examples. Then he hears the cue again, and must read each response in turn, after a number of prompt. After giving the response, he hears the correct form and has time to repeat it”.

(In English Teaching: Vol XXIV N° 2: 1970.47.)

All in all, pattern drills form the heart of audio-lingual exercises for the language laboratory's work. What should be taken into consideration, when presenting drills for laboratory practice, is the fact that the drills are well-designed and suitable for learner. Teachers should know the principles of designing the effective drills and determine the purpose of such a practice. Learners in turn have to know that the effectiveness of drills will not be achieved unless they are attentively heard and sufficiently repeated.

Stack (1971) stresses the role of length of drills in improving students performances during laboratory practices (lab time). He believes that the laboratory period of fifty (50) minutes should be organized as follows: ten (10) minutes for all the arrangements (turning on and off the equipment, getting settled...) at the beginning and the end. The forty (40) minutes left should be divided into two periods of twenty (20) minutes to allow two hearings of a tape unite (maximum twenty (20) minutes in length).

Variety of tapes is another factor that should be taken into account. He states: “variety helps alleviate the inevitable monotony of systematic practice” (P.132). In another word, two tapes of different natures (in terms of structures, topics and types) will certainly decrease the amount of uninteresting caused by unchanging drills. In this case, each tape should not be over ten (10) minutes of length and allow two hearings of each one during the whole period. He argued that the experiences in lab drills practice has shown that drills of approximately ten (10) minutes are about right. The aim of making the length of drills

limited by about ten (10) minutes is to allow students to remove their headsets to rest their ears every ten minutes. The length of drills obviously changes according to the nature of drills and the language (French, Spanish or English articles are easier to cover than German which contains more forms of articles –about sixteen (16) -).

Generally speaking, laboratory pattern drills and audio-lingual training are designed to enable student to understand the spoken form of the target language and practice speaking to hopefully reach the desired accuracy and fluency in target language communication.

9.3. TYPES OF PATTERN DRILLS

There is no single classification concerning types of drills. Several different ways of classifying them have been introduced. Julian Dakin (1971) draws a distinction between meaningless and meaningful drills. He declares:

“A distinction will be drawn between meaningless and meaningful drills. Both kinds can be used in structural or pronunciation practice. Meaningful drills are, however, less well known [...] Meaningless drills are already well-established in the classroom and in the language laboratory. They are usually called “structural drills” or “pattern practice”.”

P.48

As far as **meaningless drills** are concerned, Dakin (1971) distinguishes between three types:

Substitution drills: (replacement drills), the student replaces one part of the stimulus by another word. If an EFL teacher wants to teach the “present perfect tense” with the use of certain adverbs of time. The aim of the teacher is that his students will be able to produce utterances such as:

I've already read it

I've already heard it

I've already seen it

To do so, the teacher is supposed to make him repeat the model. Then he can prompt him to produce further examples of his own by giving him a verb as a stimulus in each successive sentence. Thus a substitution drill will be done by providing the present perfect form of each verb in isolation:

Prompt**Response**

1. *I've already read it* → *I've already read it*
Heard → *I've already heard it*
Seen → *I've already seen it*
Eaten → *I've already eaten it*

Or providing the present perfect in a sentence:

2. *Have you read it yet?* → *I've already read it*
Have you heard it yet? → *I've already heard it*
Have you seen it yet? → *I've already seen*

And so on.

In the language laboratory, the prompts (stimuli) are generally recorded in advance.

Mutation drills: we will continue teach the students sentences in the perfect tense. In the following drills, the teacher is not supposed to give him ready formed past participles to substitute but he could provide him with the infinitive form of the verb:

- Read* → *I've already read it*
See → *I've already seen it*
Hear → *I've already heard it*

Or

- Do you want to read it?* → *I've already read it*
Do you want to see it? → *I've already seen it*
Do you want to hear it ? → *I've already heard it*

This kind of drills requires not only substitution but also systematic change in the form of words provided in the prompt:

- Read* → *I've already read it*
Eat → *I've already eaten it*
The boy → *the boy has already eaten it*
More than one boy → *the boys have already eaten it*
More than one thing → *the boys have already eaten them*
Seen you → *the boys have already seen me*
Go → *the boys have already gone there*

Transformational drills: they may involve both substitution and mutation. They also involve a different kind of change:

Do you want to go there? No → *No, I've already been there*

Do you want to hear it? No → *No, I've already heard it*

Do you want to see it? Yes → *Yes, I haven't seen it yet*

Do you want to meet him? Yes → *Yes, I haven't met him yet*

Following Dakin (1971), transformational drills basically involve:

- Changes from affirmative to negative
- Change in voice, from passive to active
- Change in mood, from indicative to interrogative to imperative to subjunctive etc
- Change in sentence type from simple to compound to complex

(All these changes can be worked in either direction).

Pattern drills are not exclusively related to grammar but also to phonology and vocabulary. For instance, the following constitution drill aims at giving practice in vowel and consonant contrasts.

Prompt	Response
<i>A bead maker</i>	<i>a bead maker makes beads</i>
<i>A bidder</i>	<i>a bidder makes bids</i>
<i>A bed maker</i>	<i>a bed maker makes beds</i>
<i>A better</i>	<i>a better makes bets</i>
<i>A bat maker</i>	<i>a bat maker makes bats</i>
<i>A butt maker</i>	<i>a butt maker makes butts</i>
<i>A boot maker</i>	<i>a boot maker makes boots</i>
<i>A boat maker</i>	<i>a boat maker makes boats</i>

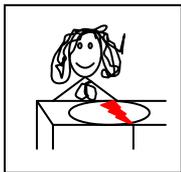
Pronunciation drills aim also at giving practice in preserving a stress pattern, changes in intonation and preserving a constant pitch pattern.

In the language laboratory the prompts are usually recorded in advance. The student is given a space in a tape after each prompt to give his response. "Before being presented with the next prompt, he will hear a correct version of the previous response recorded on the tape. This is supposed to give him the chance of discovering whether he has got each response right" (Dakin: 1971.49).

According to Dakin, the teacher should take into account that an actual drill in a laboratory would contain about ten (10) different prompts to give the learner the the chance of discovering and exploring the desired pattern of responses.

Meaningful drills are generally divided into several types. The following types of drills are among them.

Application drills: in this type, Dakin puts a picture as a prompt. So the responses are the following:

I)  Felicity is eating fish

 Felicity has just eaten the fish

II)  This is mother

 This is a hours

 This is father

 This is a car

III) 

The telephone is on the desk

The book is beside the telephone.

John is sitting on the chair.

Figure 03: pictures as prompts in the application drills

In the first category (I), the student is still doing a structural drill. He is doing substitution of new verbs and nouns, and it contrasts two tense forms (continuous and perfect).

The second category (II) practices naming people and things. It requires the omission of articles before all the proper nouns.

The third category (III) practices the use of propositions.

Thus application drills as it is defined by Dakin (1971) is:

“...the name we gave to the relationship between words and things, between sentences in the language and events or states of affairs in the world. When we ask what a sentence or a word means we are interested in its application”

P. 71

General knowledge drills:

<i>Prompt</i>	<i>Response</i>
I) <i>Rod Lever</i> →	<i>Rod Lever plays tennis</i>
<i>Paul McCartney</i> →	<i>Paul McCartney plays the guitar</i>
<i>Pelé</i> →	<i>Pelé plays football</i>
<i>Arnold Palmer</i> →	<i>Arnold Palmer plays golf</i>
The aim of this drill is to practice the use of articles in English after the verb “play”.	
II) <i>The Queen</i> →	<i>the Queen lives in Buckingham palace</i>
<i>The President of the USA</i> →	<i>the president lives in the white house</i>
<i>The British Prime Minister</i> →	<i>the British Prime Minister lives at 10,downing street</i>
<i>The Pope</i> →	<i>the Pope lives in the Vatican</i>

This drill practices the use of prepositions and articles with the verb “to live”

Sound effect drills:

<i>Prompt</i>	<i>Responses</i>
<i>(wuf, wuf)</i> →	<i>I can hear a dog barking</i>
<i>(tweet, tweet)</i> →	<i>I can hear a bird singing</i>
<i>(clap, clap)</i> →	<i>I can hear some people clapping</i>
<i>(hah, hah)</i> →	<i>I can hear someone laughing</i>
<i>(silence)</i> →	<i>I can't hear any thing now</i>

This drill practices the use of participle after a verb and the use of articles “a” and “some”. Language laboratory is really a good medium to practice aural sound effects drills.

Collocation drills:

Prompt

Response

This is a wonderful book → *Good, I'd like to read it*
This is a fantastic record → *Good, I'd like to hear it*
Mr. Lock is a very amusing speaker → *Good, I'd like to hear him*
There is an interesting program → *Good, I'd like to watch it*
There is a good film at the cinema → *Good, I'd like to see it*

The film called "Gunfight at the O.K Corral" → *Good, I like cow boy films*

This drill is also structural. It practices the contrast between “would like” and “like”. Here there is no picture or sound effects as a prompt but it is exclusively a verbal relationship.

The last drill requires general knowledge. Thus,

“Collocation is the name we give to the relationship between different classes of words in the language. It is concerned with which adjectives are commonly associated with which nouns, or which nouns with which verbs...etc”

(Dakin: 1971.71).

Synonymy drills:

Prompt

Response

Father walked here → *he came on foot*
Mother flew here → *she came by plane*
Felicity drove here → *she came by car*
Columbus sailed there → *he went by ship*

In this drill, synonymy is not applied to words of the same class (two nouns, two verbs...). It relates different classes of word or phrase. Here the verbs in the prompt are expanded to more complex predicates in the response. This drill practices the use of certain preposition (on, by) with verbs of motion.

Hyponymy and antonym drills are basically the same thing.

Generally speaking, these types of drills (application, general knowledge, sound effect, collocation, synonymy...etc) are just a sample of a great number of meaningful drills.

Drills pattern are generally regarded as a good way to train the learner speak the language correctly and fluently. It also develops his competence and performance strategies. The problem with drills is that they limit the language to something “finite” (Dakin: 1971.118) (i.e. a list of structures and patterns that can be automatically practiced). Language is not a series of drills (either meaningless or meaningful), and each user has unlimited linguistic structures that he can produce without any prompt.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that in all educational technologies, language laboratory is still considered a unique source for audio material and a conventional means for the development of student’s aural/ oral skills. It really offers facilities for both teacher and learner in terms of effective monitoring, self-pacing and intercommunication. A normal classroom is probably unable to offer such facilities.

All types of language laboratory installations are basically intended to train the learner to use the target language accurately and fluently through audio-lingual drills pattern. L.L drills are basically introduced in an early stage of teaching foreign languages to support the recognition that the spoken form of language central to effective communication.

In spite of the valuable contribution of drills to teaching-learning foreign languages, particularly grammar and phonology, many researchers are claiming that their value and role are still questionable issues. Modern theories of the nature of the language teaching have something to say about language laboratory drills practice.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Oral-expression module in the University level requires much more than giving courses and designing tasks that cover the two main components of communication: listening and speaking. It requires a profound and insightful investigation of the students' educational background and the main difficulties they may encounter in their attempt to reach "language mastery". This later obviously comprises not only listening and speaking but also writing and reading, yet the aural-oral skills are still taking the lion-share in the teaching-learning process. Current studies found that listening and speaking take almost the whole time of communication (listening 45%, speaking 30%). For the above reason, we tend to shed a light on these two skills as they constitute the pillars of Oral-expression course.

Thus, this chapter deals with the Oral-expression course and its pre-University and University programs (i.e. the Algerian educational background of the Oral-expression's program). The chapter further investigates the process of listening and speaking as they relate to foreign language learning. In addition, it examines the most remarkable aural-oral problems and difficulties that FL students do actually encounter. What is significant in this chapter is that it suggests some guidelines to consider in teaching listening and speaking in terms of classroom aural-oral activities and practice. The chapter namely focuses on the use of laboratory materials in teaching the two skills, and the way in which the language laboratory improves and develops FL students' oral-oral abilities.

1. ORAL EXPRESSION IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Present-day university lessons in oral English are conventionally called "oral communication" or "oral expression". These lessons are intended to give students a chance to speak, exchange their ideas, express their feelings and find an appropriate space to tell about their experiences and social activities.

Oral communication or more accurately "Oral expression" is undoubtedly a basic module in the foreign language program and it is used more frequently in the every day affairs of life than written communication. Oral language is then the dominant means of

communication between students and their teachers. Educators and language teachers emphasize the teaching of oral language throughout the student's school years simply because they do believe that:

“he will find in speech an outlet for his emotions, a means of presenting and defending his opinions, a way of making himself a part of his vocational or social group, and a basic tool for all his school work His speakingwill be a part of his total personality and will help those who observe him –his parents, companions and teachers- to understand his actions”

(In Mildred A. Dawson and others: 1963.202).

From this quotation, speech or –in the TEFL context- oral expression course curriculum is designed to give students the opportunity to develop their language skills, built up variety of lexis and registers and improve their capacities and strategies in using the target language. It is a convenient means to encourage students to use the target language in different situations and interact with others orally. In the other hand, oral expression course helps students express opinions and ideas on a variety of topics fluently and clearly. It assists them not only to defend their opinions but also to make critical judgments on the ideas and opinions of others. Moreover, it prepares them for their future teaching career.

2. ORAL EXPRESSION IN THE ALGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

When having a glance on the aural-oral aspects of English in the Algerian educational system, we find that the first six years curriculum's objectives of teaching English (three years at the middle school and three others at the secondary school) are mainly intended to expose the learner to English as a foreign language with its four basic language skills.

All the secondary school's course books (Modern World, Midlines, New Skills, New Lines and now Comet are primarily based on the framework of the original text book “Think It Over”. In the Think It Over teacher course book sections, “several skills have combined to comply with the principle of skill integration.” (1988.3).

In its introduction we read under the title of “the balance of skills”:

“The reading section constitute the core of unites. This is not to say that the other skills have been neglected, writing has received special attentionAgain, a whole section is devoted to speaking in Think It Over. It aims at helping students build their oral skills by giving them an opportunity to interact in the classroom and then to minimize the teacher’s intervention and counter balance the amount of teacher talk...”

pp. 5-7

Throughout my reading of “Think It Over” introduction, I have noticed that listening skill is not given sufficient attention as the other skills, and still the emphasize is put on reading. This matter is really put right later on in the “Comet” where “teachers are advised to write the pre-listening, listening and post listening activities on the board” (1998.7).

What can be said about the objectives of pre-university course books is that they are intended to provide the student the materials needed to improve his level of proficiency in English. Yet the emphasize is still put on some aspects of language like vocabulary and grammar and certain aspects are not given sufficient attention like aural-oral aspects of language. As a result, learners –after six years of experience- are still unable to comprehend English when they listen to its native speakers or carry on a simple conversation in English. This result is obviously seen in the aural-oral English productions of first year University students. Many factors are the causes of this “unexpected” outcome, particularly the shortage or even the absence of the most basic teaching aids needed for teaching aural-oral English especially authentic audio and video materials.

3. ORAL EXPRESSION IN THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL PROGRAM

The listening and speaking skills –in the University level program- are combined together in a single course called “oral expression module”. It aims at giving students extra opportunities to develop their aural-oral skills and improve their performances in English proficiency. Conversations, discussions, instructions and explanations are the most common tasks of oral expression for the first year English University students. Later on formal types of expressional activities are introduced such as: reports, debates, story

telling , role play...etc. in addition to all these oral activities, aural ones are given the same rate of attention in terms of listening-comprehension tasks.

Generally speaking, oral expression course for University students is a genuine space for EFL students to practice, improve and develop their listening and speaking abilities. Each skill is given a special attention, attitude and strategies according to students' level and needs. Oral expression module is practiced in ordinary classroom and language laboratory as well.

4. LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL

We have seen in the first chapter that listening is believed to be passive, neglected and taken for granted skill. Current researches on the nature of listening process argued that it is vital, active and complex skill. According to Anderson and Lynch (2000), listening involves a multiplicity of skills:

- Identifying the spoken signals from the midst of surrounding sounds
- Segmenting the continuous stream of speech into units and recognizing them as known words
- Grasping the syntax of the utterance and understanding the speaker's intended meaning
- Applying linguistic knowledge to formulate a correct and appropriate response to what has been said

All these skills and elements have to be overlapped to constitute a successful effective listening process. Both L1 and L2 listening involve these skills and some aspects of listening cause difficulties not only for L2 listeners but for native listeners as well (Anderson and Lynch, 2000- Rost, 1994)

4.1. LISTENING IN L1 AND L2

According to A. Anderson and T. Lynch (2000), listening to our native language does not require much effort and it is usually done at speed. This is because our attention is focused on the meaning not on the language and the sounds. Speech perception is not a problem when we listen to our native language. In this sense, Anderson and Lynch (2000) proclaim that:

“Adult native listeners do not perceive speech phoneme by phoneme, a word by word. Instead, they use their knowledge of the phonological regularities of their language, its lexicon and its syntactic and semantic properties, to compensate for the short comings of the signals.”

P. (..)

This actually emphasizes that native speakers do not perceive speech as separate stages starting with phonemes and moving up to utterances and words. They don't get the speaker's meaning from the interpretation of these segmented unites, but they make a spontaneous use of their language properties (lexis, syntax and semantics) or more accurately their schematic knowledge in an interactive process. L1 listeners exploit their linguistic knowledge and information to reach a successful and effective listening.

4.2. LISTENING DIFFICULTIES IN L2

Most learners will probably agree that L1 listening is easier than L2 for many reasons. Michael Rost (1994) claimed that second language listening confounded by a number of difficulties:

Motive: we learn our first language in order to express our selves (self-expression) and comprehend new ideas and relationships. Since we have already learned the main concepts and have associated them with words, “we have lost one of the principle motives to learn language”. For many learners, the need to self-expression has already fulfilled when using their L1 therefore their motives to acquire L2 are likely to be less enthusiastic. This is obviously due to their cognitive and social development. Rost (1994) says that the primary problem in L2 listening is “developmental”.

Transfer: this is purely psychological problem. It is related to the process of using knowledge from one concept to learn another. Rost (1994) states:

“When we learn a second language, we tend to filter the concepts of the language through those we already know in our first language. The second language can thus never truly be learned fresh, as an independent system, since it must be

filtered through what we already know
about how language works”

p.134

In L2 listening, learners usually use transfer strategies like translation to understand the new or the unfamiliar concepts. It may help them to understand momentarily but it may weaken the acquisition of L2 concepts.

Social transfer may also be considered as another L2 listening problem. This problem is always linked to cultural and social situation's difference. When L2 learner listens to any L2 aspects of cultural or social situations like beginning meals, offering congratulations, apologizing...etc, he will be wondering which aspects of his native culture can be transferred to the new situation. “For example, a French student learning English might wonder if an English speaker's saying *let us it* is equivalent to *bon appetit* in French; since that is what is customarily said before eating in France”.

Psychologists argued that social transfer problem may extend to different communicative styles, different ways of introducing topics or different expressions of politeness.

Input: L1 input do continuously come from *caretaker language* (language spoken to a child which is designed to meet the child's interests and abilities – for example, repeating to be sure that the child understands “where is your book? Your book – where is it?” This kind of language is an opportunity for a child to develop his listening ability which rarely granted for L2 learners. Therefore, L2 input is not available for most learners, and it is not easily obtained unless they “develop the social strategy of making friends who will provide them with the right kind of language input” (Rost: 1994.136).

Neurological development: some researchers include a biological problem in L2 listening difficulties. Rost (1994) writes:

“After the age twelve or so, certain processes are completed in the brain's development and this often prevents learners from processing new linguistic sounds fully”

P.132

This period is called “critical age” or “sensitive period”, adults encounter certain difficulties particularly in listening because of “the completion of specific neuropsychological connections in the brain” (Eric Lenneberg, 1967). Rost continues arguing that:

“Adults in this period may have superior grammatical and lexical knowledge that is available to them during reading and writing, but may be unable to use this knowledge during speech processing”

P.136

Since comprehension plays an essential, vital and central part in the whole process of listening. Anderson and Lynch (2000) present some problems that may prevent L2 learners from being proficient in L2 listening comprehension. They declare that the main problem of foreign learners is “the language”. This means that L2 students learn linguistic system of the foreign language and the cultural system as well. Language obviously is the means used by its speakers to express its culture. Thus deficiency in the knowledge of L2 culture can really present an obstacle to comprehension. Anderson and Lynch (2000) say that linguistic problems are still considered the primary cause of L2 listening comprehension difficulties. This is basically related to syntactic structure difficult input. They state:

“One seemingly obvious way in which input can be more or less complex is in terms of its syntactic structure. It was this aspect of language comprehension that was the subject of psycho-linguistic research in 1960’s and early 1970’s [...]. So it seems that input which is syntactically difficult for young children causes comparable problems for older foreign learners...”

P. 37

This truly shows that the degree of difficulty in understanding particular syntactic forms depends on the complexity of the syntactic structure. This problem appears apparently in the situations and contexts outside the classroom such as a conversation with a native speaker or listening to native speakers in radio and television talks. Following Anderson

and Lynch (2000), this problem is basically due to the nature and features of the foreign language presented to the learner in formal settings (classroom or laboratory). They are usually characterized by a restricted set of grammatical structures, repeated exposure and well contextualized and predictable.

When listening to a conversation between native speakers or being part of face to face conversation with a native speaker, L2 listener must identify the topic of conversation. Discourse analysis studies have shown that identifying the topic of conversation will certainly make the process of listening comprehension easier and allow the L2 listener to make immediate relevant responses so that he effectively and successfully participate and engage in the conversation and be able to understand what is said.

Ur (2000) summarizes L2 learners problems in listening in the following list :

- Trouble with sounds (inaccurate sound perception)
- They want to understand every word (learners believe that every thing that is said bears equally important information. The effort to understand every word often results in ineffective comprehension as well as fatigue and failure)
- They can't understand fast, natural native speech (they are not usually exposed to spontaneous informal speech. Teachers often speak slowly and clearly and pronounce each word the way it would sound in isolation. They do so because their learners prefer this manner)
- They need to hear things more than once (exposing students texts more than once is not usually advantageous because in real-life listening they are going to deal with 'one-off' listening)
- They find it difficult to keep up (the feeling of overloaded can be resolved by encouraging them to relax and stop trying to understand every word)
- Get tired (it is due to the long passages and non change of speakers. Making listening passages short or breaking them into 'chunks' through pause will help learners for better listening comprehension)

Generally speaking, foreign language listener really encounters such problems preventing him from the successful listening comprehension process. Discourse analysis studies have proposed three main skills to be developed by the L2 listener:

- The ability to recognize the topic of conversation from the native speaker's initial remarks.

- The ability to make appropriate predictions about the developments of the topic to make adequate replies.
- The ability to recognize and signal understanding's gaps and difficult input apparently exist – to make the right prediction or response.

L2 listener has to exploit all the available knowledge about participants, topic and setting for a successful engagement in listening.

5. TEACHING L2 LISTENING

It is commonly believed that in the course of foreign language teaching's history, listening has not received much attention until more recent years. Most of the earliest teaching methods focused on teaching written texts followed by a great deal of reading. Listening is used just as models for oral reading.

The emphasis on teaching aural-oral skills began with the development of *direct method* in which oral presentations and aural comprehension were largely stressed. Later approaches and methods like *oral approach* and *audio-lingual method* gave more attention to oral presentation and oral drills. These aural-oral methods are based in teaching language skills on the following order (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

5.1. THE ROLE OF TEACHING LISTENING IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:

In spite of the fact that most of the recent approaches and methods stress the role of listening comprehension in second language teaching and learning, many FL teachers still do not give much importance and attention to listening as a vital skill in L2 instruction.

According to Adrian Doff (1992), speaking skill cannot be appropriately developed unless listening skill is developed as well. Developing this vital skill (listening) allows FL student to understand what is said to him since it is the first “input” for the learner to understand the spoken language. “Without understandable input at the right level, any learning can not simply begin” (M. Rost: 1994.141). Moreover, spoken language provides a real medium for the FL learner to have plenty of exposure to the language as it is actually used by native speakers. Adrian Doff (1992) states:

“Listening to spoken English is an important way of acquiring language – of

‘picking up’ structures and vocabulary....
So we need to give these learners as much
opportunity to listen to spoken English as
possible”

P. 198-199

This actually means that listening tasks and activities in classroom or language laboratory provide learners with new forms in terms of vocabulary, grammar, interaction patterns of the target language. They can also expose the student to the target culture (radio and television talks, movies, plays and songs) and make the him aware of the beauty of language (figures of speech, sayings, idioms, colloquial expressions...etc).

6. TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION USING LABORATORY MATERIALS:

The purpose of this section is to present the effective way for the teacher to use laboratory materials for listening practice. Language laboratory (conventional), as it is discussed previously, can offer certain facilities for teachers to assist their students to listen appropriately and effectively, understand the spoken language and speak the FL he is studying.

According to Anthony Howatt and Julian Dakin (1974), the purpose of teaching listening to foreign language students is to make them able to understand the speaker’s accent or pronunciation, understand his grammar, recognize his vocabulary and grasp the meaning of what he says. Foreign language teachers can use laboratory materials to improve and develop their students’ listening skill. To do so, it is important to expose them to both extensive and intensive listening materials and procedures. In this sense, Harmer (2001) stresses the importance of listening to both kinds since:

“It provides the perfect opportunity to hear voices other than the teacher’s, enables students to acquire good speaking habits as a result of the spoken English they absorb, and helps to improve their own pronunciation”

P. 228

6.1. EXTENSIVE LISTENING

As it is mentioned in the first chapter, extensive listening is intended to encourage students to choose for themselves their own materials and practice listening for pleasure and language improvement. Retracing and self-pacing functions are of great benefits for them to do listening for its own sake. It is usually practiced outside the classroom; language laboratory will be the best place for students to do extensive listening. Geoffrey Broughton and others (1980) state:

“[...] this can be done in the language laboratory, which should have a library facility providing tapes for extensive listening”

P.71

In other words, language laboratory' library is supposed to contain extensive listening materials from a variety of resources. FL teacher can simply make his own extensive listening materials (recordings from the radio and television, recordings of stories and other texts taken from books and magazines, recordings of local native English speakers...)

Variety of materials provides not only different topics but also different kinds of language, different accents, and different styles of talking and dialects.

We previously said that extensive listening should be done for its own sake; this does not mean that the teacher would take no interest in it at all. Howatt and Dakin (1974) suggest an introductory period to make the learner familiar the general context of the listening passage. Showing a photograph or picture and asking some questions about it to introduce the main “key items” may be used as an introductory work. These key items will assist the learner to understand the main structures of the listening passage.

Extensive listening in general deals with “freer and more general” features of the natural spoken language. It is often kept away from the direct guidance of the teacher. It aims at giving extra opportunity for the student to hear vocabulary items, structures and styles that might be unknown or unfamiliar to him. It is a way to enrich the learner's “linguistic bank”.

What should be taken into account when selecting an extensive listening passage are the interest of the content, the adaptation of natural conversation and the existence of repetition. This latter is one of the important features of learning through listening. It helps learners to understand and memorize the new patterns.

6.2. INTENSIVE LISTENING

Following Geoffrey Broughton and others (1980), intensive listening can be defined as follows:

“[...], intensive listening is concerned, in a much more controlled way, with just one or two specific points. There is one important division to be made – the listening can be primarily for language items as part of the language teaching program, or it can be principally for general comprehension and understanding”

P.72

According to this definition, intensive listening activities can be divided into two types:

- Activities to train a detailed comprehension of meaning.
- Activities which get the learner to listen to particular features of language (vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation).

6.2.1. INTENSIVE LISTENING FOR COMPREHENSION OF MEANING

It is principally language laboratory exercises (using taped material). The teacher may design his activities according to the learners' level and purposes. According to Dakin (1974.92) comprehension exercises have three (03) major purposes:

- The student is intended to understand a text
- The student is made to show that he has understood (i.e. some exercises are made to test the student's “understanding” or “misunderstanding” by giving him some comprehension questions)
- The student must be trained to infer the most likely sense of questions on the text (i.e. the student is supposed to give the most “appropriate interpretation” of the message he has learned)

6.2.2. TYPES OF COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

Dakin (1974) proposes five main comprehension activities about any listening message (description, narration, conversation, instructions, prose or verse...etc). These activities are:

Answering questions: in this activity, the teacher has the right to employ different kinds of questions (true or false statements, blank-filling prompts, multiple choice and open ended questions). The aim of the teacher in asking such questions is “to find out whether they have heard and understood”. He is not generally concerned with what the learner tells him, but whether they can tell him (Dakin: 199974.93). Another aim is to teach the learner not only to make grammatical correct answers but to know how to ask himself relevant questions as well.

Note-taking and summarizing: these two exercises involve comprehension. They require a process of replacement of the original structures of the text by symbols or paraphrases of the student. Note-taking demands particularly using abbreviations, symbols and limited number of structure words to pick up the major points of the listening message. Summarizing is an important aspect for the student to understand the listening text by means of organizing the ideas he has heard in his own words and style.

Dictation (writing down the passage or part of it): laboratory dictation involves not only the ability to spell words and punctuate sentences but the ability to hear correctly what *he* has to write down. According to Dakin (1974.111), the student must overcome four problems to hear the passage correctly and then write down successfully. These problems are:

- Recognition of distinctive sounds (it→ eat), (place →→ plays).
- Identification of homophones (which doctor is he?→He’s a witch doctor, is he?).
- Identification of words, phrases and sentences where the problem is in the rapid speech for syllables (not at all→ not a tall), (time zone →→ time’s own).
- Identification of intonation patterns (that’s your pencil? →→ That’s my pencil.)

Following instructions: in this exercise, the teacher tends to tell students to do something (identifying a place in a map) and see if he really understands the tape’s instructions and do successfully the exercise.

6.2.3. INTENSIVE LISTENING FOR SPECIFIC FEATURES OF LANGUAGE

This kind of intensive listening deals primarily with language items as part of the language teaching program. The teacher tends to get students notice particular features of language (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar...).

Laboratory material provides the features of oral language which are radically different from their written form. Hence listening to conversation-as an example- makes the student accustom his ear to what he would hear from the native speakers. It makes them also aware of colloquial expressions, idioms, and other non-written and informal expressions...etc.

6.2.4. TYPES OF LANGUAGE FEATURES EXERCISES

Howatt and Dakin (1974) propose three (03) types of exercises: discrimination, hunting and dictation.

Discrimination exercises: they can be done with pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

Discrimination exercises for pronunciation are designed to make the student able to distinguish and “decide which of two or more sounds, stress, rhythm patterns or intonation pattern he can hear on the tape. For instance, the teacher can get students to hear some sentences (isolated or in a dialogue) and ask them to decide which of the following utterances are questions and which are not (here the intonation indicates the nature of the statement):

- You liked your holiday?
- You didn't go to France
- She was alone?
- She was alone

In *Discrimination for grammar exercises*, the student could be given sentences containing two different tenses or grammatical points and asked to distinguish between them. For example, students could be asked which of the following sentences contain habitual actions (present simple) and which of them describe progressive actions (present continuous).

- He goes to the cinema every Saturday
- He is going to the cinema.
- He meets his friends in the pub.
- He is smoking his pipe.

As far as *discrimination for vocabulary exercises* is concerned, the teacher can give his students copies with drawings (different kinds of people) in the left side and other drawings (vehicles) in the right side. While listening to the tape, they could be asked to match between the drawings following the instruction the tape gives them:



John's got a ship.



Mary's got a bus.



Mr. Simpson's got a car.

Figure 04: pictures discrimination for vocabulary exercises

Hunting exercises:

Hunting exercises are principally discrimination exercises but they provide variety of activities for students. They can be practiced also with pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

Hunting exercises for pronunciation depends on giving a dialogue to learners and ask them some particular questions. The following dialogue is taken from Howatt and Dakin (1974.104).

Mum: Henry!

Henry: yes

M: breakfast's ready. Are you up yet?

H: well...ready. Where's my jacket?

M: on the back of your chair, I expect.

H: oh yes, thanks mum.

M: quick, your eggs getting cold.

Questions:

- How many words have the sound /a/ in them?
- How many words have the sound /e/ in them,
- How many words have the sound /I/ in them?

In *hunting exercises for grammar*, students would be asked to listen to particular grammatical points (phrases expressing direction with the preposition “to”). The teacher then can get them listen to a dialogue containing phrases with “to” (I drove to a garage) and others without “to” (I drove home). Students' task is to classify the phrases which they are going to hear into phrases expressing direction with “to” in one list and phrases expressing direction without “to” in another. (This is just an example).

As far as *hunting exercises for vocabulary*, the teacher’s aim is to expose them to new vocabulary items, thus he may get them listen to a story, dialogue or poem and ask them – for example- to find synonyms of any verb, noun or phrase of his choice.

Dictation exercises:

Howatt and Dakin (1974) classify dictation exercises into tow types: general dictation and specific dictation.

General dictation is a normal dictation where the text is simply recorded for lab use. The students task is to listen carefully and write down what they have heard. Their work can be corrected in the follow-up class or taken in by the teacher.

Specific dictation is also called “fill in gaps activity”. Its aim is to attract the students' attention on to a specific linguistic point (s). The text (story, dialogue, song...etc) would be recorded on a tape and students would have to fill in the gaps with the missing words in the gapped version copy. Here is an example given by Howatt and Dakin (1974) which aims at practicing the weak forms and strong forms (I’m I am, you’re you are).

Tape

Bob: you’re late Jim

Jim: no, I’m not. It’s only ten o’clock

B: you are, you know, the game started at night

J: oh, I’m sorry...etc

written stencil to be filled in

B:late, Jim

J: no....not. It’s only ten o’clock

B:, you know, the game

J: oh,.....sorry...etc.

7. DESIGNING ACTIVITIES FOR L2 LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Exposing students to a listening passage in the language laboratory can not be done at random or blindly. There are certain procedures for the teacher to follow because “it has now become standard practice to use the following procedures when dealing with a listening text” (T.Hedge:2000. 247).

- Before carrying out any listening activity, the teacher should prepare his students for listening by getting them familiar with the topic. Introducing some of the language features or structures of the text may, at some extent, activate any relevant prior knowledge they might have about the topic. In this phase, the teacher has the total responsibility to create a good atmosphere (mental, psychological, and physical) to do the listening task. In this sense, Hedge (2000) says: “the teacher’s role is to create interest, reasons for listening, and the confidence to listen”.
- The second procedure is to check whether all students have understood the instructions about what they are going to do, and what the activity involves (filling in gaps, question-answer...etc).
- Now every thing is clear about the type of the activity and its instructions. The teacher then lets the students listen independently (without any intervention or intercommunication unless it is too necessary). He preferably encourages individual listening while working, and later on checking responses can be done in pairs or in groups.
- Checking and discussing responses can be done with partners and with the teacher as well as feedback session. Its aim is to see how successful they have been in doing the task.
- Focusing on the language features of the listening text and its structures for further development of effective listening can be appropriately done as follow-up activities. These are the most common procedures to follow when dealing with any listening text and particularly when dealing with laboratory material.

8. STAGES IN A LISTENING TASK

The teacher can facilitate the development of listening ability by designing listening tasks that guide the student through three main stages: the pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening.

8.1. THE PRE-LISTENING STAGE

In this stage, an appropriate purpose for the listening activity should be established. Students are required to bring any thing relevant to the topic (their attitudes, previous knowledge...) in order to activate their schemata. According to Hedge (2000), there are many activities related to the pre-listening phase:

“Predicting content from the title of a talk, talking about a picture which relates to the listening text, discussing the topic, answering a set of questions about the topic and agreeing or disagreeing with opinions about the topic”

P.249

Thus this stage can be called “introductory” or “preparatory” phase to the next stage.

8.2. WHILE –LISTENING STAGE

It refers to the time of listening to the text. While they listen, students will need to be involved in the task by performing some while-listening activities. The teacher can prepare an intensive or extensive listening passage, for gist or for specific information. Again, the choice of activity will depend on the listening purpose and learners' level.

The aim of while- listening activities is to help students to catch the necessary information in order to approach an overall comprehension. Teacher must insist not to worry if the learner doesn't grasp every word. While-listening activities indicate the active and vital nature of the listening process for they involve the learner in getting information and immediately performing some thing with it. There are many activities available for the teacher to use in the while-listening stage:

- Comparing the listening passage with the pre-listening stage.
- Filling in gaps (completing the missing utterances in a gaped version of a conversation or song).
- Guessing the irrelevant information from the listening passage.
- Sequencing; where students are asked to give the right order of events in the story.
- Listening for specific information (information search).

8.3. POST-LISTENING STAGE

It comprises all activities which can be practiced after listening to the text. Post-listening work involves integration of other language skills as a natural development of the topic into reading, speaking and writing activities. According to Hedge (2000), post listening work creates an extra source of motivation to learn more about the topic. Thus the interest will not be confined to the original listening text, but will certainly extend to other interests by means of students personal attitudes and impressions about the topic. Post-listening task may include the following activities:

- answering multiple-choice or true-false questions to ensure comprehension of the listening text.
- summarizing the passage by referring to the notes taken during the while-listening stage.
- in the case of listening- group work, the different passages might be linked together by exchanging information which have been gathered during while-listening and complete the whole original text (a story for example).
- integration of other skills (writing letters or essays as a follow-up to listening text, carrying out different types of speaking activities like discussions, role-plays and personal reports...).

9. SPEAKING SKILL

As it is previously mentioned in the first chapter, speaking is seemingly the most important skill in FL learning since it is the skill by which learners are most frequently judged while first impressions are being formed. However, most FL learners think that speaking a foreign language competently and fluently is a very hard task to do.

9.1. SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES IN L2

According to Martin Bygate (1987), speaking practice in a FL classroom shows the fact that there is a difference between *knowledge* about a language and *the skill* in using it. By knowledge, we mean the amount of grammar and vocabulary needed to assemble different types of sentences in abstract and isolated form. The skill of using this knowledge refers to the ability to produce sentences appropriately in various contexts and circumstances (i.e. the ability to adapt the produced sentences accurately and fluently in different situations).

A simple analogy of a football player or car driver may make the above explanation clear. It is possible to know the rules of football but not necessary be a good player. The car driver needs to know all the controls and the skill to be able to use them as well in order to driver smoothly and safely.

This distinction between knowledge of language and the skill of using it is the key element in the teaching of speaking. The FL learner needs to know about language and its features and have the ability to use them appropriately, so that he can make decisions rapidly, implement them smoothly and hold a conversation without any problem.

In addition to the distinction between the knowledge and the skill, FL students encounter other problems with classroom speaking activities. Penny Ur (2000.121) introduces four (04) main problems in getting students to speak in the foreign language in the classroom:

Inhibition: what distinguishes speaking from other language skills is its “real-time exposure” to an audience. The problem of inhibition clearly appears when the learner tries to say something in the classroom. Littlewood (1999) states:

“it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibitions and anxiety [...] the learners remain constantly aware of their own state of ignorance before a teacher who possesses all relevant knowledge [...] Whatever they say or do is scrutinized in detail with every shortcoming being made a focus for comment” **P.93**

Shyness and fear of making mistakes are due to the ill-development of communicative skills and feeling of linguistic inferiority. Making mistakes when talking is- in the learner's view- a sign of ignorance particularly when he faces critical audience. For the above reasons, many FL students prefer to remain silent and "keep a low profile in the hope that they will not called upon to participate openly" (Littlewood: 1999.93). In this respect, Ur (2000) states:

"Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts"

P.121

Nothing to say: the common complain of most FL learners when they do speaking practice is that they can not think of any thing to say. They simply say: "I have nothing to talk about", "I do not know", "no comment" or they keep silent. These complain is probably stems from the absence of motivation to express themselves or the boring and uninteresting topic they have to discuss or talk about. This problem can particularly spring from the student's previous impression that the oral tasks are difficult and put him in critical situations.

Low or uneven participation: this problem is usually related to large groups (classes) where each student will have only very little talking time. In addition, some students tended to be dominant and take almost the whole students talking time. Some prefer to speak very little and only if they are sure of the correct answer, while others keep silent all along the course and show no interest or participation. These differences among students are principally determined by their personal learning style which is in turn related to their psychological attitude toward the course. Again, participation is so closely related to motivation (i.e. if the teacher does not create any motivating factor to participate and engage in the topic, even the students who tends to be dominant or likes participation, will show no interest.

Mother tongue-use: FL students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside and even inside the formal setting (classroom) because they feel more comfort and less 'exposed' to the target language. Some learners think that the target language is

confined only to the academic use (during the lecture's period). Speaking FL in the classroom or outside it is a very hard and uncomfortable experience for many learners. This seemingly shows either a deficiency in the linguistic knowledge (lack of adequate vocabulary in the student's repertoire, inaccurate grammar and pronunciation problems) or the skill in using it (hesitation, continuous pauses, lack of accuracy and fluency...etc).

Non- motivating atmosphere: in addition to Ur's four major problems, Littlewood (1999) considers the non-motivating atmosphere as an obstacle against the development of speaking skill. He stresses that the real progress in speaking skill can only take place if learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own ideas and communicate with the people around him (his classmates and his teachers). Students do really need a motivating atmosphere where they can feel comfort and less 'exposed' to the target language. This atmosphere can not be provided unless:

“The teacher's role in the learning process is recognized as less dominant. More emphasis is placed on the learner's contribution through independent learning”

(Littlewood: 1999.94).

The motivating atmosphere gives the learner a chance to express his own personality and thus can easily integrate with his classmates in an attempt to create a non- inhibiting atmosphere which allows an effective oral practice.

Poor listening practice: in addition to the above main problems, poor listening practice can be added to them. In many FL classes, the only model of spoken language is the one spoken by the teacher which is not certainly the one they are likely to experience in real-life situations. What should be insisted on to students is the fact that good speakers need to be also good listeners. Likewise, speech is usually learned through listening, and generally learners speak what they hear. In this sense, A. Anderson and T. Lynch (2000) state:

“For the L2 learner, to be a proficient partner in conversation, he needs to be skilled as both speaker and listener. However, this interdependence has not always been appreciated by language teachers and course writers, who have often separated off ‘listening’ and ‘speaking’ as discrete parts of language competence”

P.15

This strongly shows the tied relationship between listening and speaking. Thus, poor listening practice undoubtedly will lead to a poor speaking competence too. It is not only the role of the learner to improve his listening ability to develop his speaking skill, but also the role of the teacher who has to design courses, tasks and activities where the two skills are adequately and effectively interrelated and integrated.

9.2. TEACHING SPEAKING TO SECOND YEAR STUDENTS

As it is outlined earlier, “oral expression” module with its three hours per week aims at developing students aural-oral skills. The designed program for second year students tends to encourage students to exchange ideas through purposeful speaking activities (conversation, discussion, reports, role-plays). The main objective of the course is principally training students to be able to express their thoughts and feelings confidently with his teacher and classmates as well.

In fact, some objectives are put by curriculum designers for oral expression course to second year students in an attempt to reach certain level of language proficiency. These objectives are the following:

- Effective interaction with students and their teacher by exchanging and expressing ideas clearly and sincerely using of course adequate vocabulary and correct grammatical structures to convey the exact meaning.
- Develop communicative competence by varying the activities from simple conversation to formal discussion and presentation of personal reports.

Here, the teacher has to make students aware of all types and styles of expression.

- Getting students aware of the different accents and dialects of the native speakers. In addition, acquainting students with the different language discourses and situational and contextual expressions (business English, post-office jargon...etc).

It is worthwhile to say that these objectives are seemingly too broad. Thus the teacher will have a great choice in selecting the various speaking activities. In spite of the absence of a clear methodology and teaching strategies in teaching speaking skill in this designed program, the great burden will be carried by the teacher who has to select the appropriate methodology and adequate strategies to develop his students' basic speaking skills. He has to take into account not only the allotted time, the level and interest of his students but also the need for a more cooperative student-teacher planning of goals.

9.3. CLASSROOM SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

According to Jeremy Harmer (2001), the current and most-widely used activities in oral expression course should “fall at or near the communicative end of the communicative continuum” (P.271) (i.e. stressing the significance of language functions rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary). He introduces some major activities:

9.3.1. ACTING FROM A SCRIPT

In this activity, the teacher can ask his students to act out scenes from their course books or plays. If they successfully performed this task, they would move to an advanced stage which is acting out dialogues of their own. This stage is principally done according to the following steps:

- Ask *your* students (in pairs or groups) to write their own dialogues.
- Give them adequate time to rehearse their dialogues before acting out.
- After rehearsing time, choose first *your* brave, intelligent, volunteer and less shy students to perform their dialogues. It is a sort of encouragement for other students to do the same comfortably and confidently.

- *You* have to create a real supportive, motivating and competitive atmosphere in the class in terms of : encouragements, appropriate instructions, help and assistance where necessary...in order to make sure that *your* students are working freely and with less pressure.
- If all students are working from the same script (dialogue or play extract), *you* have to play the role of theatre director. *You* can go through the script paying attention to different language features and structures (the right stress, intonation and speed).

In fact, acting out from a script is a very wonderful activity which permits the student to produce his own material and learn from his teacher's instructions at the same time. It gives him an opportunity to break the ice when coming out in front of the class.

9.3.2. COMMUNICATIVE GAMES

Teacher uses such games to provoke communication between teacher-student and student-student. These activities –as Bygate (1987) suggests- are the following:

- describe and draw
- describe and arrange
- find the difference
- ask the right question

The teacher can bring these activities from radio and TV games into the classroom. “In describe and draw”, one student describes a picture and the other(s) draw it.

In “describe and arrange”, one student describes a structure made of simple objects (rods or sticks) and the other(s) put it in the right order by following certain instructions and without seeing the original.

In “find the difference”, two students have the same picture but one is slightly different from the other. They have to find the differences but, of course, without looking at each other's picture.

For “ask the right question”, the student writes a word on a card and has to elicit that word from other students who are supposed to ask as few questions as possible. To illustrate, Harmer (2001) presents a famous TV game called “twenty questions”. He says:

“In twenty questions, the chair person thinks of an object and tells a team that the object is either animal, vegetable, or mineral-or combination of two or three of these. The team has to find out what the object is asking only ‘yes-no’ questions such as: can you use it in the kitchen? Or is it bigger than a person? They get points if they guess the answer in twenty questions or less”

P.272

Harmer suggests other communication games as activities for oral practice. “Just a minute” is a sort of “comedy contest” in which each student has to speak for sixty seconds (one minute) on the subject proposed by the teacher. The only condition is that student speaks “without hesitation, repetition, deviation and particularly without language mistakes”. The rest of the class interrupt if they hear any of the mentioned elements and therefore the contestant has to stop without getting any point. The student who interrupts gets the point and carries on with the subject till the end of his sixty seconds and so on.

Another game is called “call my Bluff”. It involves two groups of students; the first group has to give a word that is unlikely to be known by the other group and give its correct dictionary definition and two false ones from their own. They read out their definitions and the other group has to guess the correct one.

All in all, communication games are intended to provide good fluency activities. The aim of these games - as Littlewood (1999) says- is not to choose the appropriate language for the right situation, but also to use it “in order to get meanings across as effective as possible”

9.3.3. INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES

This kind of oral practice is clearly defined by Bygate (1987):

“Students work in pairs, one with each part. The material consists of fictitious graphics and /or charts or tables to be completed. The information to be transmitted is presented in pictorial or note form on the speaker’s page, and is communicated either when asked for by ones’ partner, or because the speaker deduces that if he-the speaker- has the information, his partner does not. Activities include instructions (giving directions), descriptions, comparisons and narrations”

P.76

This seemingly demonstrates that information –gap activities requires the student’s ability to fill in missing information. They also require predictability of the vocabulary and information, communication, negotiation between the listener and the speaker, the adequate explanation of the speaker and the listener reaction and response.

In the FL classroom, the teacher uses this kind of activities aiming at sharing information since these tasks are a case where information are known by only a part of the group and the rest has to complete the task (information-gap) by asking the appropriate questions. As it is mentioned in the quotation, there are various tasks to be carried out in the information –gap activities; for instance, when working in pairs, the student (A) holds a non- completed map and has to give directions to the student (B) to locate the missing places in the map. A partially narrated story (unfinished) can be held with a part of the group and the rest of the class is supposed to negotiate and predict the end for the story. Here are some examples of the information-gap activities:

Passeport description :

			
Name :.....	Andrew Martin	.....	John Grant
Age :47	.....	.....	.....
Job :.....	.....	housewife	actor
Country: U.S.A	England	.....	Ireland

			
Name : Sue Turner .....	.....	Linda Williams .....	.....
Age :	32	25	29
Job : Teacher	Postman.	.....	.....
Country: .....	.....	Scotland	.....

Figure 05: pictures demonstrating information-gap activities

Who is the murder?

A woman has been found dead in her hotel room. It was the time of her husband arrival from his trip. The receptionist said that she saw a man with a young lady get out from her room. Guess who is the murder?

Incomplete dialogues:

A: good morning, can I help you?

B :.....

A: Mr. Smith is not here for the moment.

B:.....

All in all, information-gap activities are undoubtedly a student-centered practice where each student is given the chance to engage and share his information with others. The teacher serves as guide and assistance where necessary. They also increase the amount of interest and motivation since all students are working together in a non rigid direction of the teacher.

9.3.4. DISCUSSION (DEBATE)

It is one of the most useful and interesting forms of oral practice in the classroom. Discussion sessions immensely help learners to develop their communicative ability. According to Littlewood (1999), discussion has three main functions:

- It creates a rich stimulus for communicative interactions, particularly in terms of sharing experiences, expressing opinions and interests of the students. Learners can bring their personal identity and their outside world

into the classroom by discussing different subjects that concern every individual and discovering the various aspect of the subject being under discussion in an attempt to approach the real communicative interaction.

- It allows the students to extend the range of communicative functions and domains of meaning. Moreover, it benefits them in further social interaction (how to introduce a new topic, turn-taking and maintaining the conversation through different stages).
- Discussion sessions offer opportunities for FL students to talk about their experiences and express their views through the foreign language. They create a medium for learners to experience the use of the target language in handling their social relationships.

Discussion sessions are considered as “check-points” where the student is supposed to practice his language (vocabulary and grammar) in different situations, and the teacher has to see their real level and to think of appropriate feedback. In any formal discussion, three are certain standards that should be taken into account like: thinking time, appropriateness of language and convincing arguments. In this respect, Mildred A. Dawson and others (1963) declare:

“In formal discussion, the pupils prepare ahead of time the arguments and validating proof in respect to some well-defined issue. Precision of vocabulary, exactness of statement, variety in sentence structure, and effective arrangements of ideas are necessary features when pupils participate in debates, symposiums, and other formal types of expression”

P.242

This shows that “discussion” is a real language experience where the student is intended to deploy all his linguistic abilities to deal with such a “complex” and planned speaking activity. Students are supposed to prepare arguments in favor or against the proposed subject (written-like arguments), so that, when the discussion begins, the student can produce his well-rehearsed and prepared arguments. However, most FL teachers claim: “discussions fail” (Harmer: 2001.272), and they are unable to make students

express their opinions in an organized way in front of the class. The reason for this failure, according to Harmer (2001), is that students are reluctant to give their opinions because of the lack of self-confidence and the feel of extreme exposure in discussion situations using the target language.

To avoid this problem, he proposes a discussion technique called “the Buzz group”. It is a kind of a quick discussion in small groups before speaking out in front of the class; it gives a period for thinking, arrangement of ideas and language expression they will use. The “Buzz group” can –at some extent- decrease the amount of pressure and increase self-confidence in learners.

“Instant comment” is another technique in which the teacher can train students to respond fluently and immediately. It depends on showing pictures or photographs and asking students to say ideas that come into their minds, then carrying on a formal discussion will be easy since they have got the main ideas and headlines of the subject.

9.3.5. PREPARED TALKS (REPORTS)

It is a very common classroom speaking activity in which a student or a group of students choose a topic of their own choice and present it in front of the class. The report should be well-defined and well-organized in terms of form and meaning (ideas). Thus, the teacher is required to give special lessons concerning the design and layout of the report. M.A Dawson and others (1963) clearly state:

“Teachers should have a series of lessons that show pupils how to locate materials, select only the pertinent information, take running notes, organize the materials in an interesting manner, and present the ideas concretely. How to give a good report is not learned by accident.”

P.238

Thus, the report should contain a detailed study about any subject that should be basically unknown to the class and present facts of value and interest. The student who presents his report in front of the class should do it in a conversational manner and should maintain eye contact with his audience. Such talks (reports) should be presented orally and in an unstilted manner depending on notes not on the detailed written script. Generally speaking,

prepared talks are of immense communicative value if properly organized, presented and explained. This does not mean that they have no drawbacks; M.A Dawson and others (1963) state the report weaknesses:

“Perhaps the most common weakness in any oral presentation that has been planned ahead of time is the speaker’s reliance on reading what should be actually spoken. Without constant effort by the teacher, oral reports are likely to be largely copied from printed sources or written hastily and then read before the class”

P.240

The above drawbacks of planned talks make both teacher and students uninterested and tired when hearing the presentation because the reports are often memorized “*verbatim*” and presented in a passive and stilted manner.

9.3.6. ROLE-PLAY

It is one of the most useful ways to vary the forms of oral interaction that learners can experience in the classroom. Ur (2000) defines it as follows:

“Role-play [...] is used to refer to all sorts of activities where learners imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom [...], sometimes playing the role of someone other than themselves, and using the language appropriate to this new context”

P.131

Role-play is a drama-like classroom activity where students are asked to imagine themselves in a situation that may occur outside the classroom. They may think of any situation happens in a normal life (from a simple meeting with a friend to business interviews). They have to perform their role in accordance to the way it really exists. Role-plays activities can take many forms:

Dialogues: Ur (2000) considers this technique as “out of fashion” and “traditional language learning”; it depends on learning by heart a given dialogue and perform it pairs or groups. The teacher can ask the students to perform it in different ways and moods (sad, happy, bored, irritated...).she presents the following dialogue as an example:

A: look, it’s stopped raining!

B: so it has! Do you want to go out?

A: yes, I have got a lot of shopping to do.

(Ur: 2000.131).

This dialogue, for instance, can be performed in different role-relationships (a husband and wife, pupil and teacher, mother and child...). Whenever the participants change, the key words of the dialogue change too. The learner can suggest a continuation to the dialogue by adding two or more events and even add other participants. Role-play in form of a dialogue is seemingly of a great linguistic and psychological value. Ur (2000) recognizes that:

“Particularly for beginners or the less confident, the dialogue is a good way to get learners to practice saying target-language utterances without hesitation and within a wide variety of contexts; and learning by heart increases the learner’s vocabulary of ready-made combinations of words or ‘formulates’”

P.132

Plays: they are just an expansion of the dialogue technique in which learners study a play and then perform it. It depends on rehearsing or learning by heart the different roles. The play can be a real literature play or the teacher’s or the learner’s play, and it is generally performed as a speaking classroom activity at the end of the course, year or any occasion of celebration.

Role cards (role cues): it is a role-playing technique where the students’ performances are guided by the instructions printed on a separate role cards. Such instructions are usually used as cues for students to act out what may occur. William Littlewood (1999) suggests four types of role cards:

Role –playing controlled through cued dialogues:

Learner A

You meet B in the street
A: great B.
B:.....
A: ask B where he is going.
B:.....
walk.
A: suggest somewhere to go together.
B:.....
a

A: accept B's suggestion
B:

Learner B

You meet A in the street
A:.....
B: great A.
A:.....
B: say you are going for a

A:.....
B: reject A's suggestion. Make

Different suggestion.
A:.....
B: express pleasure.

9.3.7. SIMULATION

It is another form of oral interaction where:

“The individual participants speak and react as themselves, but the group role, situation and task they are given is an imaginary one”

(Ur: 2000.132).

In this kind of speaking activities, students simulate a real-life situation as if they are really involved in it. Here, they are no longer student but real participants in the situation. The teacher has to create the simulated environment and give them the necessary information to perform the simulation effectively. According to Herbert and Sturtridge (1979), simulations contain three main phases. The first one is for giving the participants necessary information; the second one is for the discussion of the task and finally, the phase of follow up work and feedback. These phases are clearly shown in the following diagram:

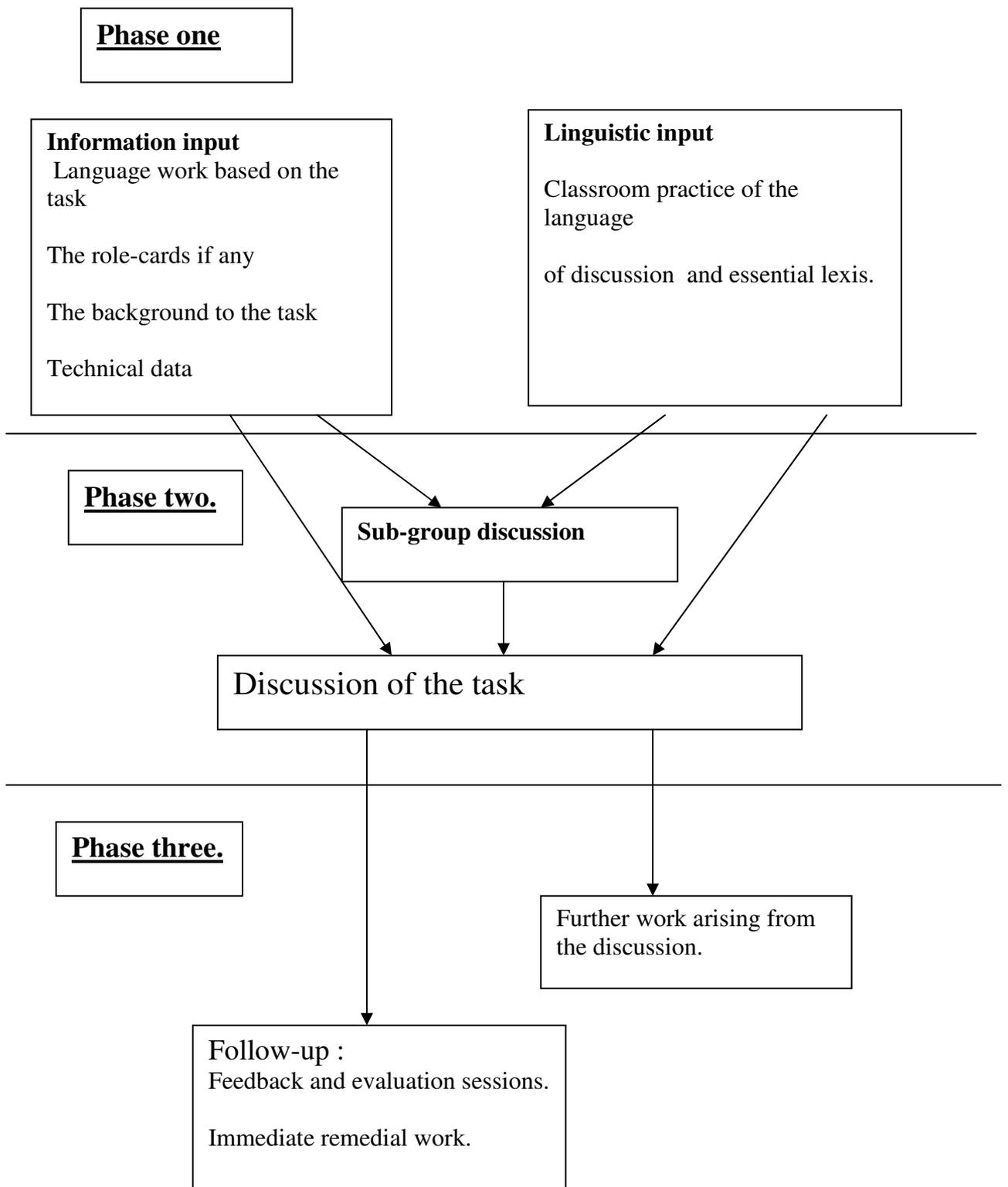


Figure 06: the structure of a simulation (in Littlewood: 1999. 81)

The famous example of simulation is “The Cambian Educational Aid Project” (Herbert and Sturtridge):

“In this simulation, a fictitious country, Cambian, has been offered one million pounds for English language teaching. The question is how to use the money?

First of all, the participants are introduced to the country and give facts about the national and educational background. They read information sheets and listen to recorded tapes to build up a fuller picture. In this example, there a maximum of nine role cards, so groups of up to nine are formed, each with a chairman, and each student with a role card [...] then try to resolve the problem, starting from the position outlined on their role cards...”

(Littlewood: 1999.82)

Generally speaking, role-playing and simulation activities are undoubtedly an opportunity for FL students to improvise a range of real life encounter in the classroom. Such activities train students to be more confident and cooperative, and working in groups, sharing ideas and trying to deal enthusiastically with the task create motivation and interest that will make students speak freely and then learn effectively.

In fact, there are other speaking classroom activities that can be used to train accuracy and fluency, but these are the most common ones.

10. TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL USING LABORATORY MATERIALS

There is no doubt that the language laboratory remains the most-suited teaching aid for the development of students’ aural skill and the teaching of listening comprehension, but the question here is : is it well-suited tool for teaching speaking and developing oral skills as well?

In this section, we are going to see some of the most useful production exercises and laboratory speaking activities that can hopefully develop FL learners’ oral skills.

Language laboratory offers the students the opportunity of speaking and oral practice in a number of ways. The teacher should utilize all the laboratory functions and characteristics to get the utmost benefits that certainly help learners improve their speaking abilities through the laboratory practice. Language laboratory advantages that have been mentioned earlier are undoubtedly of enormous value and importance if carefully and appropriately used.

Aside from audio-lingual drills, here are some of the most useful and common laboratory speaking activities that can effectively develop FL students' oral skills.

10.1. REPETITION (IMITATION OF A MODEL)

Harmer (2001) considers this activity as the simplest use of a “double-track” option. This later is one of the L.L special characteristics which allows the student to listen to the taped material on one track and record on another. Repetition activity can range from repeating a single word to a whole dialogue exchanges; students listen to the recorded passage (a word, phrase, sentence, dialogue) through headphones and repeat it in a special space(indicated by a bleep or buzz signal)that is left for them to repeat what they have heard. They listen to the passage twice or three times to check if they have imitated the model correctly (as an immediate feedback).

The recorded passage is certainly a helpful model for speaking practice via repetition and imitation since it is said by a native speaker (s) whose voice is pleasant and well-modulated, his pronunciation is correct and the stress, rhythm patterns and intonation are correctly, fluently and naturally uttered. Imitation and repetition exercises improve the students quality of spoken language for they “rehearse all aspects of language from sound structures to the minutes change in tone of voice indicating attitudes and feelings (Dakin: 1973.119).

Some researchers may say that repetition of a model is simply a passive and non-creative production of language, and it teaches the FL students only rehearsing and learning by heart. This claim in one hand is actually true, but in the other hand it may need some revision. In this sense, Dakin (1973) declares:

“Repetition is a re-creative and recreational exercise rather than creative one. When it proceeds to the extent of learning things by heart, it has its place in language learning. Many foreign language learners believe in learning things by heart, particularly important things like irregular verbs and examination answers.”

P. 119

For many learners, imitation of a model and repetition exercises are sort of ‘familiarization’ with FL features of language (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) through the process of rehearsing.

Repetition activities can be practiced indifferent modes; the teacher decides either the activity can be done individually or collectively. In case of individual work, he can record the proposed material onto each individual booth and have the students working with the same material but at their own pace. Then, the student has the access to enjoy retracing (listening, imitating through repetition, recording, stopping, playing back and checking mistakes by comparing his version with the model). In this activity, Audio-Active-Compare A-A-C operation can be used.

As far as material selection, it is up to the teacher to decide the taped program (separate words or sentences, short dialogues, conversations, songs...) depending on his perception of students’ level, interests and purposes. The teacher can listen to any individual as he practices repetition or imitation of a model for the sake of general monitoring in terms of correcting serious errors and evaluating. Providing necessary comments, instructions and feedback are usually done by means of “intercom” operation.

In the case of collective work, “the broadcast” operation is the most suitable procedure to deal with this kind of laboratory work. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, the broadcast operation is so useful and appropriate especially when using the lab for group study; the students hear and respond at the same time (listen and repeat or more technically Audio-Active A-A “listen and respond operation”)

10.2. TELEPHONING

“It is an interactive speaking activity that can be performed by students who are paired together at different booth ("or two of whom plug their headphones into the same machine") (Harmer: 2001.144).

In the conventional L.L, each student’s booth is equipped with two headphones which allow the process of pairing two students in one machine. In this case, the most useful and appropriate laboratory speaking activity is “telephoning” where students can practice telephone conversations through their headphones and microphones. In this activity, the teacher can get students listen to native speakers’ telephone conversation and ask them to practice it by repetition and imitation. Students, then, have to create their own telephone conversation as an interactive speaking activity. They can record their version on their own tape-recorder and listen to it at their own pace. This activity depends on Audio-Active-Compare A-A-C procedure (listen, respond and record) where self-pacing and retracing options are offered. Again, the supervision of the teacher (monitor) is required for necessary instructions, help and evaluation by means of monitoring and intercom switches.

10.3. READING ALOUD EXERCISES

In this kind of speaking activities, the teacher has the total choice to select the appropriate text for reading (for example, extracts from stories or plays) taking into account their level, interests and reading purposes. Students read the text aloud into a tape-recorder with the possibility to enjoy self-pacing and retracing (repeating sections with which they are not satisfied). The aim of reading aloud laboratory activity is to:

“Train the learner to differentiate *orally* between the sounds and phrases he has to distinguish *aurally* [...] and to differentiate in his pronunciation between homographs, words that are spelt in the same way but spoken differently”

(In Julian Dakin: 1973.120).

This apparently indicates that reading aloud could be used to improve learners’ pronunciation through the practice of different sounds located in different words.

Assimilation, elision, intonation and variation of voice tone can be also practiced in reading aloud activities.

What is useful and significant in this sort of laboratory activities is its ability to combine the three language skills: writing, reading and speaking. It effectively helps the learner to remember the written form of the word and the right way to pronounce it for further use in different speaking situations.

10.4. DISCUSSION THROUGH A TAPED REPORT

The taped report can be used as warm-up activity to carry out a discussion in the language laboratory. Each student is supposed to make a taped report (about five (5) minutes) on a favorable subject that might be a personal experience (s), update issue (s), natural or human phenomena.... At the beginning of each laboratory session, the teacher can play one of the taped reports as a warm-up for further discussion. He is supposed to play the tape three (03) times; the first listening is intended to get the main idea, the second to look after details and the last one to check what is missing. After each time of listening, a short discussion about a specific element in the report can be carried out. Here the broadcast operation is seemingly passive because students listen without speaking in their microphones, recording their voices or using other functions (i.e. no self-pacing and no retracing).

The aim of this activity is to give students the chance to produce and prepare their own laboratory materials. The students' performances in the taped report can be better than the real oral report since they are doing their best to produce the best report; they can monitor their own language and do self-correction.

N.B: this activity is proposed by: Yeh-Chieh- Yue in English Teaching Forum: April 1994. P43.

10.5. AUDING

It is an activity which requires both elements of communication: listening and speaking. Lena Mitragaeva defines it as follows:

“By auding we mean reproduction by students of a previously recorded story after listening to it once or twice”

(In English Teaching Forum: October 1989.43)

As this brief definition indicates, auding depends largely on recorded stories so that the student has the choice to select the story as he so wishes and plays it in his own booth. Auding is a multiple skill; it involves comprehension of the story, understanding the maximum of its vocabulary and expressions, recognition of characters and appreciating the style.

Before auding, there are certain procedures that the teacher should follow in an attempt to make it effective and successful:

- Be sure that all *your* students have chosen a taped story from the laboratory library
- Prepare and distribute cards with the following assignments:
 - pick out the general idea of your story
 - select and write down the key expressions that will help you retell your story
 - make an outline of the story
 - give the main events of the story
 - write down the main characters, time and the place of the story
 - What is your opinion of.....?
 - How do you think the author's attitude when writing his story?
- let *your* students listen to their stories twice or three times
- Give the class about three (03) to five (05) minutes to complete the assignment.

After carrying out these procedures, retelling the story orally comes next. Each student is supposed to retell his story in front of the class depending on his assignment's answers.

The aim of auding in the language laboratory is to help students remember what they have heard, learn how to organize the events and the main ideas, retell orally the story with their own style and finally try to speak fluently and accurately after writing what has to be spoken.

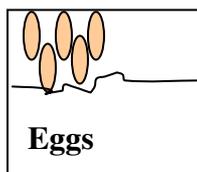
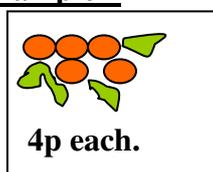
Another way of doing auding with one story is also possible. The teacher can bring any taped story from the laboratory library and distribute among students the assignments cards, each student or group of students will answer a particular card and then the story will be retold in the given order of the cards. This procedure allows all students to listen attentively and experience the technique of "class-story retelling" (i.e. each one retells an

event till the end of the story). Auding is actually an opportunity to experience “library operation”.

10.6. ROLE-PLAYING EXERCISES

Role-play in the language laboratory is almost the same in the ordinary classroom; the only difference is that the learner’s side of the conversation can be prompted in the laboratory. Instead of using the role cards, cue-words, pictures or sound effects can be employed. To illustrate, Dakin (1963) presents the example of shopping: the exercise starts with a simple role-play using pictures as prompts and taped instructions and answers.

Example 1



Taped instructions and answers:

Look at picture one.

Voice: how many oranges are there?

Student: there are five oranges.

Voice: how much does one orange cost?

Student: it costs four (04) p.

Figure 07: pictures used as prompts in lab-role playing

The activity can be developed to a more complex role-play.

Example: 2. Taped instructions and answers: now play the role of a customer. Look at picture (a) and (b) and listen carefully.

Voice: good morning, can I help you?

Student: I’d like five oranges, please. How much is that?

Voice: it costs four (4) p each, any thing else?

Student: yes, I also want half a dozen eggs. How much is that?

In this activity, the language prompted is limited (asking for something by *I’d like* and *I want*, a sample of countable and uncountable nouns, simple expressions like: *good morning, please, thank you...*). This activity can be developed by adding other role-cues in terms of sound effects, word-cues and more pictures.

The laboratory role-play activities are of enormous linguistic value; Dakin (1963) declares:

“They help to make him (*student*) more independent in the language, trusting in his appraisal of the situation and in his appreciation of the significant of the small cues to an expected response that may be given in real conversation.”

P. 126

Thus, laboratory role-play teaches the student how to consider the value of each small cue to predict the appropriate response as in real conversation. It opens up a rich stimulus for communicative interaction, namely through cues and responses. By further practice of laboratory role-play exercises, the student “will find that he can not forever be playing predictable roles” (Dakin: 1963.126), and he can ultimately produce various responses according to the different types of prompt.

10.7. GAME-PLAYING EXERCISES

The language laboratory is not so suitable for games practice as it is in the classroom i.e. there are a large number of communicative games, as we saw earlier, that can be played in the classroom, and a few that can be performed in the L.L.

The purpose of games-playing in the language laboratory is to practice a particular form of language features (vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation). Dakin (1963) presents a modified form of the game “twenty questions” that we have seen earlier in the “classroom communicative games” and declares that it could be played in the laboratory too.

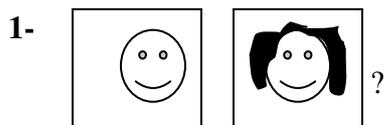
He suggests “five questions” game that requires cues (pictures, words, numbers, graphics...) printed on the student’s booklet or on special cards. Here are two types of laboratory game-playing exercises suggested by Dakin: 1963. 138-139

I) I am thinking of someone. I will give you five questions to try to guess who is”

Taped instruction: look at the prompts in front of you and ask me a question about each of them. I will tell you the answer.

Prompts:

Taped response and answer



Student: is it a man or woman?

Voice: it's a woman.

2- British : American ?

Student: is she British or American?

Voice: she is British.

3- film-star : public figure?

Student: is she a film-star or a public figure?

Voice: she is a public figure .

4- 40+: 40-?

Student: is she over forty or under forty?

Voice: she is over forty

5- Buckingham palace:

student: does she live in Buckingham palace or at

10, downing street?

10, Downing street?

Voice: she lives in Buckingham palace.

Check your guess

The answer is **the Queen Elizabeth II.**

II) “This time it’s a thing”.

Prompts:

Taped response and answer.

1- veg: min?

Student: is it vegetable or mineral?

Voice: it's a mineral.

2- Metal: stone?

Student: is it made of metal or stone?

Voice: it is made of metal

3- 

Student: is it round or square?

Voice: it is round.

4- 1971: 1972 ?

Student: was it made in 1971 or 1972?

Voice: it was made in 1971.

5- Cu: Ag ?

Student: is it made of cooper or silver?

Voice: it is made of cooper.

The answer is: **a penny.**

The two games indicate that laboratory playing-game exercises aim at practice language structures (how to ask questions) and intonation patterns. Moreover, they allow the student listen attentively to the pronunciation of the answers as he is listening to a native speaker in a real question-answer conversation. Yet, laboratory games suffer from certain drawbacks; according to Dakin (1963):

“The game suffered from a restriction imposed by the nature of the conventional tape-recorder. The student can not easy choose which questions he wants to ask, and he cannot order the questions in his own way.”

P. 139

Generally speaking, language laboratory can, at some extent, offer opportunities for FL students to practice their oral ability and improve their speaking skill via taped material and the different activities we presented above. The teacher can possibly achieve his aim in teaching speaking in L.L if he carefully chooses the appropriate material and follows the instructions of the selected activity. Again, creating motivation is very important to encourage student perform the activity with more interest, enthusiasm and involvement.

CONCLUSION

After investigating and examining most of the fields related to teaching and learning Oral-expression module for FL University students both in classroom and language laboratory, we came up to the point that listening and speaking are the two major parts that need much attention and consideration in the foreign language program. The fact that aural and oral skills are unquestionably overlapped obliges FL teachers to create tasks where listening and speaking are interdependent because any progress in one skill is certainly a progress in the other as well.

The most significant point we came up to is the possibility of teaching speaking skill in the language laboratory as well as listening comprehension. The common assumption which considers the language laboratory a well-suited too l only for teaching and developing aural skills is no longer true since oral skills can be also performed in the L.L (as we saw above). It is now up to the teacher to select carefully the appropriate materials and design skillfully the suitable tasks for students to perform accurately and fluently their activities to reach hopefully the desired “language mastery” through the use of laboratory materials.

PART TWO

FIELD STUDY

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

INTRODUCTION

To investigate the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing the learners' aural-oral skills, we saw the necessity to involve our second year students and teachers of oral expression module in this study by including their view points concerning the subject under investigation. Learners and teachers opinions were gathered in a form of questionnaire administered to them in order to determine students learning barriers in listening and speaking, and the teachers' methods to deal with them.

Hence, the present chapter is devoted to describe and analyze the results of both questionnaires.

1. DESIGN AND DESCRIPTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires used in this study are divided into two types: students and teachers' questionnaire. They aimed at collecting the different opinions about the subject under investigation. Both questionnaires probe nearly the same issues that have been discussed in the theoretical part of the theme. We attempted to introduce both perceptions to make sure that the subject matter is viewed from different perspectives and studied from both dimensions.

1.1 STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Students' questionnaire was supposed to be administered to the whole population of second year English classes at Biskra University (about 180 students). It was submitted at the beginning of the academic year where many students were absent. Therefore, we unfortunately obtained only 90 answered questionnaires (50% of the population).

Students' questionnaire includes both opened and close-ended questions. Its primary objective is to give our students an opportunity to express their opinions and attitudes towards learning and teaching the four skills and aural-oral skills in particular. Moreover, it is actually an outlet for revealing the difficulties and problems they encounter in oral expression module both in classroom and language laboratory. It also provides a free space for their personal evaluation and suggestion concerning the use of language laboratory in the teaching of aural-oral skills and its effectiveness in developing their listening and speaking abilities.

Students' questionnaire is made up of four sections with a total number of forty questions; each of these sections investigates a different but a relevant issue. The results are analyzed below with brief comments of the emerged remarks.

SECTION ONE: it contains five questions.

The section entitled "background information"; it seeks the general information about the students' sex, age, type of baccalaureate they hold, whether their choice to study English is personal or imposed and the reasons behind their choice.

SECTION TWO: it contains ten questions.

The section is entitled "language skills and teaching aids". It surveys the students' general attitudes towards learning the four skills, the difficulties they encounter and whether they follow a strategy to deal with these difficulties. It also aims at identifying the viewpoints of students towards using teaching aids in classroom and generally the use of educational technology in TEFL context.

SECTION THREE: it contains ten questions.

The whole section is devoted to language laboratory. It seeks the personal evaluation of students' knowledge, attitude and feelings towards the study in such instructional setting (language laboratory) and the difficulties they encounter while lab practice.

SECTION FOUR: it contains fifteen questions.

In the last section of the questionnaire, we sought to probe our learners' personal evaluation of their speaking and listening abilities. It is supposed to obtain learners' views concerning the effectiveness of teaching aural-oral skills in the language laboratory. This section contains a space for students' own suggestions concerning the teaching of oral expression module according to their needs and interests.

1.2 TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was distributed to eight teachers, who are in charge of the oral expression module in different years of study, at the department of English in the University of Biskra.

Like students' questionnaire, it includes both open-ended and close-ended questions. The main objective of this questionnaire is to survey the teachers' methods and techniques they follow in teaching aural-oral skills particularly in language laboratory. It also seeks the teachers' attitudes towards learners' difficulties in learning the four skills especially listening and speaking, and the way each teacher deals with his/her students' learning barriers. Yet the primary concern of teachers' questionnaire is to probe teachers' opinions about the role of language laboratory in developing students' aural-oral skills.

Teachers' questionnaire is composed of four sections made up of forty three (43) questions.

SECTION ONE: it contains six questions.

The opening section is about the background information. It investigates the personal professional profile of our teachers. It includes their sex, qualification, experience of teaching at the university and the modules they have been teaching during their experience.

SECTION TWO: it contains nine questions.

The section deals with language skills and teaching aids. It aims at identifying teachers' attitudes towards teaching the four language skills and the barriers their students often encounter when learning them. It also seeks the teachers' points of view concerning the use of teaching aids in foreign language classes and particularly their role and importance in teaching the four skills (listening, writing, reading and speaking).

SECTION THREE: it contains ten questions.

The whole section is devoted to the use of language laboratory as a teaching aid in EFL classes. It attempts to identify the teachers' general knowledge about language laboratory's functions and their degree of mastery of its procedures and teaching techniques.

SECTION FOUR: it contains eighteen questions.

The last section tries to find out the teachers' opinions concerning the oral expression course (number of groups, allotted time, program...). It accurately attempts to probe the teachers' methods and techniques of teaching listening comprehension and speaking both in language laboratory and typical classroom. The difficulty that students encounter when learning the two skills in language laboratory is also a matter of investigation in this section of the questionnaire.

2. RESULTS ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES

2.1 SECTION ONE: background information

ITEM ONE: sex distribution.

Response	Male	Female
Participants	13	77
Percentage	14.44%	85.56%

Table 01: students' sex distribution

Table 01 reveals the fact of female over representation: out of 90 participants, 77 (85.56%) are females and 13 (14.44%) are males. This high number of females enrolled in the department of English at the University of Biskra proves the common belief that females have more tendency towards studying foreign languages and English in particular. It is a mean to hunt a profession as language teachers or interpreters which are commonly considered as feminine jobs in this country. Males generally tend to prefer scientific and technical branches (computing, technology, mechanics...).

ITEM TWO: Age distribution

The questionnaire resulted in the following age categories:

R	18	19	20	21	22	23	24-27	30-41	N.A
Ps	3	21	27	16	5	4	5	5	4
%	3.33%	23.33%	30%	17.77%	5.55%	4.44%	5.55%	5.55%	4.44%

Table 02: students' age distribution

According to the results shown in the table 02, we notice that the scope of second year students' age ranges between 18 (3.33%) and 41(1.11%) with a supremacy of the percentage of students aged 20(30%). For unknown reasons, 4 students (4.44%) didn't mention their age (most of them are females?!). students aged between 24(1.11%) and 41(1.11%) are –for many reason- enrolled in English language studies. It could be due to the number of times they pass Baccalaureate exam or due to their job requirements because most of the 'aged' students are workers too.

ITEM THREE: Type of baccalaureate

This item of the questionnaire seeks the type of baccalaureate our students hold.

Response	Literary	scientific	technical	Scientific + literary	N.A
Participants	60	23	2	4	1
Percentage	66.67%	25.56%	2.22%	4.44%	1.11%

Table 03: students' type of baccalaureate

Table 03 shows that the majority of students: 60 (66.67%) came from literary classes. 23 participants(25.56%) hold scientific baccalaureate and only two(02) participants (2.22%) came from technical branches. Four(04) students(4.44%) hold both scientific and literary baccalaureate; they were probably enrolled in other departments(science or technology) and because of many factors(failure, wish to change the domain of study- English in particular-), they passed another exam for the sake of holding a literary baccalaureate to have an easy access to English language studies. In fact, the results above revealed different educational backgrounds of second year English students.

ITEM FOUR: free/ imposed choice to study English

In this question, we wanted to know whether the choice of students to study English was free or imposed. The questionnaire resulted in the following responses:

Responses	Personal	Imposed
Participants	80	10
Percentage	88.89%	11.11%

Table 04: students' personal/ imposed decision to study English

Out of 90, 80(88.89%) participants reported that they chose freely to study English, however 10 subjects said that studying English was imposed either by their parents or by the administration. The great rate of students whose decision to study English was personal reveals their great motivation and interest to study this language. This factor is really important for us in having an easy access to introduce the experimental materials to our students. The personal choice to study English lets them prepared and ready to receive any material attempts to develop and improve their language level especially productive and receptive skills.

ITEM FIVE: students' reasons to study English

It is obvious that any decision-making comes as a result of many reasons. Thus, students' decision to study English stands behind many motives and reasons. The 80 students, who reported that they have freely chosen to study English, are now asked to

give their main motives and reasons for such a decision. Their responses are summed up in the following points:

- It is an international language (language of science, media, and technology).
- It makes *us* members of the international community (to be able to speak English, understand its native speakers and be understood).
- Knowing more about English language and the culture of its people.
- It is a very useful language to study other branches like computing, electronics...etc.
- It became one of the most important job requirements.
- Studying English was a childhood dream.
- Speaking English allows *us* to travel abroad- England and USA in particular.
- Studying English was for the sake of professional reasons especially teaching (I want to be a teacher of English in the future).
- It is a very 'sweet' and musical language, *we* enjoy learning it.
- Many students gave the "I like it" response to express their great desire, tendency and interest to study this language.

2.2 SECTION TWO: language skills and teaching aids

ITEM ONE: the classification of skills according to their importance.

The question seeks the students' opinions about the skill which is given much importance and attention by their teachers. Here are the results:

Response	speaking	writing	reading	Listening
Participants	36	29	13	12
Percentage	40%	32.22%	14.44%	13.33%

Table 05: proportions of the four skills depending on the teachers' given attention

The first remark the table shows is the supremacy of productive skills (speaking and writing) with a total percentage of (72.22%) over the receptive skills (reading and listening) with 27.77% of the responses. The table also shows that speaking skill takes the lion-share of the teachers' instructional attention (40%); writing receives a very considerable share

(32.22%). In the other hand, reading and listening receive low portions (14.33% and 13.33%) in the classification of language skills according to their importance. These results do clearly support the common assumption that receptive skills (reading and listening in particular) are passive, neglected and taken for granted skills.

What makes speaking and writing classified as very important skills is the fact that English language studies curriculum contains "written expression" and "oral expression" as two basic modules where writing and speaking skills are carefully taught and formally tested.

ITEM TWO: the ranking of four skills in terms of difficulty

When asked to order the four skills according to their level of difficulty, students gave the following ranking:

Degree		Very difficult	difficult	easy	Very easy
Listening	<i>participants</i>	28	18	23	21
	<i>percentage</i>	31.11%	20%	25.56%	23.33%
Speaking	<i>participants</i>	37	26	17	10
	<i>percentage</i>	41.11%	28.89%	18.89%	11.11%
Reading	<i>participants</i>	10	19	21	40
	<i>percentage</i>	11.11%	21.11%	23.33%	44.44%
Writing	<i>participants</i>	17	26	28	19
	<i>percentage</i>	18.89%	28.89%	31.11%	21.11%

Table 06: students' ordering of the four skills according to their degree of difficulty

The following table is the final ranking of the four skills according to their difficulty:

Rank	First	second	third	Fourth
Skill	<i>speaking</i>	<i>listening</i>	<i>writing</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Participants	37	28	17	10
percentage	41.11%	31.11%	18.89%	11.11%

Table 07: the final ranking of the four skills in terms of their difficulty

The tables above indicate that 37 participants (41.11%) reported that speaking is the most difficult skill, listening comes in the second rank with 31.11% of the total responses. These two difficult skills are the main components of the oral expression course which is undoubtedly a basic module in the program of second year students.

In spite of the special attention given to listening and speaking in the instructional program, they are still come up against students' attempt to achieve language mastery. Speaking in particular is often seen by EFL learners as a far reaching goal simply because it requires not only knowledge of specific points of language such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (linguistic competence), but also how, when, why and what settings to produce language (sociolinguistic competence). Yet the aural-oral skills' difficulty is seemingly a result pf students' lack of practice.

In fact, the real reasons stand behind students' difficulties in learning the four skills is what the following question seeks to find out.

ITEM THREE: students' difficulties in learning the four skills

In this item, students were asked to cite their main barriers in learning all the four skills (reading, speaking, writing and listening).

Difficulties in listening comprehension.	participants	Percentage
Inability to understand or guess the meaning of the discourse	25	27.78%
Native speaker' s speech rapidity	20	22.22%
Unfamiliarity with native speakers' pronunciation	18	20%
Hearing problems (concentration, distinguishing sounds...)	13	14.44%
Informal language difficulty (dialect for instance)	2	2.22%
Unavailability of taped materials and lack of practice	2	2.22%
N.A	10	11.11%

Table 08: students' listening difficulties

The items listed in table 08 are the main comprehension barriers second year students' encounter when they listen to native speakers or even to their teachers.

- **Inability to understand or guess the meaning of the discourse:**

The table demonstrates that understanding the meaning of the discourse represents the big challenge for learners. Out of 90, 25 respondents (27.78%) argued that they are

unable to pick up the meaning of the discourse they hear. Unlike listening in their first language, EFL learners don't focus on the meaning of the discourse but on the specific points of language (vocabulary, pronunciation...). Thus, they perceive speech as segmented units (phoneme by phoneme or word by word) and attempt to get the speaker's meaning from the interpretation of each separated unite. The non-spontaneous use of their schematic knowledge and language properties comes up against their attempt to reach a successful and efficient comprehension.

- **Native speaker's speech rapidity:**

The second major barrier in listening comprehension that our students stressed on is the difficulty arising from the speech rate. 20 participants (22.22%) claimed that they can not understand the fast and spontaneous speech produced by native speakers or even by their teachers. It is because they are not used to listen to non- authentic listening texts like "classroom lectures" which are generally delivered in slowly and deliberately spoken English. Thus when listening to native speakers' language, they meet considerable difficulty in understanding what is being said. Lack of exposure to authentic materials produces another listening comprehension problem which is basically related to native speakers' pronunciation.

- **Unfamiliarity with native speakers' pronunciation:**

Out of 90, 18 students (20%) maintained that they are unable to understand the listening discourse because of the unfamiliar pronunciation. This problem is a result of students' educational background where phonetics was not given much importance. So, notions like: stress, weak forms, intonation, elision...are either unknown or new to them. In addition to that, most of learners know the written form of the word (dictionary transcription) but they are unable to guess its meaning when it is pronounced.

- **Hearing problems:**

13 subjects (14.44%) claimed that they suffer from hearing problems which affect their ability in comprehending any listening discourse. Problems of attention and concentration are among the major barriers of learners which affect their auditory perception and discrimination abilities. Therefore, they are unable to recall what has been heard or recall the correct sequence of utterances.

- **Informal language difficulty:**

Informal language tends to be another obstacle for students to reach successful listening. Two (02) students (2.22%) said that some informal speech and accents are unfamiliar to them. This is because of the type of language they used to hear which is typically formal and academic.

- **Unavailability of taped materials and lack of practice:**

As far as availability of taped materials (cassettes) is concerned, two (02) participants (2.22%) claimed that the lack of such learning aids (audio tapes) prevents them improving their listening skills. they believe that extensive and intensive listening practice is the solution to develop their comprehension skills and overcome their listening problems.

For unknown reasons, 10 participants (11.11%) didn't mention their listening problems.

The items organized in the table below are the students' speaking problems.

Speaking difficulties	participants	Percentage
Pronunciation difficulties	23	25.56%
Limited range of vocabulary and structures	17	18.89%
Grammatical and structural mistakes (accuracy)	13	14.44%
Disconnected speech (fluency).	11	12.22%
Lack of self confidence and fear of criticism	12	13.33%
Lack of outside classroom -practice	4	4.44%
Mother tongue interference	2	2.22%
N.A	8	8.89%

Table 09: students' speaking difficulties

- **Pronunciation difficulties:**

When asked to determine their speaking difficulties, 23 participants (25.56%) reported that pronunciation problem is their major barrier in oral skills. Again, the problem is a result of learners' educational background in which pronunciation practice was almost absent. Such phonetic terms as stress and intonation are really new learning items for second year students. Therefore, producing a well-pronounced utterance is really

something difficult, added to this is the difference between oral and written form of the word (pronunciation Vs transcription). Most of the 23 participants, who maintained that pronunciation is their major barrier in achieving a good speaking performance, argued that they can manage to produce well-built structures but they are unable to apply phonetics rules like: stress, intonation and weak forms.

- **Limited range of vocabulary and structures:**

Out of 90, 17 subjects (18.89) argued that their range of vocabulary and structures is their main speaking problem. This is a result of the lack of knowledge of the language features (syntax, semantics in particular). In fact, such deficiency related to vocabulary, grammar and discourse structure of the language creates a major obstacle preventing learners from approaching the desired speaking level.

- **Grammatical and structural mistakes (accuracy problem):**

The problem of accuracy stands in the third rank of the speaking difficulties' list. Out of 90, 13 subjects (14.44%) reported that their barriers in speaking related to their frequent basic grammatical and structural inaccuracy which prevents them from the effective communication in the target language.

- **Lack of self confidence and fear of criticism:**

Lack of self-confidence and fear of criticism represent another major hindrance against learners' oral proficiency. 12 respondents (13.33%) claimed that they encounter such a problem which is very possibly related to the factor of inhibition. This later resulted from students' shyness and fear of making mistakes which are in turn due to the ill-development of communicative skills and feeling of linguistic inferiority. Facing the 'critical audience' during 'the real time exposure' makes the learner aware (and often afraid) of criticism which may reveal his weak points and signs of his ignorance. Thus, all the above factors lead to the lack of self-confidence which does certainly hinder the learner from developing his oral skills.

- **Disconnected speech (fluency problem):**

11 subjects (12.22%) felt that their disconnected speech (fluency) is their main speaking problem. It is apparently due to their lack of practice and participation inside and

outside the classroom. This later is the basic factor which can involve students in talking about a range of topics in different situations of different interest. Therefore, lack of practice produces difficulties in sustaining conversations over a period of time. Students' focus on the form rather than the meaning while speaking creates frequent hesitations, hence impede communication and strain the listener.

- **Lack of outside classroom –practice:**

A proportion of students even though low (4.44%) mentioned the point of lack of outside classroom-practice which is basically related to the status of English as a foreign language in the society. English in this country tends to be the third language or even the fourth language spoken in the community, therefore, the time devoted to the outside classroom practice is really very limited (only with classmates). Some learners think that the target language is confined only to the academic and formal use (during lectures' period), and their communication needs are fulfilled in the time of mother tongue or second language use.

- **Mother tongue interference:**

This item is the last stated speaking problem with a very low proportion (2.22%). In fact, what distinguishes speaking from other language skills is the oral exposure to the target language which is said to be a very hard and uncomfortable experience for many learners. Hence, when being unable to verbalize their messages in the target language because of the linguistic repertoire' shortage, most learners refuge to their mother tongue either consciously or unconsciously to fill their communicative gap.

For unknown reasons, 8 participants (8.89%) didn't mention their difficulties.

Students' difficulties in reading and writing are summed up in the following tables:

Reading difficulties	participants	Percentage
Pronunciation problems	20	22.22%
Inability to adapt with new words and structures	13	14.44%
Difficulty in understanding the reading discourse	12	13.33%
Lack of self-confidence (hesitation, pauses...)	4	4.44%
N.A	30	33.33%

Table 10: students' reading difficulties

Writing difficulties.	participants	Percentage
Grammatical mistakes and spelling problems	50	55.55%
Punctuation problems	10	11.11%
inability to find appropriate vocabulary	10	11.11%
Keeping the coherence of the text	5	5.55%
Wordiness	2	2.22%
Bad handwriting	1	1.11%
N.A	12	13.33%

Table 11: students' writing difficulties

ITEM FOUR: the need to follow a methodology to deal with language skills problems

When asked whether they follow certain methodology aiming at dealing with their learning obstacles and hindrances in aural-oral skills, participants gave the following responses:

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	60	26	4
Percentage	66.67%	28.89%	4.44%

Table 12: students' attitudes towards following a methodology dealing with their difficulties

Out of 90, 60 subjects (66.67%) gave a positive response to the question, whereas, 26 subjects (28.89%) reported that they do not follow any methodology. Four subjects (4.44%) gave no possible answer.

The proportion of 66.67% reveals the fact that our students are really aware of their learning problems. Therefore, following a methodology to deal with them is actually a serious attempt to consider their weak points in receptive and productive skills and to improve their learning strategies of language skills (aural-oral skills in particular). The 26, who maintained that they do not follow any methodology, belong to the category of students who do not care about their learning difficulties and they are unable to make any effort to overcome their problem. It is because either they don't see any necessity to do

such a 'hard work' or simply because following a methodology requires much time, effort, practice and even considerable sacrifice which, according to them, is really an exhausting job.

ITEM FIVE: success extent in following a methodology

In this question we wish to have students' self evaluation concerning their success level in following their methodology. The evaluation is organized in the following table.

Response	25%	50%	75%	More than 75%
Participants	20	29	7	4
Percentage	33.33%	48.33%	11.66%	6.67%

Table 13: students' success rate in dealing with language skills' learning problems

The table above represents rates of success in following a methodology reported by the 60 students who gave a 'yes' response to the question. 50% of success extent stands in the first rank with a proportion of (48.33%). 20 subjects (33.33%) reported 25% of success extent. Seven (7) subjects (11.66%) gave the '75%' response and only four (4) subjects (6.67%) who claimed that their success rate in following their methodology reaches up to 75%.

We can apparently notice that half of students make half of the achievement (50%). This number leads us to talk about the standards of evaluation. Such concepts like "achievement" and "success" have always something to do with subjectivity and relativity i.e. the difference in success rates is related to the person's perception of these terms. Anyway, the percentage of 6.67% of participants who reported more than 75% indicates how difficult to overcome learning difficulties especially those of aural-oral skills.

ITEM SIX: using teaching aids in the classroom.

No one can deny the importance of teaching aids in teaching/learning language skills. Hence, the present section seeks to discover the teachers' frequency of using T.As (teaching aids) in the classroom according to their learners' points of view. Here are the students' responses.

Response	Very often	sometimes	rarely	never	N.A
Participants	9	43	28	8	2
Percentage	10%	47.78%	31.11%	8.89%	2.22%

Table 14: frequency of using teaching aids in the classroom

In spite of the necessity and importance of T.As in the classroom, the table above shows that only 10% of the total responses argued that teachers very often use teaching aids in classroom. Some teachers never use them; this is what the proportion of 8.89% reveals. The majority of participants reported that their teachers use T.As but from time to time. The percentage of 47.78% who gave the 'sometimes' response indicates two possibilities: either their teachers do not have accessibility and availability of teaching aids, or they do not give much importance to these instructional tools. 28 respondents (31.11%) claimed that their teachers rarely use them. Generally speaking, the results show the undervaluation of the significance of teaching aids in the classroom.

ITEM SEVEN: kinds of teaching aids used in the classroom

After asking them about the frequency of using T.As in the classroom, participants now are asked to determine the type of the used aids. Three types are the proposed options (audio, visuals, and audio-visuals). The responses of the participants are highlighted in the following table.

Responses	Visual aids	Audio aids	Audio-visuals	All of them	N.A
Participant	25	38	08	11	7
Percentage.	28.89%	42.22%	8.89%	12.22%.	7.78%

Table 15: types of teaching aids used by teachers

Audio aids seem to be the common and the most used teaching aid with a proportion of (42.22%) of the total responses. Visuals deserved the second rank with a proportion of (28.89%). Only 08 respondents (8.89%) said that their teachers use audio-visuals in classroom. 11 participant (12.22%) claimed that all the three types are generally used. For unknown reasons, 7 participants (7.78%) gave no possible answer.

ITEM EIGHT: the necessity of teaching aids in the language classroom.

This item attempts to investigate whether our students see any necessity to use teaching aids in teaching/learning language skills.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	87	03
Percentage	96.67%	3.33%

Table 16: students' attitudes towards the use of teaching aids in the classroom

As it is expected, almost all students gave a positive attitude towards using T.As in the classroom. Only 03 participants (3.33%) gave negative responses. The reason behind 96.67% of positive responses is the learners' awareness of the T.As importance in facilitating learning process, creating motivation, and making the course easy to be understood. Yet the real motives that stand behind claiming the necessity and effectiveness of T.As are what the following question attempts to find out.

ITEM NINE: learners' points of view towards the effectiveness of teaching aids

The question tries to find out the students' points of view concerning the necessity and effectiveness of T.As in the classroom. Their opinions are classified in the following table.

Response	Participants	Percentage
- make students motivated and interested, hence learn more effectively	28	32.20%
- help learners improve and enrich their language repertoire	18	20.69%
- facilitate learning; make them understand better and faster	12	13.78%
- bring native speakers' language and cultural context into the classroom	6	6.89%
- give an opportunity for students to practice and test their genuine language level	5	5.75%
- aid teachers to help their students	5	5.75%
- make the lecture enjoyable (break the routine)	2	2.29%
- N.A	11	12.65%

Table 17: learners' opinions towards the role of teaching aids

The table reveals that students gave various points of view to stress the vital, important role of teaching aids in teaching/learning process.

- **make students motivated and interested, hence learn more effectively:**

Out of 87(the participants who gave the positive attitude towards the use of teaching aids), 28 subjects (32.20%) declares that T.As help them learn effectively. They do believe that these instructional tools break the boring learning atmosphere; they create a sort of motivation that pushes learners to learn effectively and be more involved and interested in the material being presented.

- **help learners improve and enrich their language repertoire:**

18 subjects (20.69%) claimed that T.As help them improve and augment their language level. Because of their deficiency in linguistic knowledge, teaching aids- according to these subjects- improve their syntactic level, enrich their vocabulary bank and ameliorate their pronunciation through the audio and visual cues they provide.

- **facilitate learning:**

A proportion of respondents (6.89%) argued that T.As facilitate learning and make them understand the instructional material better and faster. As most learners encounter difficulties in learning the four skills- as it is noted in the second section of the questionnaire- teaching aids tend to help them overcome these problems by making learning process much easier.

- **bring native speakers' language and cultural context into the classroom:**

Transporting native speakers' environment (language, culture, lifestyle...) to the class is another advantage of using T.As in the language classroom. 6 participants (6.89%) said that teaching aids- audio and audiovisual in particular- are the best ways to learn the natural speech of natives with its appropriate accent and intonation, they offer an opportunity for students to discover their lifestyle, cultural setting (civilization and literature) and social behavior.

- **give an opportunity for students to practice and test their genuine language level:**

5 subjects (6.75%) argued that teaching aids give them a chance to practice and test their language level. Here they mainly refer to 'the language laboratory' where they can practice drills, repetition or imitation and then try to produce their own performance on the basis of what they listened to. Testing can be done in language laboratory by doing voice recording and making comparison with the model, hence discovering where the weak points are.

- **aid teachers to help their students:**

A proportion of students (5.75%) reported that T.As are helpful not only to learners but to teachers as well. Teachers can use these instructional equipments as a source of motivation for their students so that they can help them learn better.

For unknown reasons, 11 participants did not mention their points of view.

In the other hand, the three (03) participants, who claimed that T.As are not effective in teaching/ learning process, also gave their own reasons.

Response	Participants	Percentage.
- make the learner passive and dependent	1	33.33%
- they add nothing to students since they are not frequently used	1	33.33%
- they tend to entertain rather than to instruct	1	33.33%

Table 18: learners' points of view towards the ineffectiveness of teaching aids

The first participant focused on the assumption that T.As make the learner passive and dependable. He believes that they destroy the self-reliance, creativity and innovation in learners. The second participant saw no necessity to use these aids since they are not always available and accessible; hence they are not frequently used. He thinks that good results come after continuous practice, so that using these aids once or twice a year adds nothing to the learner.

The third participant argued that T.As are sources of entertainment rather than instruction. He may believe in immediate results because listening to a song or watching a movie doesn't give immediate and concrete outcomes. This may need long time and ongoing practice to observe the desired results.

ITEM TEN: the use of educational technology in EFL teaching and learning.

This item seeks the students' opinions towards the use of educational technology in teaching and learning process. Students' opinions are summed up in the following points:

- It is interesting, important, helpful and useful for both teachers and learners.
- It facilitates learning and makes understanding easier.
- It improves learners' language level.
- It shortens the time and effort.
- It creates source of motivation
- It can replace the teacher
- It brings native speakers' environment close to students

2.3 SECTION THREE: language laboratory

ITEM ONE: language laboratory

Before asking them any thing about language laboratory, learners were first asked whether they know what the notion of language lab is or not.

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	68	19	3
Percentage.	75.56%	21.11%	3.33%

Table 19: learners' knowledge of the language laboratory

Out of 90, 68 subjects (75.65%) declared that L.L (language laboratory) is familiar teaching equipment, whereas, a considerable proportion (21.11%) reported that they do not know what the L.L is (their 'pretension' seems illogic simply because they did answer the next questions). Therefore, their responses are clearly due to their misunderstanding of the question). 3 participants (3.33%) did not give any possible answer.

ITEM TWO: courses taught in language laboratory

This question aims at determining the courses relied on laboratory- based language teaching.

Response.	Oral- exp	phonetics	Written-exp	linguistics	All of them	N.A
Participants	41	14	3	1	3	28
Percentage	45.56%	15.56%	3.33%	1.11%	3.33%	31.11%

Table 20: modules relied on laboratory- based language teaching

The table reveals that there are four modules taught in L.L (oral expression, phonetics, written expression and linguistics). Out of 90, 41 participants (36.67%) said that oral expression is the most common course which relied on laboratory-based language teaching. It is the course which does heavily depend on taped materials to practice listening and speaking. These two skills are what the L.L tends to develop. 14 respondents (15.56%) added phonetics as another module taught in L.L; it is intended to teach

pronunciation. Thus, the appropriate setting to provide native speakers' speech (right accent, intonation, stress....) is the laboratory authentic taped materials. Written expression is also said to be among modules relied on laboratory- based language teaching with a proportion of 3.33%. Teachers can use the L.L to practice dictation (he can play a passage from any recording and ask students to write down the passage script. One (01) participant (1.11%) mentioned linguistics as a course taught in language laboratory though it is not suitable to teach such a course. A proportion of students (3.33%) preferred to mention all the three courses previously stated (oral expression, phonetics and written expression). What is unexpected is the great number of participants who gave no answers i.e. 28 subjects (31.11%).

ITEM THREE: learning in language laboratory

Since L.L is said to be a different learning medium, our learners are asked in this question to express their feelings and attitudes when learning in this 'new' instructional setting. Learners reported different attitudes highlighted in the list below:

- feeling of happiness, comfort and freedom
- state of being ready and eager to learn more and understand better
- act of being active, motivated, enjoyed and excited
- discovering a new educational setting and a new way of learning
- enjoying the spirit of community (the whole class share opinions and views)
- discovering native speakers' cultural and social milieu
- feeling uncomfortable and confused

ITEM FOUR: the difference between learning in the L.L and a normal classroom

Question four investigates the issue whether there is a difference between learning in a typical language classroom and a language laboratory. The responses are organized in the following table.

Response	Quite different	Little bit different	No difference	N.A
Participants	51	27	6	6
Percentage	56.66%	30%	6.67%	6.67%

Table 21: students 'opinions concerning the difference between learning in a normal classroom and a language laboratory

The proportion of 'quite different' indicates that half of students (56.66%) found L.L as a very different place to learn. 27 respondents (30%) claimed that there is a little bit difference between L.L and classroom. Only 6 subjects (6.67%) said that the two setting are almost the same. For unknown reasons, 6 participants (6.67%) did not give any response.

ITEM FIVE: the distinction between language laboratory and classroom

After asking them if they find a difference between L.L and classroom, now it is obvious to ask them about the features that distinguish L.L from the typical classroom. Here are the obtained responses.

- availability of listening equipments and taped materials
- the existence of motivating, helpful atmosphere to EFL and its culture
- freedom of expression and ability of concentration
- opportunity for more oral practice
- more communication between teacher-students and student-student
- enjoying the study in sub-groups

ITEM SIX: students' attitudes towards language laboratory

By asking this question, we wanted to know our learners' attitudes towards L.L. Three options were given: "I like it", "neutral", "I hate it". The responses are shown in the following table.

Response	I like it	Neutral	I hate it	N.A
Participants	69	18	1	2
Percentage	76.67%	20%	1.11%	2.22%

Table 22: learners' attitudes towards language laboratory

The table reveals that two thirds of respondents (76.67%) claimed that they like language laboratory i.e. they enjoy and favor being and learning in this instructional medium. 18subjects (20%) have a neutral attitude towards L.L (they are not interested). Only one participant (1.11%) claimed that she hates this teaching medium and she does not feel well when learning in it. Two (02) participants (2.22%) gave no attitude.

ITEM SEVEN: learning difficulties in language laboratory.

Depending on their experience in L.L during their first year, our second year students were asked whether they encounter learning difficulties in L.L or not.

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	33	52	5
Percentage	36.66%	57.78%	5.56%

Table 23: students 'learning barriers in language laboratory

Out of 90, 33 respondents (36.66%) reported that they really face difficulties when learning in L.L. 52 participants (57.78%) stated that they encounter no difficulties. 5 participants (5.56%) did not answer.

ITEM EIGHT: the causes behind students' difficulties

The 33 participants, who claimed that they encounter difficulties when learning in L.L, were asked again to determine the factors causing these barriers. The results are listed as follows:

- inability to understand native speakers' speech because of its rapidity
- shyness when speaking and fear of making mistakes
- unfamiliarity with native speakers' pronunciation
- lack of control and mastery over laboratory equipments
- hearing problems (concentration for instance)
- lack of taped materials
- the difficulty of some laboratory activities (fill in gaps)
- insufficient time allotted to laboratory practice
- teacher's lack of mastery and skill in controlling the equipments
- Teacher's unsuitable method of teaching listening and speaking (it does not suit their level, needs and interests).

ITEM NINE: teachers' mastery in using L.L

This question is designed to see the mastery level in using laboratory equipments, of course according to their students' points of view. The mastery here is basically related to the complete control over laboratory switches, functions and procedures. It also deals

with the teachers' skill in moving smoothly from one activity to another which indicates his knowledge of laboratory functions.

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	45	39	6
Percentage	50%	43.33%	6.67%

Table 23: learners' evaluation of their teachers' mastery of using L.L

In fact, learners' evaluation and appreciation of their teachers' mastery in using the laboratory equipments vary from one learner to another according to his/ her personal perception of the concept "mastery". Therefore, we notice that the proportions of 'yes' and 'no' are nearly equal with only (7%) as a difference. 45 students (50%) argued that their teachers possess a complete control over laboratory switches and functions, whereas, 39 students (43.33%) gave the opposite view i.e. they think that their teachers really lack mastery and they require extra skills of using L.L. 6 participants (6.67%) gave no evaluation; this may be due to their inability to judge such variable like "mastery" which ,previously said, differs from one learner to another.

ITEM TEN: laboratory activities and tasks

The language laboratory undoubtedly offers to the teacher variety of activities which create a sort of classroom routine's break. Yet it is up to the teacher to vary the types of activities according to his sense of creation and innovation, skill and mastery. In this question, we wanted to find out the teachers' frequency of varying laboratory activities and tasks. Learners' responses are shown in the table below.

Responses	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N.A
Participants	6	43	25	13	3
Percentage	6.67%	47.78%	27.78%	14.44%	3.33%

Table 24: teachers' frequency of varying laboratory activities and tasks

The highest rate presented in the table above is that of learners who claimed that their teachers sometimes vary the laboratory activities. This reveals the fact that most teachers lack the skill in using the laboratory functions which prevents them to make the most of L.L offers and vary the types of activities most often. The response of 'rarely' received the second highest proportion (27.78%) which strongly supports the previous claim. A considerable proportion of (14.44%) stated that their teachers never vary their tasks; it is surely due to their inability to exploit laboratory functions and procedures which hinders them from presenting variety of tasks and activities. Only 6 participants (6.67%) mentioned that their teachers very often present different activities as much as possible. This actually indicates how few the numbers of teachers who can be considered as skillful language laboratory teacher (simply because they can make the most of it). 3 subjects (3.33%) did not give any possible answer.

2.4 SECTION FOUR: teaching listening and peaking

ITEM ONE: students' favorite module

The English language studies' curriculum stresses both sides of language: written and oral because of the interrelation existing between them. Yet learners tend to prefer one more than the other, hence they show better outcomes in the side they favor. Therefore, the first question of this section attempts to discover which module is the most preferred to our students: oral expression (O.E) or written expression. The responses are presented below.

Response	Oral expression	Written expression	Both	N.A
Participants	53	35	1	1
Percentage	58.89%	38.89%	1.11%	1.11%

Table 25: learners' preference of oral/written expression modules

The results above reveal the supremacy of oral expression over written expression; out of 90, 53 students (58.89%) argued that they prefer O.E module, whereas 35 students (38.89%) favor written expression. One participant (1.11%) seems that he couldn't favor one module over the other, so he chose both of them. No answer is given by only one participant.

ITEM TWO: the preference of oral expression module

Now, those who favored O.E module were asked to give their reasons of doing so. Students' reasons and motives are generally summed up in five main points.

Response	Participants	Percentage
- it is an opportunity to express freely the ideas, practice and test their level of language	22	41.50%
- it develops and improves students' communicative skills	15	28.30%
- for many students, it is an active, enjoyable and motivating course	7	13.20
- it helps students to break up their shyness and encourage self-confidence	6	11.32
- it is very useful and helpful for professional/ teaching career	3	4.67%

Table 26: students' reasons of favoring oral expression module

- **it is an opportunity to express freely the ideas**

Unlike the other modules in English language studies' program, O.E is the only one which is intended to be 'student-centered course' i.e. the lion-share of T.T (talking time) is given to students (STT) which is basically stressed in this course. So, oral expression is really an outlet for students' emotions and ideas to be conveyed. He can talk about his life experiences, personal attitudes and express freely his private opinions and beliefs. It is the only provided free space to say all what he thinks using the target language. He can also practice and test his language level via peer's evaluation and teacher's feedback.

- **it develops and improves students' communicative skills:**

The powerful, efficient and successful way of one-on-one communication between the student and his teacher or peer is the practice of oral language. By carrying out various frequent conversations and interviews with his peers or teacher, student can gradually learn "the art of talking" which in turn allows them to build up their communicative skills.

Oral expression class is a small community where each student is a communicating member who gives opinions, defend his decisions and make critical judgments.

- **it is an active, enjoyable and motivating course**

To make any course active, enjoyable and motivating means giving each learner the opportunity to feel that he/she is not outside the "game". It is up to the teacher to create the atmosphere where each of his students practices his right to be a "real language learner". Moreover, it is the act of being innovating each time which produce activity, joy and motivation; the teacher who repeats himself all over the time -through his repeated course activities and tasks- will undoubtedly be no more active and creative teacher. Hence, the participants, who reported that the course of O.E carries such features, reveal the course requirements i.e. variety of activities, opportunities of "language show off" for each student and different instructional media: language laboratory and the typical classroom.

- **it helps students to break up their shyness and encourage self-confidence**

Among the major problems of our students are: shyness and lack of self-confidence which are due to their lack of participation and being in the margin most of the time. Most English language modules are 'teacher-centered courses' where students are usually passive listeners. So any attempt to participate makes him/ her feel that he/ she is in focus which means- according to them- more mistakes, hesitation, embarrassment and further peer's criticism. As the course of O.E encourages the idea of being in focus the students' feelings of shyness and lack of self-confidence will be less because of the frequent exposure to such situations. Thus, more and more training to participate will certainly rebuild self-confidence and reduce the feeling of shyness.

- **it is very useful and helpful for professional/ teaching career**

In fact, teaching requires not only the knowledge and the skill of the subject but also the ability to teach confidently. Oral expression trains both requirements and the **last** one in particular. Thus the proportion of students who reported this reason-even though low- discovers this feature when doing oral presentations of research papers which give them a feeling of being 'the teacher'.

ITEM THREE: time allotted to "oral expression" module

This item tends to have students' points of view concerning the duration of time given to the course of oral expression i.e. is it sufficient or not?

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	22	63	5
Percentage	24.44%	70%	5.56%

Table 27: students' opinion towards the sufficiency of the time allotted to oral O.E

Almost two thirds of students (70%) felt that the allotted time for O.E course is not sufficient, whereas 22 participants (24.44%) were satisfied with the amount of time devoted to the course. 5 subjects (5.56%) did not mention their points of view.

ITEM FOUR: pre- university special courses devoted to aural-oral skills development

By asking this question, we wished to see our learners' previous exposure to oral language i.e. the pre-university level's experience, and their familiarity with native speakers' language. The question was: how often did your pre-university teachers give you special courses to improve your aural-oral skills. The responses are shown in the table below.

Response	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N.A
Participants	6	21	30	30	3
Percentage	6.67%	23.33%	33.33%	33.33%	3.33%

Table 28: frequency of giving special courses at pre-university level to improve students' aural-oral skills

The table reveals that "rarely" and "never" responses received the highest rates (33.33%each). Only 6 students (6.67%) reported that they were often training to improve their aural-oral skills.

Although the Algerian educational system stresses the balance of skills in all the secondary school's course books, teachers put much emphasis on some aspects of language like vocabulary and grammar in an attempt to improve students' level of proficiency. As a

result, our first and second year university students are still unable to understand authentic English, and their oral productions are 'not acceptable'.

ITEM FIVE: oral expression program

All English language modules normally have an official instructional program to follow, but some teachers usually prefer to highlight their own programs and design the courses they want to cover. This fact resulted from the drawbacks of some already existed programs. The question now is: do O.E teachers follow their own designed programs or more accurately: do they give a program to their students at the beginning of the academic year? This item tries to find out an answer to the question.

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	14	73	3
Percentage	15.56%	81.11%	3.33%

Table 29: students' opinions about giving a program of O.E at the beginning of the year

The overwhelming majority of respondents (73 subjects with a percentage of 81.11%) gave a negative response to the question. 14 subjects (15.56%) claimed a positive response. Three (3) students (3.33%) gave no answer.

ITEM SIX: listening and speaking skill

Since O.E module covers the two components of spoken language (listening and speaking), we then wished to know which skill is given much importance and attention although their interrelation. Here are the responses:

Response	Listening	Speaking	N.A
Participants	25	61	4
Percentage	27.78%	67.78%	4.44%

Table 30: proportions of listening and speaking according to the teachers' given attention and importance

The table reveals that speaking skill is given the lion-share from the teachers' attention. The 67.78% who reported such a claim indicates that O.E teachers consider speaking as the most important skill for learners to reach 'language mastery' since it is the skill by which learners are frequently judged while first impressions were being formed. In the other hand, listening is always regarded as passive, neglected and taken for granted skill; hence it received 27.78% of the total responses. For unknown reasons, four (4) students (4.44%) did not give their response.

ITEM SEVEN: students speaking ability

As it is previously mentioned, speaking is the skill by which learners are often judged; we wanted to have learners' self evaluation of their speaking ability level. The given levels are: good, average, bad and very bad.

Response	Good	Average	Bad	Very bad	N.A
Participants	3	66	10	9	2
Percentage	3.33%	73.33%	11.11%	10%	2.22%

Table 31: students' evaluation of their speaking ability

Out of 90, 66respondents (73.33%) claimed to have an average speaking ability level. 19 subjects (21.11%) reported that they have a poor/ very poor level in speaking. Only 3 students (3.33%) argued that they possess a good speaking ability. 2 participants didn't make any evaluation. The reasons stand behind the bad/ very bad speaking level of the 19 learners (21.11%) is what the next question seeks to find out.

ITEM EIGHT: students' justification of their poor speaking ability

Having poor/ very poor level in speaking skill indicates that there are serious problems preventing students from reaching the desired level. The 19 students who reported that they have bad/very bad speaking level gave the following reasons:

- lack of outside classroom' practice
- shyness, lack of participation and fear of criticism
- insufficient time allotted to the course of O.E
- Lack of teaching aids (taped materials, video, computer ...)
- Limited range of vocabulary and poor mastery of grammar
- The state of being uncomfortable when speaking because of the audience

ITEM NINE: students listening ability

After evaluating speaking level, it's time to evaluate listening level as well. The same degrees options are given to make a self evaluation of aural ability level. The results are organized as follows:

Response	Good	Average	Bad	Very bad	N.A
Participants	17	59	10	2	2
Percentage	18.89%	65.56%	11.11%	2.22%	2.22%

Table 32: students' evaluation of their listening ability

Again, the majority of respondents (65.56%) claimed that they have an average listening ability. 12 subjects (13.33%) have bad/ very bad level. The proportion of "good" in listening is better than the one in speaking i.e. 17 students (18.89%) said that they have a good listening ability. Two (02) respondents (2.22%) did not give any possible response.

ITEM TEN: students' justification of their bad listening ability

The item investigates the main reasons causing the poor level in listening comprehension. The 12 students (13.33%), who maintained that they really suffer from their bad level in listening, gave the following reasons:

- limited opportunities of listening to native speakers
- unfamiliarity with teacher/ native speakers' pronunciation
- heavy dependence on writing and dictation rather than listening and comprehension
- there is no methodology to teach and learn listening
- unfamiliarity with new vocabularies
- absence of communication between students and teachers or students and native speakers

ITEM ELEVEN: teaching listening comprehension in language laboratory

No one can deny the importance of language laboratory in teaching listening comprehension, yet we wish to have our students' points of view concerning this issue.

Response	Effective	Motivating.	Boring	I don't know	N.A
Participants	35	34	4	13	4
Percentage.	38.89%	37.78%	4.44%	14.44%	4.44%

Table 33: students' points of view towards teaching listening comprehension in L.L

Out of 90, 35 students reported that L.L is effective teaching aid; laboratory characteristics and functions offer certain facilities (especially retracing and self pacing) that allow students to listen effectively. The 34 students (37.78%) who argued that L.L is a motivating instructional tool indicates the dynamic nature of working in L.L that can not be found in the normal classroom (working all the time, listening with your own material, receiving individual attention from the teacher and self evaluation of *your* performance). These features may push the learner to comprehend much better and get better outcomes. A considerable proportion of students (14.44%), who could not evaluate teaching listening in L.L, resulted from their neutral attitudes towards this instruction tool. Four subjects (4.44%) felt that teaching/ learning listening in language laboratory is a boring task. For unknown reasons, 4 subjects (4.44%) did not give any answer.

ITEM TWELVE: laboratory listening comprehension activities

In fact, oral expression teacher can design different and various laboratory listening activities to cover all the aspects of oral language practice. However, these activities don't receive the same valuation and appreciation from students' i.e. They may favor one than another. Hence, the present item seeks to discover the most favored laboratory listening activities. The results are demonstrated below:

- activities dealing with conversations, dialogues and interviews
- activities dealing with songs
- retelling taped stories
- pronunciation practice (drills and minimal pairs)
- listen and record activities

ITEM THIRTEEN: the suitability of language laboratory in teaching speaking skill

It is now clear that L.L is a well-suited tool to teach listening comprehension, but is it a well-suited tool to teach speaking as well? This is what the present question seeks to find out.

Response	Yes	No	N.A
Participants	78	9	3
Percentage	86.67%	10%	3.33%

Table 34: students' opinions concerning teaching speaking skill in L.L

Out of 90, 78 students (86.67%) gave a positive response, whereas 9 participants (10%) gave the negative one. Three (03) subjects (3.33%) gave no answer.

ITEM FOURTEEN: teaching speaking skill in language laboratory

By asking this question, we wished to know the frequency of teaching speaking in L.L since it was previously argued that it is suitable instructional tool to teach oral skills.

Response	Often	Occasionally	Never	N.A
Participants	43	17	28	2
Percentage	47.78%	18.89%	31.11%	2.22%

Table 35: the frequency of teaching speaking skill in L.L

It seems that O.E teachers realized the importance of language laboratory in teaching speaking skill that is why they often make the most of it to do so. The majority of learners (47.78%) reported that their teachers often use the L.L to practice speaking. 17 subjects (18.89%) claimed that speaking is occasionally practiced in L.L, however, a considerable proportion (31.11%) said that their teachers have never tried to teach speaking in this instructional medium. Two (02) respondents (2.22%) did not give any possible answer.

ITEM FIFTEEN: students' suggestions for teachers of oral expression module

At the end of the questionnaire, we wished to give our students a free space to suggest what they think is better for them to improve their level in listening and speaking skills. The suggestions are basically given to their teachers of O.E course. Here are the obtained suggestions:

- First of all, there should be trained teachers in charge of the oral expression module
- The primary objective of the O.E teacher is not only to give lectures (tasks and activities) improving students' aural/ oral skills but also to cope with their psychological problems (shyness, embarrassment, lack of self confidence...)
- The teacher of O.E should establish a sort of trust between him and his students to make them feel that they are close to their teacher, hence the communication will be easier
- Teachers should have a clear, well-built and suitable methodology to teach this module. Methodology is the framework of successful tasks
- Creating motivation is required to activate students, push them to participate and make them really involved
- Designing activities should be a cooperative work by giving students a considerable freedom to choose and propose activities that meet their needs
- Teachers should give more importance to the level of tasks: "they must take into account that the course and activities are designed for 'us' not for him or for other teachers
- Students need more speaking practice, pronunciation exercises and vocabulary activities
- Varying activities each session make students active and interested. They should range from simple conversations, interviews, story telling to role-play and oral reports
- The use of variety of teaching aids (audio aids, visuals, audiovisuals) is also stressed
- Adding modern instructional media to the language laboratory (computer, video...)
- Dividing the crowded classes into sub-groups to make learning more effective
- What is distinguishable in learning suggestions is the one who proposes the possibility of bringing native speaker into the classroom to have a chance to speak with a native speaker and see the language as it is
- Varying taped materials (documentaries, T.V and radio news, plays, situational conversations, historical and social topics...)
- The time allotted to O.E is not sufficient, thus making extensive and intensive laboratory hours is also suggested

CONCLUSION

The analysis of students' questionnaire revealed that second year female over representation students with their different educational background encounter difficulties in learning the four language skills- aural/ oral ones in particular-. In an attempt to overcome their learning barriers, most students tend to follow a methodology to cope with their language skills problems. The 50% success rate indicates how serious the problems are, hence the need to double the effort to hopefully achieve the desired goal.

For many students, learning effectively requires not only their effort but also the assistance and guidance of the teacher in terms of frequent use of different types of teaching aids. This later became an urgent priority in the EFL classes for the facilities they provide and the motivation they create. Most participants insisted on the immediate insertion of various educational tools in teaching/ learning process. Among these tools, language laboratory stands in the first rank for its availability and accessibility. According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, language laboratory offers another dimension to the learning process and creates extra opportunities for aural-oral practice.

Students' lack of exposure to the spoken language and their lack of practice inside and outside the classroom, added to other reasons resulted to their average listening and speaking level. Thus our learners need to go one step further to get better outcomes.

In spite of their learning barriers, all participants tried to give suggestions to their teachers of oral expression to better their situation. Students' suggestions emphasized the role of the teacher i.e. his job is not only to instruct and detect learners' problems but also to deal with their learning difficulties via his guidance and supervision.

Thus, learners' call for help urges us to select the appropriate laboratory materials according to their level, needs and interest, and design suitable tasks and activities aiming at enhancing students' aural-oral skills. Therefore, the next chapter will present an experimental study focusing on these points.

3. RESULTS' ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1 SECTION ONE: background information

QUESTION ONE: sex distribution.

The questionnaire resulted in the following sex distribution

Response	Male	Female
Participants	2	6
Percentage.	25%	75%

Table 36: teachers' sex distribution

Out of 8, 6 teachers are female and 2 teachers are males. This can not be generalized to say that there is a female over representation of teachers in charge of the O.E module, simply because these teachers are just a random sample of the whole population of teachers at the University of Biskra.

QUESTION TWO: teachers' qualifications

The question seeks our teachers' qualification and diplomas.

Response	License	Magister	Doctorate
Participants	4	4	0
Percentage	50%	50%	0%

Table 37: teachers' qualification

The table reveals that there are four (04) teachers (50%) hold a "license" degree, the same number holds "Magister", but no teacher holds "doctorate" degree. Theses different educational backgrounds will provide us different opinions and attitudes towards the issues under investigation.

QUESTION THREE: how many years you have been teaching English at the university level?

By asking this question, we wished to investigate our teachers' teaching experience in terms of number of teaching years at university.

Participants	Teacher (T1)	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
Response	03	06	10	32	03	03	27	03

Table 38: participants' teaching experience

The table above shows that the scope of teaching experience ranges from three (03) years to thirty two (32) years with the supremacy of teachers experienced three (03) years of teaching. In fact, the four teachers, who reported that they have been teaching English at the university level for three (03) years, have recently obtained their "License" degree and they are preparing for "Magister"; they were summoned to be in charge of certain modules to cover the lack of teachers in the department of English at Biskra university.

QUESTION FOUR: what are the modules you have been teaching during these years?

After asking them about their teaching experience, it's time to ask them now about the modules they have been teaching during these years. Here are the results:

Participants	Response
T1	Oral expression, general culture, grammar
T2	Written expression, oral expression, grammar
T3	British literature, British civilization, American literature, oral expression
T4	Phonetics, oral expression
T5	Written expression, oral expression, general culture
T6	Oral expression, general culture, grammar, Written expression
T7	English for specific purposes (ESP), general English, grammar, , British civilization, Oral expression
T8	American civilization, Phonetics, British civilization, American and British literature, Oral expression

Table 39: teachers' instructional career

The table shows that our teachers have experienced teaching different and various English modules. What is common is that all teachers experienced teaching oral expression module.

QUESTION FIVE: how many years you have been teaching O.E module?

By asking this question we wanted to know our teachers' experience in teaching O.E course

Ps	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
R	2 years	4 years	5years	3 years	01 year	01 year	+ 12 Y	2 years

Table 40: teachers' experience in teaching oral expression

According to the results stated above, the scope of years in teaching oral expression ranges from one (01) year to more than 12 years. Thus, each teacher would give us his own evaluation, opinion, attitude concerning the coming items that are tightly related to the teaching/ learning of O.E. In fact, different experiences will certainly provide different points of view.

QUESTION SIX: is teaching oral expression personal or imposed?

In this question, we wanted to know whether teaching O.E was freely chosen or imposed by the administration.

Response	Personal choice	Administrative choice
Participants	3	5
Percentage	37.5%	62.5%

Table 41: personal/ imposed decision to teach O.E

Out of 8, 5 teachers (62.5%) claimed that teaching O.E is an administrative choice and the other three teachers (37.5%) chose freely to teach this module. It seems that the need to develop learner' aural-oral skills obliged the administration to call the experienced teachers to do the job and to train the new 'fresh' teachers to be in charge of the module. Those who chose freely to teach O.E seem to have great interest and motivation to do so

(they believe that they can give a hand to the learners who are really in need of their experience).

3.2 SECTION TWO: language skills and teaching aids

QUESTION ONE: which of the following skills you think should be given much importance and attention listening (L), reading (R), speaking (S) or writing (W)?

The question seeks the teachers' opinions about the skill (s) they think should be given much attention because of its/ their importance in achieving the desired proficiency level. Participants gave the following responses:

Participants	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
Response	S+W	S+W	S+W	L+S	L+S	L+S	L+S	L+W

Table 42: teachers' classification of skills according to their importance

The table above indicates that almost all teachers (7 subjects) with a proportion of (87.5%) believe that speaking is the skill requiring much attention. Listening comes in the second rank then writing. No teacher mentioned reading as the skill which should be given much importance. As a result, all teachers stressed the teaching of aural-oral skills and believed to receive much instructional awareness.

QUESTION TWO: which of the four skills you think is difficult to be taught?

As students encounter difficulties in learning the four skills, teachers face problems as well when teaching them. The present question tries to find out the skill which our teachers think is difficult to be taught.

Responses	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Reading
Participants	01	03	04	0
Percentage	12.5%	37.5%	50%	0%

Table 43: the teachers' evaluation of the four skills according to their teaching difficulty

The table above reveals that the half (50%) of the participants (04 teachers) said that writing is the most difficult skill to teach. Speaking comes next with a proportion of

(37.5%), then listening (12.5%). No teacher mentioned reading as a difficult skill to be taught. These results support the common assumption that receptive skills (listening and reading) are always thought to be passive, neglected and taken for granted. However, productive skills (speaking and writing) are believed to be more complex and difficult processes to deal with, for they require employing variety of strategies and involving number of sub-skills. In fact, our teachers' belief about speaking and writing is what most educationalists and language authors focused on such as: T. Hedge: 2000, P. Ur. 2000, M. Bygate: 1987, J. Harmer: 2001...etc.

QUESTION THREE: in which skill (s) you feel that your students are really involved?

Language skills are generally divided into receptive and productive; each skill seems to be interesting more than the other. Some students found to be more involved in one skill more than in another according to his/ her linguistic capacities and learning style. Hence, this question investigates the skills in which students are really involved. Teachers mentioned the following responses:

Responses	Productive skills	Receptive skills	N.A
Participants	4	3	1
Percentage	50%	37.5%	12.5%

Table 44: students' kind of involvement according to their teachers' points of view

According to the results revealed in the table above, 50%of participants argued that their students are really involved when dealing with productive skills (speaking and writing). Three (3) teachers (37.5%) maintained that their students seem to be involved when they (teachers) teach receptive skills (listening and reading). One participant (12.5%) gave no answer.

The fact that students are more interested when learning productive skills rather than receptive skills support the assumption which claims that many EFL students do believe that learning to speak or write is an urgent priority. These skills are his/ her expressive devices conveying his/ her opinions either via face-to- face interaction (speaking) or via paper (writing). In addition, most EFL teachers used to judge students' language abilities through their written and oral performances. This does not mean that they neglect totally the importance of receptive skills since they are his language inputs which are generally the basis for their oral and written outputs.

QUESTION FOUR: what are the most remarkable difficulties your students encounter in learning the four skills?

After asking our students about their difficulties in learning the four skills, it's time to ask their teachers to give their opinions concerning this issue. The table below summarizes learners' difficulties seen through teachers' eyes.

P	Speaking	listening	writing	reading
T 1	Limited range of vocabulary	Inability to understand native speakers' language	Lack of grammatical rules' knowledge	No answer
T 2	Lack of outside classroom practice	lack of exposure to native speakers' language	Undervaluation of the skill	Lack of reading practice
T3	Teacher' difficulty in checking students' performance	Unfamiliarity with native speakers' pace of speaking	As speaking	The existence of Arabic literature hinders them from reading in English
T4	No answer.	Lack of exposure to the language	No answer	They do not read (lack of practice)
T5	inhibition to speak willingly	Lack of concentration	Limited range of vocabulary, grammatical mistakes and low writing style level	Lack of further reading (they read only their lectures)
T6	Problems of pronunciation	Inability to understand native speakers' language	Spelling, punctuation and grammatical problems	Unfamiliarity with the new vocabulary items
T7	No following of a suitable and effective method in learning			
T8	Lack of motivation	Lack of concentration and the speech rate of natives	Limited writing abilities because of the absence of practice	No answer.

Table 45: teachers' opinions concerning students' difficulties in learning the four skills

The table presents learners' difficulties in details, but what should be mentioned is that learning barriers given by students are about to be the same as the ones given by teachers.

Generally speaking, teachers stressed the lack of practice as the main reason for all the barriers added to the absence of suitable method for learning.

QUESTION FIVE: do you follow certain strategy to deal with these difficulties?

It is certainly clear that the role of the teacher is to help his learners overcome their learning obstacles in an attempt to make them learn effectively and appropriately, hence achieve the desired level of language proficiency. Therefore, the question tries to find out whether our teachers follow certain methods and strategies to help their learners cope with their learning difficulties.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	08	0
Percentage	100%	0%

Table 46: teachers' attitudes towards following a strategy to deal with their students' difficulties

As it is expected, the eight (8) teachers (100%) gave a positive answer to the question. This actually shows their awareness towards the seriousness of the problem and their intention to practice their "noble" job in order to solve the problems that come up against students' desire to reach 'language mastery'. In another hand, letting students in a mess may create problems to the teacher as well. So, following a methodology became an urgent mission for the teacher to control the situation easily and successfully.

QUESTION SIX: to what extent you think you have succeeded in treating these difficulties?

By asking this question, we wished to have teachers' self evaluation concerning their success extent in following their strategy. Their evaluation is presented in the following table.

Response	25%	50%	75%	More than 75%
Participant	01	05	02	0
Percentage	12.5%	62.5%	25%	0%

Table 47: teachers' success extent in following a strategy

Out of 8, five (05) teachers (62.5%) reported that they have achieved the level of 50% success, two (02) participants (25%) said that they reach 75% success extent and only one (01) teacher (12.5%) stated that he achieved 25% . No teacher exceeded the level of 75% of success rate.

In fact, dealing with students learning barriers is really a hard job since it goes beyond correcting grammatical mistakes to reach the level where *your* students will be aware of their difficulties and build up a personal strategy to cope with them. It really takes much time and effort.

QUESTION SEVEN: how often do you use teaching aids in the classroom?

Teaching language skills usually requires using teaching aids to facilitate learning and create motivation. Thus, the present question aims at discovering teachers' frequency of using teaching aids in the classroom.

Response	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Participant	3	4	1	0
Percentage	37.5%	50%	12.5%	0%

Table 48: teachers' frequency of using teaching aids

Out of 8, 4 teachers (50%) said that they use teaching aids from time to time, three (3) participants (37.5%) claimed that they often use them, and only one teacher (12.5%) said that he rarely uses them. What can we deduce from these results is either our teachers haven't appreciated yet the great role of teaching aids or the availability and accessibility of teaching aids in the department of English is not enough.

The types of teaching aids that teachers frequently use are what the following question tries to find out.

QUESTION EIGHT: what kind of aids do you often use?

This question attempts to identify the different kinds of teaching aids our teachers usually use: (visuals, audio or audiovisuals). Here are the results.

Response	visual	audio	audiovisual
Participants	2	5	1
percentage	25%	62.5%	12.5%

Table 49: types of aids used by teachers in the classroom

As students' questionnaire previously revealed, teachers' questionnaire reveals the same thing i.e. five (5) teachers (62.5%) claimed that audio aids are their most used teaching tools. Two (2) teachers (25%) said that they tend to use visuals and only one teacher (12.5%) reported that he frequently use audiovisual aids. The supremacy of ' audio aids' response is very possibly due to the availability and accessibility of this type; Biskra's department of English provides five (05) conventional language laboratories where each teacher has the right to teach with his own audio taped materials. Although, the department offers an audiovisual room, it is not widely used. Again, it is up to the teacher to select what suits him and meets his learners' needs.

QUESTION NINE: do you think that teaching aids are necessary in teaching the four language skills?

To check the assumption that teaching aids and educational technology in general are necessary and helpful in teaching/ learning process, we asked our teachers to give us their opinion concerning the assumption. The opinions are shown below.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	7	1
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%

Table 50: teachers' attitudes towards the necessity of using teaching aids in the classroom

Almost all teachers (87.5%) agree that teaching aids and educational technology in general are very helpful and necessary in teaching/ learning EFL. Only one teacher (12.5%) gave a negative response.

3.3 SECTION THREE: language laboratory

QUESTION ONE: have you experienced L.L in your EFL teaching?

Language laboratory is one of the most used teaching aids in EFL classes, and almost all teachers experienced it in their teaching. The present question aims at confirming this fact.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	8	0
Percentage	100 %	0 %

Table 51: teachers' experience in language laboratory

The table reveals that all teachers (100%) have experienced L.L as a teaching aid in EFL classes. This will certainly help us to discuss the remaining items concerning teaching in language laboratory since our teachers will give us their attitudes, experience and opinions concerning this educational tool.

QUESTION TWO: in which courses do you often use it?

This question aims to cite the different courses relied on laboratory- based language teaching. The participants gave the following responses.

participants	Response
T1	Oral expression
T2	Oral expression (listening exercises).
T3	English literature (Hamlet's play)
T4	Phonetics (minimal pairs and intonation)
T5	Oral expression
T6	Oral expression (listening to native speakers)
T7	Oral expression and grammar
T8	No answer

Table 52: courses relied on laboratory-based language teaching

Out of 8, six (06) teachers (75%) maintained that O.E is the most suited course for the laboratory practice. One mentioned phonetics, and another teacher mentioned English literature (the play of hamlet). In fact, oral expression module is the most known instructional space to practice listening activities (dialogues, conversations, interviews, stories, songs...) and listening to practice pronunciation (minimal pairs, intonation, stress, weak forms...). Teachers of literature can profit from L.L in plays and short stories.

QUESTION THREE: what do you think the role of the L.L is?

By asking this question, we want to have teachers' personal evaluation of language laboratory's role. They provided the following response.

Response	Effective	Interesting	Boring	Needless
Participants	3	4	1	0
Percentage	37.5%	50%	12.5%	0%

Table 53: teachers' evaluation of L.L's role

Half of the participants (50%) reported that language laboratory is an interesting teaching aid; three teachers (37.5%) claimed that language laboratory is an effective educational tool and one teacher (12.5%) argued that it is boring aid. No one said that it is needless. The almost total agreement that L.L is effective, interesting and motivating teaching aid indicates its importance and vital role in the development of learners' receptive and productive skills through the facilities and functions the L.L provides.

QUESTION FOUR: do you know all the lab functions and for what they stand for?

Technically, L.L is the educational technology equipment which contains a range of switches and controls. Hence, any user needs to know how it works and operates. The present question seeks the teachers' knowledge of the lab functions.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	4	4
Percentage	50%	50%

Table 54: teachers' knowledge of the lab functions

The table above reveals that half of the participants (4 teachers) reported that they know all the lab functions and what each switch stands for, while the other four teachers (50%) gave a negative response to the question. If the teacher of O.E module does not know all the functions and switches of the console, he will no longer profit and exploit all the facilities it offers and this will affect the whole process of teaching/ learning.

QUESTION FIVE: do you know how to use them appropriately?

Now, the participants are asked whether they know how to use the switches appropriately. Their responses are as follows:

Response	Yes	No
Participants	4	4
Percentage	50%	50%

Table 55: Teachers' level of mastery in using the lab procedures and functions

The teachers, who previously claimed that they possess a good knowledge of the L.L functions, are the ones who reported that they also possess a good mastery of the lab procedures.

QUESTION SIX: among these language laboratory operations, which one you often use?

Language laboratory offers different operations and procedures which are based on the student's control over the equipment and the teacher's skill in using its functions. This question investigates the procedures our teachers frequently use.

Response	Audio-active (listen-respond)	Audio-active-compare (Listen-respond-record).	Passive listening
Participants	5	2	1
Percentage	62.5%	25%	12.5%

Table 56: teachers' often used lab procedures

According to the results shown above, almost two thirds of the participants (62.5%) claimed that they often manage with 'Audio-active' (listen-respond) operation; two (02) participants (25%) reported that Audio-active-compare (Listen-respond-record) is their frequently used laboratory procedure, and only one (01) participant (12.5%) said that he uses passive listening.

The heavy depend on the audio-active procedure is due to its generous offers for the teacher to select the program he wants, to be the only supervisor, monitor and evaluator. In addition, it suits the advanced level' students who work in groups and this is the case of O.E best way of learning (small groups). Using audio-active-compare is basically related to the teacher knowledge and skill in using the students' recording system. Dealing with passive listening procedure indicates the teacher's lack of mastery and control over the equipment, thus he chose to use the simplest lab procedure.

QUESTION SEVEN: do you support the idea of teaching drills in the L.L?

It is commonly assumed that L.L, as an instructional tool, is often associated with repetition drills; that is why most language teachers call it "a drill instructional media". Do our teachers support this idea or not? This is what the present question tries to discover.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	7	1
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%

Table 57: teachers' attitudes concerning the idea of teaching drills in the L.L

It is not surprising that the results above revealed that almost all teachers support the idea of teaching drills in the L.L. only one (01) teacher presented a negative response.

QUESTION EIGHT: what is your purpose in teaching drills?

The question seeks teachers' purposes in teaching drills. Their purposes to teach drills are summed up below.

participants	Response
T1	Use language by repeating words, know and retain vocabulary items
T2	No answer (he does not believe in teaching drills)
T3	Mainly for language practice' sake
T4	To facilitate the acquisition of expressions and use them spontaneously
T5	For more development of students' speaking and listening abilities
T6	Know how to pronounce correctly, know different forms of natives' speech
T7	Despite the automatic repetition, drills help to memorize structures for further use
T8	For the language training' sake

Table 58: teachers' purpose in teaching drills in L.L

QUESTION NINE: how much do you think drills help EFL students speak fluently and accurately?

By asking this question, we wished to have teachers' personal valuation of the drills' role in enhancing students' fluency and accuracy.

Response	Very much	little	No at all
Participants	7	1	0
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%	0%

Table 59: teachers' valuation of drills' role in improving students' fluency and accuracy

It seems that our respondents are great defenders and supporters of the belief stated that pattern drills form the heart of lab exercises. This later is supposed to train students practice speaking to hopefully achieve the desired accuracy and fluency. Therefore, 7 teachers (87.5%) claimed that pattern drills are very helpful to EFL learners to improve their fluency and accuracy.

QUESTION TEN: have you tried to teach something else than drills?

Language laboratory is not only devoted to teach pattern drills but also to practice other language skills. Here we want to investigate whether our teachers teach something else rather than drills. They gave the following answers.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	7	1
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%

Figure 60: teachers' experience in teaching other things than drills

Out of 8, 7 teachers (87.5%) argued that teaching drills is not their only teaching focus, but they tried to teach other language skills especially listening and speaking.

3.4 SECTION FOUR: teaching listening and speaking

QUESTION ONE: how many groups you teach for the oral expression course?

By coming back again to ask about O.E course, we wished to know number of groups each teacher takes in charge.

Participants	T1	T2	T3	T4	5	T6	T7	T8
Response	1	2	4	3	1	2	5	2

Table 61: teachers' number of groups for the O.E course

The table shows that the number of groups ranges from one (01) group to five (05) groups. In fact, exceeding two (02) groups is really a burden for a teacher who has not received any special training to teach O.E module. It seems that two groups per teacher is an ideal number for it is possible to control, monitor and evaluate.

QUESTION TWO: how many students do you have per group?

The number of students studying in one group is what the present question seeks to find out.

Participants	T1	T2	T3	T4	5	T6	T7	T8
Response	36	30	+30	35	36	32	35	35

Table 62: number of students per group

The scope of students' number per group ranges from 30 to 36 which really reveals how overcrowded the groups are. Such great numbers of students hinder the work of the teacher in terms of supervising, monitoring, individual evaluation and harden the effort of students to obtain good results. Embedded groups creates a teaching mess particularly in a course which requires sub-groups like oral expression, not to mention the problem of seats (carrels) in language laboratory (up to 22 seats in the conventional L.L)

QUESTION THREE: how many hours allotted to the O.E course?

By asking this question, we wished to investigate the number of hours allocated to the course of O.E.

Participants	T1	T2	T3	T4	5	T6	T7	T8
Response	3h	1h 30	3h	1h 30	3h	3h	1h 30	3h

Table 63: the allotted time to O.E

The table indicates that the allotted time ranges from one hour and a half (1h 30) to three hours (3h). In fact, English language studies' program devotes two sessions (1h 30 each) for first year and second year, whereas third year receives only one session per week.

QUESTION FOUR: do you think that this time is sufficient for EFL students?

This question seeks teachers' attitudes concerning the sufficiency of the time allotted to the course of O.E.

Response	No	Yes
Participants	7	1
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%

Table 64: teachers' points of view about the sufficiency of time allotted to the course of O.E.

The proportion of (87.5%) which indicates the negative response elicits the teachers' dissatisfaction with the time allotted to O.E, and their desire to have more time for oral practice.

QUESTION FIVE: do you follow any program in teaching oral expression course?

Teaching any module requires a very organized instructional plan including program design which highlights the teacher's methodology of teaching. The program can be official, personal or mixture of both, yet the aim is always the same (achieving set of goals).

Our teachers' opinions towards following a program are shown below.

Response	No	Yes
Participants	2	6
Percentage	25%	75%

Table 65: following a program in teaching O.E

Out of 8, six (6) teachers (75.5%) argued that they follow a program in teaching this module and the other two teachers (25%) said that they do not do so. This indicates that our teachers have realized the necessity of the instructional plan; for it makes the teaching/ learning process systematic and organized.

Indeed, following a teaching program especially in this course creates no more gaps inside lectures and tasks; moreover, it keeps learners in contact with the teacher and lessons in terms of preparation, attention and participation. By following a program, it is not only the teacher who knows what to do and how but also the learner as well.

QUESTION SIX: do you give much attention to the teaching of listening or speaking? Explain.

The present question investigates the skill which receives much attention than the other (listening or speaking) and the teachers' reasons of doing so.

Ps	Response	Reason
T1	Listening.	Without listening, students can not speak and keep only the receptive knowledge. Speaking without listening creates lack of linguistic inputs
T2	Speaking.	It develops language fluency
T3	Both	The two skills are essential to a good command of the language
T4	Listening	Learning a language passes through the stage of listening and then imitation (speaking)
T5	Speaking	It is the skill that it is devoted to express themselves freely using the target language
T6	Listening	It is the first step to learn the language; a good listener produces a good speaker
T7	Both	They are tightly related
T8	Listening	Students are supposed to know first how to articulate, then they can speak

Table 66: teachers' points of view towards the priority of listening or speaking

The table reveals that our teachers realized the importance of listening comprehension in enhancing students' oral abilities. Out of 8, 4 teachers (50%) argued that they give much attention and importance to the teaching of listening comprehension simply because it provides the basic linguistic inputs which can help learners develop their language outputs (oral performance). It also provides the exposure to the spoken language which does certainly reinforce their speaking skill.

Two participants (25%) claimed that they give much attention to speaking practice. They argued that this skill is the learners' outlet to express themselves using the target language, and it is the skill devoted to develop their fluency. The two remaining teachers stressed the importance of both skills for their interdependence.

QUESTION SEVEN: from your experience in TEFL, what are the main difficulties your students encounter in listening comprehension?

To start with listening comprehension, students in their questionnaire claimed that they encounter certain barriers in learning this skill. Do teacher agree with this claim? This is what the present question investigates.

Participants	Response
T1	- pronunciation problems (unfamiliarity with native speakers' accents)
T2	- lack of aural training - lack of perception and quick decoding - unfamiliarity with speakers' accent
T3	- Inability to understand more than 10% of the listening discourse - Length of the listening passage
T4	- Students are not sufficiently exposed to spoken English. - Inability to understand the listening texts
T5	- Lack of sound discrimination (phoneme, intonation, stress...)
T6	- Unfamiliarity with the new vocabulary items
T7	- Lack of practice produces all the listening problems
T8	- Inability to understand native speakers' language (speed, regressive, progressive, assimilation...)

Table 67: teachers' evaluation of students' difficulties in listening comprehension

From their experience in TEFL, teachers cited above their students' listening comprehension problems. Generally speaking, it seems that the factor of being insufficiently exposed to the spoken English let the opportunity for all the mentioned problems to surge and come up against learners' attempt to approach the process of comprehension.

QUESTION EIGHT: do you help your students overcome their listening problems?

It is obviously clear that the job of the teacher is not only to instruct but to help their students overcome their problems as well. Is it the case of our teachers? And how often do they do so? The table below gives the answer.

Response	Always	Sometimes	Never	Where necessary
Participants	4	1	0	3
Percentage	50%	12.5%	0%	37.5%

Table 68: teachers' frequency of helping their students overcome their listening problems

The table indicates that half of the participants (4 teachers) gave the "always" response, three (03) gave the "when necessary" and one teacher mentioned the "sometimes" response. Teachers' responses indicate their awareness and care about learners' difficulties. One of the respondents said: "if not, what is my role?" which clearly confirms the previous statement.

QUESTION NINE: where do you prefer teaching listening comprehension?

The question seeks the suitable educational medium to teach listening comprehension (L.L or classroom).

Response	In classroom	In language laboratory
Participants	0	8
Percentage	0%	100%

Table 69: teachers' preferable instructional medium to teach listening

All respondents (100%) claimed that their preferable instructional medium to teach listening comprehension is the L.L for the facilities and options it offers which can not be found in a typical classroom.

QUESTION TEN: what type of activities do you use to help your students improve their aural skills?

Effective teaching of listening requires appropriate activities and tasks which meet students' needs and aim at enhancing their aural abilities. Hence, the participants were asked to cite the different types of activities which they think enhance and better students' aural skills. The responses are presented below.

participants	Type of activities
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions, dialogues - Using taped materials. - Work in small groups
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening to authentic recordings for many times
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening to authentic materials
T4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimal pair exercises to improve pronunciation. - Dialogues to improve their intonation
T5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - group discussions - individual reports
T6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - songs with gap filling - authentic dialogues - watching clips and answering set of questions to check comprehension
T7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different activities according to the aim you want to achieve
T8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - audio tapes with interesting topics

Table 70: types of activities used to improve aural skills

What can be deduced from the above responses is that most of the activities depend on the authentic taped materials; yet it is up to the teacher to design the activities according to the aims he wants to achieve.

QUESTION ELEVEN: how often do your students complain about the difficulty of the taped material and the activities in the L.L?

Inappropriate designing of the listening activities does provoke dissatisfaction and complaining. When asked: how often do your students complain about the difficulty of the taped material and the activities in the L.L, teachers gave the following answers.

Response	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Participants	0	4	4	0
Percentage	0%	5%	50%	0%

Table 71: students' frequency of complaining from the difficulty of lab practice

We can notice from the given results that students sometimes or rarely complain about the designed activities. This assumption demonstrates that our teachers follow certain procedures when exposing students to a listening passage in the L.L in an attempt to meet their needs and interests. In fact, difficulty rises from the ill-choice of activities and their inappropriateness to students' level.

QUESTION TWELVE: have you found the L.L a well suited tool for teaching listening?

To check the common assumption that L.L is the most well- suited tool for teaching listening comprehension, we asked the present question.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	8	0
Percentage	100%	0%

Table 72: teachers' attitudes towards the suitability of language laboratory in teaching listening comprehension

All teachers (100%) answered positively, thus confirmed and supported the above assumption.

QUESTION THIRTEEN: as far a speaking skill is concerned; do your students suffer from the inability to express themselves orally?

After investigating the issue of students' aural difficulties, it's time to investigate students' oral difficulties too.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	7	1
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%

Table 73: teachers' attitudes towards the students' problems in oral skills

Out of 8, 7 teachers (87.5%) claimed that their students suffer from the inability to express themselves orally. Only one teacher (12.5%) reported a different opinion.

QUESTION FOURTEEN and FIFTEEN: what are the most remarkable difficulties your students encounter in their oral abilities?

What type of activities you often suggest to improve your students' oral skills?

To find out the obstacles come up against students' oral performance and the activities suggested by their teachers to overcome their oral skills' barriers and then improve them, we asked the present questions.

P	Students' speaking difficulties	Teacher's suggested activities
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited rang of vocabulary. - Lack of grammar' rules application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - free self expression - listening and discussion - using audiovisual aids
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of fluency - Lack of practice. - inability to find the right word in the adequate moment (vocabulary shortage) - hesitations, pauses (a lot of Mmm.../Hhhh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oral presentation of exposes - Acting very short plays (5mn) and specific situations (in the shop, airport...)
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less time is spent speaking English - no real opportunities for them to express themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - role-play and interviews - improvisation
T4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lacks in grammar and vocabulary - No opportunity for an effective use of the language (it is not their mother tongue) - Huge groups and lack of time 	- no suggested activities.
T5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of fluency - misuse of grammar rules - vocabulary shortage 	Discussions
T6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grammatical mistakes - shortage of vocabulary and structures 	Extensive use of authentic materials: songs, pictures, movies, audio tapes...
T7	- lack of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - research projects - reports with photos - plays with actual performance
T8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of self-confidence - The fact of being shy 	- simulation where they have to imitate exactly native speakers

Table 74: teachers' evaluation of the students' oral difficulties and the activities suggested to improve their speaking abilities.

Indeed, each teacher tended to suggest the activities according to his/ her perception of problems and the aims he/ she wish to achieve. As the problems differ, the activities differ too according to the strategy the teacher follows.

QUESTION SIXTEEN: have you ever experienced teaching speaking skill using L.L?

Since it is agreed that L.L is the most suited tool to teach listening comprehension, will the participants agree about its suitability in teaching speaking?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	5	3
Percentage	62.5%	37.5%

Table 75: teachers' experience of teaching speaking in L.L

The table above revealed that out of 8, 5 respondents (62.5%) did experience teaching speaking in L.L, while the other three (03) teachers (37.5%) didn't do so. One can blame the lack of mastery and control over lab functions and procedures; it is the inability of some teachers to get the utmost benefits from the lab characteristics and their "undervaluation" of its enormous value and importance in developing speaking skill.

QUESTION SEVENTEEN: what do you find different in teaching speaking in L.L?

Teaching speaking in a typical classroom is certainly different from teaching it in language laboratory. The difference between the two settings in teaching oral skills is what the present question tries to find out.

Participants	Response
T1	It contributes in enhancing students capacities mainly listening and speaking
T2	"Sincerely, I am not able to manipulate the lab instruments, I favor friendly talks"
T3	It is really effective mainly in listening? but the problem of space can hinder students from free movement (the fixed laboratory carrels)
T4	Lab is useful for pronunciation, for it is very good to have a native speaker as a model
T5	It motivates students to learn much better
T6	No given response.
T7	It gives more attention and concentration

	Opportunity to practice listening and speaking at the same time
T8	Provides the occasion to students for the simulation (immediate imitation)

Table 76: teachers' opinions concerning the work in L.L

It seems that the less practice of speaking in L.L resulted in these "non-detailed" opinions.

QUESTION EIGHTEEN: can you consider, now, language laboratory a well- suited tool for developing students' oral skills?

As a conclusion of the above items, this final question seeks teachers' attitudes towards the suitability of L.L in developing students' oral skills.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	7	1
Percentage	87.5%	12.5%

Table 77: teachers' attitudes towards the suitability of L.L in developing oral skills

Out of 8, 7 teachers (87.5%) considered L.L as well-suited instructional equipment to teach speaking, and only one teacher (12.5%) answered negatively.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire allowed us to draw up the following points. The questionnaire revealed that oral expression teachers of the department of English at the University of Biskra possess different educational backgrounds, teaching experiences and instructional careers. These diversities resulted in different teaching perceptions in terms of attitudes, viewpoints and evaluations of teaching aural-oral skills. Almost all teachers claimed that teaching speaking and listening becomes an urgent priority to achieve real language proficiency. Yet this target can not be achieved unless our oral expression teachers decide seriously to follow an effective strategy to deal with these two "difficult to be taught skill". As most teachers are unable to go beyond 50% of their

teaching strategy' success level, their EFL students are still encountering serious difficulties in learning language skills especially aural-oral ones.

Although our teachers have realized how important, necessary and helpful teaching aids are in teaching / learning language skills, they reported lack of frequency in using them. Language laboratory is claimed to be the most used teaching aid, yet the lack of mastery and control over laboratory functions and procedures hinder teachers from better exploitation of this "unvalued teaching tool".

The questionnaire showed that the major problems associated with crowded groups, insufficient time, the absence of an effective program in teaching aural-oral skills create an obstacle for teachers to improve and develop their students' average ability in listening and speaking. Teachers' efforts to help their students overcome their learning difficulties by designing well-suited activities and variety of tasks are still required to be doubled. Students' aural-oral difficulties can not be effectively overcome unless our oral expression teachers try to get the utmost benefits of language laboratory which has been argued to be suited for teaching listening comprehension and speaking as well.

CHAPTER V

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY INTO THE ROLE OF LABORATORY- BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS

AURAL-ORAL SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

The results of questionnaires revealed the genuine difficulties our students encounter in understanding oral English while language laboratory practice. Our students' suggestions in the questionnaire conveyed a loud call for help. Almost all students suggested more exposure to the language as it is used in the real context by its native speakers aiming at improving their receptive and productive abilities. Thus, the present chapter deals with the experimental study which has been conducted with students of second year English at the University of Biskra as an attempt to put the issue under investigation on the field work.

1. RATIONALE

For the above reason, we saw the necessity to experience exposing our students to English in its oral form spoken by its native speakers in different real life situations and contexts.

At first, we thought of a very effective teaching aid that could be “the boat” for our students to surf safely in the “big ocean” of language. Indeed, many teaching aids seemed to be suitable to do the job, but after a long brainstorming we chose the language laboratory to be our “boat”. It has not been chosen blindly or accidentally; it is because of many reasons. First of all, it really offers facilities for both teacher and learner in terms of easy access to listen to a variety of speakers on a variety of subjects in a variety of real-life situations. It provides learners with opportunities to test and improve their oral performance through voice recording equipments (microphones, personal tape recorders and earphones). Language laboratory is not

only a strong motive to students for more effective language learning but also a powerful and helpful teaching aid for teachers as well.

To examine and test the research hypotheses:

- To what extent can laboratory-based language teaching be a real language experience which helps learners of English at the university level develop and reinforce their aural-oral skills?
- To what extent can laboratory appropriate tasks and activities have a significant degree of importance in advancing our students' listening and speaking abilities?

We carefully designed an experimental program in which listening and speaking tasks are interrelated. The two groups under experimentation were given approximately the same tasks, yet they differ in the teaching aid used to carry out the experiment. We used language laboratory as a teaching medium with the experimental group including various topics from different taped material's sources. In the other hand, the control group had undergone a normal classical teaching medium.

Our predictions have been checked throughout the experiment depending on the results emerged from the two groups' performance. Observation grids were used every experimental session. They really allowed us to assess and evaluate the outputs of students' performances both in listening comprehension and speaking.

2. THE STUDY

2.1 VARIABLES

The variable, as the term suggest, is any thing that may vary and differ or simply any thing which does not remain constant. It is generally agreed that any experimental study is carried out to explore the strength of relationship between variables; then our variables- in this case- are the teaching aid (language laboratory) and the scores of tests.

Language laboratory is the independent variable which we expect to influence the dependent variable which is, here, the listening and speaking tests' scores.

Now, we have the only variable, which we expect to cause changes upon the students' performance in listening and speaking, is the designed laboratory experimental program. However, we have to consider some other extraneous variables for there is always a possibility

that some factors other than the experimental material may cause differences in the scores and in the study in general.

Following J. D, Brown (1995.29), we have to take into account some problems that can arise both within and outside the study and create major flaws in its validity. These extraneous variables are basically associated with the environmental, grouping, people and measurement issues.

To begin with, environmental issues are generally associated with noise, time of day, seating arrangements...etc. thus; the experiment was conducted in a quite and pre-arranged language laboratory. During the experimental study, we attempted as much as possible to make the experimental sessions with both groups in the morning period to avoid all sorts of fatigue, tiredness or annoyance. We also tried to create a calm environment where laboratories are considerably far from the crowded classes. As far as the seating arrangements are concerned, the language laboratory provides individual numbered booths for students.

To deal with grouping issues, we successfully avoided what is called 'subject' self selection' which "refers to the practice of letting the subjects decide which group to join" (Brown: 1995.31). The subjects were randomly divided into two separate groups on the basis of departmental records to be in a better position to argue that any development and difference at the end of the experimentation are due to the experimental treatment (L.L experimental program). The two groups are: the experimental group which had experienced the innovative materials (language laboratory), and the control group which had undergone the traditional treatment. In fact, randomizing the groups cancels the effects of such variables like the subjects' personal characteristics (sex, age, aptitude, intelligence...).

This leads us to talk about people issue. It is related to the unpredictable emotions, feelings and attitudes towards the study and the researcher as well. This in turn produces uncontrolled variables which take, according to Brown (1995.32), many forms such as what is called "Hawthorn" effect or "halo" effect. Hawthorn effect refers to the status of being "so pleased at being included in the study", so the results of the study can be influenced by this pleasure rather than anything related to the experimental materials. To deal with this issue, we purposefully did not inform any group that we are conducting an experiment to keep their feelings neutral and natural towards the study.

As far as the measurement issue is concerned, it usually causes an effect occurs when the same test is given repeatedly in a study. This variable was easily controlled because we tended to give different types of tests and tasks all along the experiment.

Finally, checking our experimental materials and equipments (L.L and its accessories) has been frequently done to ensure the suitability and availability of laboratory equipments and taped materials as well as their well-functioning.

2.2 THE EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM AND THE RELATED TASKS

Before administering any task or instruction, we did carefully plan, organize and design the experimental program which we believed that it will hopefully meet the students' needs and fit their level. The aim of the program is to incorporate listening and speaking skills within the available and accessible taped materials and allotted time.

Listening tasks were designed with different strategies for different purposes in order to test different points of language proficiency. Listening tasks included such strategies like:

- listening for details
- listening for main ideas
- listening for specific information
- inferring and interpreting attitudes
- understanding the listening discourse

Whereas the tests' type of questions includes:

- matching extracts with pictures and statements
- filling the uncompleted charts
- multiple choice questions
- true-false statements
- fill in gaps activities

Speaking tasks are designed to provide students with the opportunity to practice their language in terms of real-life simulations with genuine exchanges of information and opinions. The general aim of these tasks was to train learners practice and improve their oral skills. Speaking tasks included the following strategies:

- general communication and social interaction
- pair work and role-playing

- imitation of the model
- telephoning
- developing discussions

Our primary consideration when designing the experimental program is the possibility to make the listening and speaking tasks interdependent and overlapped in each experimental session. We attempted to make speaking practice relied on the listening task i.e. listening as an input and speaking as an output. We then followed a schedule of tests to guarantee the progressive development as well as the differences in both groups' performances.

2.3 MATERIAL SELECTION

Conducting such an experiment to investigate the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing students' aural-oral skills requires different and various taped materials. Therefore, we tried as much as we can to collect different listening and speaking text books with their cassettes to obtain the oral and written aspects of the teaching material. We did so to provide variety of topics in a variety of situations by variety of speakers. In fact, each instructional source (book + K7) includes different extracts which rang from simple face-to-face conversation to formal news broadcasting and story narration, hence selecting the appropriate materials for the experimental treatment was the main and important phase. Listening extracts were carefully chosen to ensure the diversity in terms of topics, strategies and purposes. Most selected topics cover the general interests of students and meet their needs (educational issues, communication, lifestyles, cultural and social matters, celebrities and famous people...).

Deciding a topic for listening and speaking required a well-thought out criteria and profound preparation, then we purposefully selected the language of listening extracts that should not go beyond the learners' linguistic abilities and conceptual level in order to maintain the factor of motivation and interest. Moreover, we attempted to keep the factor of listening-speaking interdependence.

Finally, we took into consideration the following points when selecting any material or designing any task.

- the task should create motivation and interest
- it requires learners' previous knowledge (schematic knowledge)

- Varying listening extracts to cover variety of voices (male, female, different ages and different accents) and variety of genres (conversations, interviews, lectures, stories and songs).
- The task should activate students' expectations and motivates their abilities of grasping the meaning from the taped extracts.
- The speaking task requires the involvement of all students (it shouldn't be designed for a specific group).
- The task bridges between the text (extract) and the test (questions).
- Finally, the listening task should be authentic to bring the natural language of native speakers into the classroom.

2.4 LISTENING TASKS

A part of the current experiment is based on the listening materials via dealing with different and various aural-based tasks. These later are supposed to have an effect on the learners' listening abilities and they are intended to be the initial inputs for oral performance. They really required a very insightful preparation in order to hopefully meet the needs, interests and level of students.

During the experiment, almost all listening sections were held in the first session of the week and the speaking ones in the second. Generally speaking, the aural tasks contain three main stages:

- Pre-listening phase: it aimed at creating a sort of warm-up activities.
- While-listening phase: they required learners' attention to look for the missing information, complete the chart or fill in gaps.
- Post-listening phase: they further exploit the listening passage to check students' genuine comprehension.

As far as L.L procedures, we relied on the two main laboratory procedures (audio-active and audio-active-compare) to exploit utmost the laboratory functions. However, the conventional L.L was the only laboratory installation used to conduct the current experiment for its availability and accessibility.

Finally, one should mention that the language laboratory in which the experiment was conducted is the "TANDBERG EDUCATIONAL" laboratory which contains up to 22 booths

and one main console. Each student can have the access to a private booth that contains a tape recorder and two headsets for pairing procedure. All these equipments provided the learner with acoustic and psychological privacy.

2.5 SPEAKING TASKS

In fact, each speaking task is an extension of the listening task to guarantee their interdependence. The activities are designed to provide each student with an opportunity to practice the target language. The main goal of speaking tasks is to push the shy and embarrassed students to participate. Building self-confidence, breaking the ice wall, supporting creativity and creating an encouraging atmosphere are also among the primary goals of oral practice.

We tried as much as we can to maintain the factor of interaction between the teacher-students and student- student. Different strategies of work (individual work, pair and group work) were applied to vary the stimulus of oral production. The topics used for speaking practice range from talking about personal experiences and attitudes to discuss social affairs and lifestyles in order to cover all students' interests.

3. THE PRE-TEST OBSERVATION GRID:

The pre-test is usually intended to test both groups before the experimental treatment just to make sure that the two groups are likely the same in terms of aptitude, intelligence, language abilities and skills. Administering a pre-test can give us a clear idea about the two groups' genuine level in aural-oral skills.

Topic: unusual homes

Source: CAE listening and speaking –unit 3-

3.1 LISTENING SECTION:

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following:

- predicting what a recording is about through picture interpretation
- listening for main ideas

Pre-listening phase: (10 minutes)

Strategy: picture interpretation

In this pre-listening step, students were given a picture representing a photo of an “unusual home” (railway carriage), and they were asked to make a list of the possible

advantages and disadvantages of living in this home (two items each). To make students fully aware of the topic by letting them predict the listening extract' content was the primary aim of this step. In fact, picture interpretation can be used as a good warm-up activity to stimulate students pre-listening knowledge (schemata) before getting exposed to the listening text.

While-listening phase: (15 minutes)

Strategy: fill in the chart (information search)

After explaining the task and distributing the work sheets, students were asked to listen carefully to the recording and write down, while listening, any possible advantages and disadvantages of living in a “railway carriage” (the unusual home) that the speaker is going to mention. The teacher played the recording twice.

Post-listening phase (10minutes)

Strategy: multiple choice questions

Since students have already listened to the recording, they were, then, asked to answer the multiple choice questions based on what they can remember. For the scoring procedures, the teacher gave one point for each full right answer, and no point for the wrong or uncompleted ones. The two groups' scores are shown in the table below.

Experimental group					Control group				
N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A	N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A
01	02	01	04	07	01	04	07	07	15
02	02	05	04	11	02	02	03	05	10
03	04	05	06	15	03	03	05	04	12
04	04	04	04	12	04	02	02	05	09
05	04	03	04	11	05	03	03	06	12
06	04	02	06	12	06	03	03	04	10
07	03	01	04	08	07	04	04	03	11
08	04	05	04	13	08	03	05	04	12
09	02	01	06	09	09	03	04	06	13
10	04	06	06	16	10	04	04	05	14
11	02	04	04	10	11	04	05	03	12
12	04	04	05	13	12	03	05	04	12
13	04	05	04	13	13	01	03	07	11
14	04	05	06	15	14	03	02	03	08
15	04	03	05	12	15	03	06	06	15
16	03	03	03	09	16	02	03	03	08
17	04	03	03	10	17	03	03	04	10
18	04	04	03	11	18	02	04	03	09
19	04	04	04	12	19	02	03	03	08
20	02	07	06	15	20	03	06	05	14
$\sum X_E$				234	$\sum X_C$				225
X_E				11.70	X_C				11.25

Table 78: scores of both groups in listening section of the pre-test

N = number of subjects A= average

X =the average of scores $\sum X$ =the sum of scores

Subjects of both groups were also pre-tested on the speaking skill.

3.2 SPEAKING SECTION

Strategy: acting from a script (dialogue)

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following:

- agreeing and disagreeing with other people's view
- take turns to defend a point of view and offer a brief explanation
- discussing and drawing conclusions

Procedure

Students were asked to work in pairs. They were made aware that speaking task is tightly related to the listening section in terms of the topic under discussion. Students had to tackle the following points:

- discuss the possible advantages and disadvantages of living in the unusual homes
- expand the dialogue to talk about life in towns Vs life in countryside
- suggest a solution for the housing problems in this country

Students' performances were assessed in terms of accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, task achievement and interactive communication.

The scores of both groups in the speaking section are displayed in the following table.

Experimental group							Control group						
N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average	N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average
01	01	02	01	02	02	08	01	03	03	02	03	03	14
02	02	02	01	03	02	10	02	02	01	01	02	02	08
03	03	03	03	03	03	15	03	03	03	02	03	03	14
04	02	02	01	01	02	08	04	01	01	02	02	02	08
05	01	02	01	02	01	07	05	02	03	02	02	02	11
06	02	02	02	02	01	09	06	02	02	02	02	02	10
07	01	02	02	02	01	08	07	02	02	02	02	01	09
08	03	03	03	03	03	15	08	01	02	02	02	01	08
09	01	02	02	02	02	08	09	02	03	03	02	03	13
10	03	03	03	03	03	15	10	03	03	03	03	03	15
11	02	02	02	01	03	10	11	01	02	01	03	02	09
12	01	02	01	02	01	07	12	02	01	01	02	02	08
13	03	04	02	02	03	14	13	02	02	02	03	02	11
14	03	03	02	02	03	13	14	01	01	01	01	01	05
15	02	02	01	02	02	09	15	03	03	03	03	03	15
16	02	02	01	02	02	09	16	01	01	01	02	01	06
17	01	02	01	03	02	09	17	02	03	02	03	03	13
18	03	03	03	03	03	15	18	01	01	01	02	01	06
19	02	02	01	02	02	09	19	01	02	01	02	02	08
20	03	03	02	02	03	13	20	02	03	03	03	02	13
ΣX_E						211	ΣX_C						204
X_E						10.55	X_C						10.20

Table 79: scores of both groups in the speaking section of the pre-test

N = number of subjects

F= fluency

T.A= task achievement

X =the average of scores

A= accuracy

IC= interactive communication

ΣX =the sum of scores

P= pronunciation

Tables of both listening and speaking tests indicate how close the two groups are in terms of the sum of scores (**234 Vs 225** in the listening test, and **211 Vs 204** in the speaking test). However, to have a clear picture of how the two groups' aural-oral level is likely to be the same, comparing the means of scores will certainly clarify the matter.

tests groups	Listening comprehension test	Speaking test
Experimental group	11.70	10.55
Control group	11.25	10.20
Difference in the means	0.45	0.35

Table 80: means of scores on the pre-test of both groups

The table representing the pre-test means of scores reveals that the experimental group recorded numerically little bit higher than the control group (the difference in the means is only **0.45** in listening test and **0.35** in the speaking test).this insignificant over scoring put us in a position to claim that the aural-oral proficiency level is almost the same. Hence, any further over scoring in the coming tests will be due to the experimental teaching material (language laboratory instructional training).

One may say that the scores obtained in listening test are high; this is indeed due to the nature of the task (simple language, familiar structures and vocabularies, slow speech rate...etc). All these factors resulted in a better comprehension of the listening discourse, hence, the ease to tackle the subject and get good scores.

During the experimental treatment, the teacher used variety of tasks including different activities to test both listening and speaking abilities. All the tasks based on the language laboratory instructional medium and depended on taped materials as teaching tools. Therefore, what follow is a detailed description, analysis and interpretation of the various tests we have used to confirm our research hypotheses. The results of tests are displayed in a form of observation grids.

4. OBSERVATION GRID № 01

Topic: the language of colour

Source: Advance your English –unit 08- (adaptation)

Laboratory procedure: Audio-Active (listen-respond)

4.1 LISTENING SECTION

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following:

- interpreting context: identifying and predicting what a concept conveys as language messages
- comparing students' predicted ideas with the listening discourse
- listening for the main ideas of the passage
- listening to focus on important words for meaning

Pre-listening phase: (10 minutes)

Strategy: brainstorming

Students were given a list of colours and asked about the effects of each colour on people's minds. The aim of this activity is to activate students' prediction ability in order to make them fully aware of the listening discourse. Students were asked to work in pairs to suggest different interpretations of each colour effects.

While- listening: (10 minutes)

Strategy: listening for specific information (information search)

The aim of this activity is to compare the listening passage with the responses of pre-listening stage. In this activity, students were given the same list of colours and asked to write down their effects according to what they are going to listen to. The recording is about a colour analyst giving effects of colours on peoples' minds. While-listening, our students tried to fill in the given chart by looking for the missing information.

The control group also received the same activity but they were asked to listen without headphones (the teacher used the laboratory outside speaker)

Post listing: (10 minutes)

Strategy: multiple choice questions

The last step of the listing section aimed at checking students' comprehension through a list of multiple choice questions. The teacher intended to check students' ability of sound discrimination through introducing the "look-like" words which seems similar when hearing them but they are different in meaning (seat and eat, simulating and stimulating...etc).

Both groups' scores are displayed in the following table.

Experimental group					Control group				
N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A	N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A
01	04	06	04	14	01	02	02	03	08
02	03	02	03	08	02	04	06	04	14
03	02	02	06	10	03	02	04	02	08
04	02	04	02	08	04	04	04	02	10
05	04	02	03	09	05	02	02	02	06
06	04	04	04	12	06	03	04	03	10
07	03	04	04	11	07	05	06	04	15
08	02	04	02	08	08	02	04	02	08
09	04	06	03	13	09	03	02	03	08
10	05	08	03	16	10	04	04	03	11
11	03	02	02	07	11	02	02	03	07
12	03	04	04	11	12	05	06	02	013
13	04	04	04	12	13	03	08	04	15
14	01	02	02	05	14	03	04	03	10
15	05	06	03	14	15	02	02	02	06
16	02	02	02	06	16	02	02	03	07
17	04	04	03	11	17	01	02	02	05
18	03	04	03	10	18	02	02	02	06
19	04	08	04	16	19	01	01	02	04
20	02	02	02	06	20	03	06	03	12
$\sum X_E$				207	$\sum X_C$				183
X_E				10.35	X_C				9.50

Table 81: scores of both groups in listening section of the first test

N = number of subjects

A=average

X =the average of scores

$\sum X$ =the sum of scores

4.2 SPEAKING SECTION:

Strategy: simulation

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following:

- agreeing and disagreeing with other people's view
- asking for explanation of personal decision
- exchanging opinions to reach an agreement
- guessing people's personalities through personal interpretation of their colours

Procedure

Before carrying out the speaking task, students were given a list of colours and their messages. Then, they were asked to work in groups of three (one is supposed to be the colour analyst and the other two are friends). The task was about simulating a session with the colour analyst trying to analyse one of the two friends' personality through the colours he likes, dislikes and usually wears.

This activity is a kind of role-playing in the form of peers' debate. Students took their roles and discussed for a while (05 minutes) how the colour analyst session would be organized. It was up to the members of the group to choose their roles. The performances were required to be acted out. This drama-like activity needed rehearsing time to act the role confidently.

The volunteers and less shy students performed first to encourage other peers to perform as well. Such activity trains students to be more cooperative and confident in terms of sharing ideas and distributing roles. Again, the assessment based on the five levels (accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, task achievement and interactive communication). Both groups had experienced the same task. Their scores are shown below:

Experimental group							Control group						
N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average	N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average
01	03	03	03	03	03	15	01	03	03	02	03	03	14
02	02	02	01	02	03	10	02	02	01	01	02	02	08
03	01	02	01	02	02	08	03	03	03	02	03	03	14
04	02	02	02	03	03	12	04	01	01	02	02	02	08
05	01	01	02	02	03	09	05	02	03	02	02	02	11
06	01	02	02	02	03	10	06	02	02	02	02	02	10
07	02	03	02	03	02	12	07	02	02	02	02	01	09
08	03	03	02	03	03	14	08	01	02	02	02	01	08
09	02	02	02	01	02	09	09	02	03	03	02	03	13
10	03	03	03	03	03	15	10	03	03	03	03	03	15
11	03	03	04	03	03	16	11	01	02	01	03	02	09
12	02	01	01	02	01	07	12	02	01	01	02	02	08
13	02	02	02	03	03	12	13	02	02	02	03	02	11
14	02	02	01	03	03	11	14	01	01	01	01	01	05
15	01	01	01	02	01	06	15	03	03	03	03	03	15
16	03	03	02	03	03	14	16	01	01	01	02	01	06
17	01	02	02	01	02	08	17	02	03	02	03	03	13
18	03	02	03	02	03	13	18	01	01	01	02	01	06
19	02	02	01	03	03	11	19	01	02	01	02	02	08
20	03	03	03	03	03	15	20	02	03	03	03	02	13
$\sum X_E$						227	$\sum X_C$						204
X_E						11.35	X_C						10.20

Table 82: scores of both groups in the speaking section of the first test

N = number of subjects

F= fluency

T.A= task achievement

X =the average of scores

A= accuracy

IC= interactive communication

$\sum X$ =the sum of scores

P= pronunciation

The two tables above (81 and 82) reported that the experimental group in both tests (listening and speaking) attained more progress than the control group. The sum of scores shown in the tables proves the over scoring of the experimental group (**207 Vs 183** in listening test and **227 Vs 204** in the speaking test). The difference in the means will clearly reveal the experimental group progress.

Tests groups	Listening comprehension test	Speaking test
Experimental group	10.35	11.35
Control group	09.15	10.20
Difference in the means	01.20	01.15

Table 83: means of scores on the first test of both groups

What made the experimental group gained more scores than the control group in the first listening and speaking tests was the exposure to the authentic language via L.L equipments (headset) which guaranteed the acoustic privacy and clarity of the sound. In fact, listening to any discourse using headset offers the listener the ability to grasp most of the text features (vocabulary and pronunciation), discriminate between sounds and recognise the missing words. It also helps the listener remember and recall important utterances and ideas. Listening via L.L outside speaker may result in unclear, distorted, bad reception and discrimination of sound patterns, hence finding difficulties in remembering and retrieving the missing words or sentences. Therefore, the control group encountered difficulties especially when dealing with while-listening phase (filling the chart) and post listening (multiple choice questions); the two listening stages requires good hearing medium to achieve successful comprehension of the discourse and be able to answer appropriately.

As far as the speaking practice is concerned, the experimental group, again, recorded numerically higher than the control group simply because of the appropriate language input they had received in the listening section. This later provided the subjects of the experimental group with more essential lexis and vocabulary pattern, appropriate pronunciation and finally better intercommunication. Thus, good information and linguistic inputs produced speaking performance and oral output.

5. OBSERVATION GRID № 02

Topic: communicating

Source: CAE listening and speaking skills –unit 04- (adaptation)

Laboratory procedure: Audio-Active-Compare (listen-respond-record)

5.1 LISTENING SECTION

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following:

- Interpreting context: identifying the identity and role of the speakers, inferring relationships and attitudes from the tone of voice and the type of language used.
- Listening for details and main ideas
- understanding the general meaning of the discourse

Pre-listening phase: (10 minutes)

Strategy: matching technique

In this activity, students were given statements said by different speakers talking about different means of communication. Then, the teacher asked them to match each statement with the right speaker and the suitable mean of communication. The activity aims at making students ready to listen to the passage and expect what the recording is going to be about, not to mention activating their schematic knowledge.

While-listening phase: (20 minutes)

Strategy: writing the tape script

before getting students listen to the passage, the teacher recorded the extract for each student in his own tape-recorder in which he/ she could have a total control over the equipment i.e. they could have the capability of self-pacing and retracing (stop the tape, rewind it and play any part). After having a copy of the listening extract in each student's tape recorder, they were asked to write down the whole script. The discourse was about a message on an answer phone (a mean of communication). Students were allowed to work in pairs.

As far as the control group is concerned, they were given the same listening passage played with Audio-Active L.L procedure i.e. there was no control over the equipment (no

retracing or self-pacing). The teacher played the recording from the console three (03) times using pauses at the end of each sentence so that students could have sufficient time for writing the whole script. As the time of the extract was short (02 minutes), the teacher was playing it whenever he was asked to do so.

Post-listening phase:

Strategy: imitation of a model

As a follow up activity, the post listening was a kind of speaking skill integration. After writing down their scripts on their worksheets, students were asked to record the passage with their voices in an attempt to imitate the model. Students' versions of the "message on an answer phone" were captured for analysis and assessments. The control group's subjects were asked to imitate the model orally in front of the class. Both groups' scores are displayed in the table below.

Experimental group					Control group						
N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A	N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A		
01	02	05	03	10	01	04	08	03	15		
02	02	03	03	08	02	02	04	02	08		
03	04	05	04	13	03	03	02	02	07		
04	02	03	02	07	04	02	03	04	09		
05	03	05	03	11	05	02	03	02	07		
06	02	03	02	07	06	03	03	03	09		
07	04	06	04	14	07	02	02	02	06		
08	03	05	02	10	08	01	02	02	05		
09	03	05	03	11	09	04	05	03	12		
10	02	05	02	09	10	02	02	03	07		
11	03	04	02	09	11	03	04	03	10		
12	03	07	03	13	12	02	04	04	10		
13	04	07	04	15	13	02	02	02	06		
14	03	05	04	12	14	03	02	02	07		
15	03	05	03	11	1502	03	02	02	07		
16	03	04	03	10	16	02	01	02	05		
17	03	05	03	11	17	03	08	04	15		
18	01	03	03	07	18	04	04	04	12		
19	03	04	03	10	19	03	02	02	07		
20	03	03	02	08	20	02	08	04	14		
$\sum X_E$				206	$\sum X_C$				178		
X_E					10.3	X_C					8.90

Table 84: scores of both groups in listening section of the second test

5.2 SPEAKING SECTION

Strategy: telephoning

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following:

- listening and responding to reach agreement
- exchanging views and reporting decisions

Procedure:

Since the listening section was about the means of communication, the teacher decided to design a relating speaking task. The decision was “telephoning” since it represents a sort of communicating technique. Students were first asked to create their own telephone conversations and practice them as interactive speaking activity. They were then asked to record their versions on their own tape recorder (students’ booth is provided with two headsets which permit the process of pairing two students in one machine and practice telephoning).

In the other hand, the control group was required to practice telephone conversations too, but they were asked to act them out in front of the class.

Scores of both groups are shown in the table below.

Experimental group							Control group						
N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average	N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average
01	02	01	01	02	01	07	01	03	02	02	03	03	13
02	02	02	02	02	01	09	02	02	01	01	02	02	08
03	03	04	03	03	02	15	03	01	01	01	02	01	06
04	02	02	01	02	02	09	04	03	03	02	02	01	11
05	02	02	02	02	03	11	05	01	01	01	02	01	06
06	01	02	02	02	02	09	06	02	02	02	01	01	08
07	03	03	03	03	04	16	07	01	01	02	01	01	06
08	02	02	02	02	02	10	08	02	02	01	01	01	07
09	03	03	02	03	02	13	09	02	02	02	02	02	10
10	02	01	02	02	02	09	10	01	01	01	02	02	07
11	01	02	02	02	02	09	11	02	02	03	02	02	11
12	03	03	02	03	03	14	12	03	03	02	02	02	12
13	03	03	02	03	03	14	13	02	02	01	02	02	09
14	02	02	03	03	02	12	14	01	01	02	01	02	07
15	02	02	02	02	03	11	15	01	02	01	02	02	08
16	01	01	02	01	02	07	16	01	01	01	01	02	06
17	02	02	02	02	02	10	17	03	04	03	03	03	16
18	01	01	01	02	02	07	18	03	02	02	02	03	12
19	02	01	02	02	01	08	19	02	02	01	01	02	08
20	01	02	02	01	02	08	20	03	03	03	03	03	15
ΣX_E						208	ΣX_C						186
X_E						10.40	X_C						9.30

Table 85: scores of both groups in the speaking section of the second test

N = number of subjects

F= fluency

T.A= task achievement

X =the average of scores

A= accuracy

IC= interactive communication

ΣX =the sum of scores

P= pronunciation

Again, the experimental group scored higher than the control group in both tasks of the second test (**206 Vs 178** in listening and **208 Vs 186** in speaking).

The difference in the means will show a clear picture of the experimental group over scoring.

Tests groups	Listening comprehension test	Speaking test
Experimental group	10.30	10.40
Control group	08.90	09.30
Difference in the means	01.40	01.10

Table 86: means of scores on the second test of both groups

Experimental group progress in this test resulted from the facilities that A-A-C language laboratory procedure offers to students. Self-pacing and retracing allowed the subjects of the experimental group to work on their own pace and speed i.e. they offered them the capability to stop the tape, rewind it and replay any part they want. These facilities provided effective and appropriate listening, easy grasping of words and sentences, hence appropriate writing of the tape script. This resulted in a good imitation of a model in terms of pronunciation, stress and intonation. Repetition and imitation of a model enhance students' abilities in oral skills performance since "they rehearse all aspects of language from sound structures to the minutes change in tone of voice indicating attitudes and feelings" (Dakin: 1973. 119)

The over scoring of the experimental group in the speaking test was due to the effectiveness of "telephoning" technique in providing students with self-confidence via the psychological and acoustic privacy that the booth offers. Moreover, telephoning permits students to record their voices, listen to their performances and make appropriate feedback and corrections.

Whereas, acting out in front of the class (the technique that the control group had undergone) may create lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, hesitation and shyness which in turn affect students 'oral performance.

6. OBSERVATION GRID № 03

Topic: leadership

Source: CAE listening and speaking skills –unit 08-

Laboratory procedure: Audio-Active (listen-respond)

6.1 LISTENING SECTION

Aim: the aim of this section is to focus on the following

- understanding text organization and following the thread of the passage by recognizing discourse markers
- listening for detail and main ideas

Pre-listening phase: (10 minutes)

Strategy: matching technique

In this activity, students were asked to match the given names of leaders with their photos. The aim was to activate students' schematic knowledge before exposing them to the listening passage. Activating students' schemata helps them to recognize and make sense of the discourse they are going to hear in the while-listening step. The activity was given to both groups.

While-listening phase: (15 minutes)

Strategy: fill in the gaps

Before exposing them to the listening text, students were informed that the passage is talking about leaders mentioned earlier in the pre-listening stage. The passage was an extract from a radio interview with a historian who is talking about the characteristics of famous leaders. The teacher, then, distributed worksheets and explained the task to students. The passage was played twice; the first listening was passive (listening to the whole text without doing any thing), in the second listening the passage was divided into sections and played with pauses to help students grasp the missing words.

Control group's students were given the same task and the same text; however, instead of using the taped material, they were invited to listen attentively to their teacher reading aloud the tape script (a non-native speaker).

Post-listening phase:

Strategy: true-false statements

As a follow up activity, learners were asked to distinguish the false statements from the true ones by putting “F” if the statement is false and “T” if the statement is true, and correcting the false ones. The aim of the activity is to check students ‘comprehension of the text and their retention capacities. The activity was given to both groups.

As far as the scoring procedure is concerned, the teacher gave a full mark to the full right answer and zero point for the wrong or uncompleted answer.

Both groups’ scores are displayed in the table below.

Experimental group					Control group				
N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A	N	Pre-listening	While-listening	Post-listening	A
01	04	04	00	08	01	05	05	03	13
02	03	01	03	07	02	03	01	04	08
03	05	08	03	16	03	05	05	02	12
04	05	04	02	11	04	05	04	02	11
05	04	01	03	08	05	05	05	03	13
06	05	04	01	10	06	04	01	01	06
07	05	04	04	13	07	04	03	03	10
08	05	08	04	17	08	05	06	02	13
09	04	04	02	10	09	05	02	02	09
10	05	04	03	12	10	04	03	01	08
11	05	05	02	12	11	04	02	02	08
12	05	06	03	14	12	04	01	01	06
13	05	04	02	11	13	03	02	01	06
14	03	01	03	07	14	05	00	01	06
15	05	02	01	08	15	02	01	02	05
16	04	01	01	06	16	05	04	02	11
17	05	05	02	12	17	02	02	02	06
18	05	05	04	14	18	05	03	01	09
19	05	04	01	10	19	05	03	02	10
20	04	06	02	12	20	05	04	03	17
$\sum X_E$				218	$\sum X_C$				187
X_E	10.90				X_C	9.35			

Table 87: scores of both groups in listening section of the third test

N = number of subjects **A**= average

X =the average of scores $\sum X$ =the sum of scores

6.2 SPEAKING SECTION

Strategy: role-play (work in pairs)

Aim: the section aims to focus on the following

- asking for explanation and clarification of ideas through turn-taking
- exchanging views and make critical judgements

Procedure:

After listening to the interview between the journalist and the historian talking about leaders and leadership, students in the speaking section were asked to perform their own interviews. The teacher had already distributed role-cards for all students and gave them adequate time to prepare and rehearse their interviews' roles before acting them out.

After preparation time, the teacher chose the volunteer and **less** shy pair to perform their interview. The teacher did so to encourage other students and make them feel confident and comfortable. During each pair acting out, the teacher was observing their performance and evaluating it in his assessment grid. This later based on testing the five language levels (fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, task achievement and interactive communication). The task was given to both groups.

Role-cards:

S1: you are the interviewer and your partner is your interviewee

S2: you are intended to be a very famous leader (make a simulation of any leader you know)

S1: ask **S2** about:

- his childhood and early family life
- How did he become a leader?
- What are his main achievements?
- What are his personality characteristics?....etc

S2: give explanation and clarification of all questions

Note: exchange roles to allow **S1** the opportunity to speak.

Both groups' scores are displayed below.

Experimental group							Control group						
N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average	N	F	A	P	T.A	IC	average
01	01	01	01	02	01	06	01	03	02	02	02	03	12
02	01	02	01	02	01	07	02	01	01	01	01	02	06
03	03	03	03	03	03	15	03	03	02	02	02	02	11
04	02	02	02	03	03	12	04	02	02	02	02	02	10
05	01	01	01	02	01	06	05	02	02	02	02	02	10
06	01	02	01	02	01	07	06	01	01	01	02	01	06
07	03	04	03	03	03	16	07	03	02	03	02	03	13
08	03	02	02	03	03	13	08	03	03	03	03	03	15
09	02	01	02	03	03	11	09	02	01	01	02	01	07
10	02	02	02	02	02	10	10	02	02	02	02	02	10
11	02	03	03	03	02	13	11	01	01	02	02	01	07
12	03	03	02	03	03	14	12	02	02	02	03	03	12
13	03	03	02	02	03	13	13	01	01	01	01	01	05
14	02	01	01	02	02	08	14	02	01	01	01	02	07
15	01	01	02	02	01	07	15	01	01	01	02	01	06
16	02	02	02	02	02	10	16	02	02	02	02	02	10
17	02	02	02	03	02	11	17	01	02	01	01	01	06
18	02	02	02	03	03	12	18	02	02	02	02	03	11
19	03	03	02	03	03	14	19	02	02	01	02	02	09
20	02	03	02	03	03	13	20	03	03	03	03	03	15
ΣX_E						218	ΣX_C						188
X_E						10.90	X_C						9.4

Table 88: scores of both groups in the speaking section of the third test

N = number of subjects

F= fluency

T.A= task achievement

X =the average of scores

A= accuracy

IC= interactive communication

ΣX =the sum of scores

P= pronunciation

The first look at both grids suggest that the sum of scores obtained by the experimental group is numerically higher than the one of control group (**218 Vs 187** in the listening test and **218Vs 188** in the speaking test).

To make a more detailed and clear description of the experimental group over scoring, the table below presents the difference in the means of the tests (listening and speaking).

Tests Groups	Listening comprehension test	Speaking test
Experimental group	10.90	10.90
Control group	09.35	09.40
Difference in the means	01.55	01.50

Table 89: means of scores on the third test of both groups

According to the results displayed in the table above, we notice that the experimental group scored higher than the control group. Now, we are in a position to claim that this progress is a result of the laboratory instructional treatment. The exposure to the authentic listening text using laboratory equipments allowed the subjects of the experimental group to receive clear, undistorted and well uttered sounds which made them grasp the nuances of speech. Therefore, they obtained better results than the other subjects who received the listening passage via their teachers' loud reading with all his idiosyncrasies.

7. SUMMARY OF THE TESTS' RESULTS

To have a clear idea about the pre-test and the three tests scores, the following table sums up all the tests and their scores.

Tests	Pre-test	Test 01	Test 02	Test 03
Experimental group	11.70	10.35	10.30	10.90
Control group	11.25	09.15	08.90	09.35
Difference in the means	0.45	01.20	01.40	01.55

Table 90: means of scores on the pre-test and the three tests of listening

Tests	Pre-test	Test 01	Test 02	Test 03
Experimental group	10.55	11.35	10.40	10.90
Control group	10.20	10.20	09.30	09.40
Difference in the means	0.35	01.15	01.10	01.50

Table 91: means of scores on the pre-test and the three tests of speaking

The table (90) clearly shows that the slight difference in means scored in the pre-test of listening started to increase just after the first test (from **0.45** to **01.55**). This significant progress of the experimental group proved the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing students' aural skills

Experimental group over scoring in the speaking tests reinforce the assumption which claims that most effective oral performances usually produced by learners who experienced success in listening comprehension tasks. The inappropriate ways of listening which the control group had experienced led to create psychological and situational obstacles to communicate and interact while speaking practice.

Generally speaking, the real language experience (listening in the language laboratory) which the experimental group had been treated with made them gain progress over the control group in all listening and speaking tests, hence improved their aural-oral proficiency level.

7.1 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Any statistically based research requires picturing how the subjects performed on each test by means of “descriptive statistics” and “graphic representations” of all the performances. It is an attempt to “understand the logic behind experimental research in which the researcher makes claims about an entire population based on data obtained from a sample of that population” (D. Nunan: 1999.28).

To start with, then, it is necessary to calculate the frequency (it indicates how many students achieved the same score in the same task). Frequency distribution of the listening and speaking tests (the arrangement of score values from high to low and the frequency of each score value) is displayed in the following table.

Experimental group		Control group	
Score “Xe”	Frequency “F”	Score “Xc”	Frequency “F”
04	00	04	01
05	01	05	04
06	03	06	09
07	07	07	08
08	09	08	11
09	05	09	06
10	11	10	10
11	12	11	05
12	11	12	09
13	06	13	04
14	05	14	04
15	04	15	06
16	03	16	00
17	01	17	01
Sum of “F”	N= 78	Sum of “F”	N= 78

Table 92: frequency distribution of both groups’ score values in the listening tests

The following points can be deduced from the table:

- the score values range from **04** to **17**
 - 53 scores > 10
 - 25 scores < 10
- } The experimental group
- 39 scores > 10
 - 39 scores > 10
- } the control group

To represent the frequency distribution of the listening tests’ score values in a form of a graphic representation, a histogram form can be used

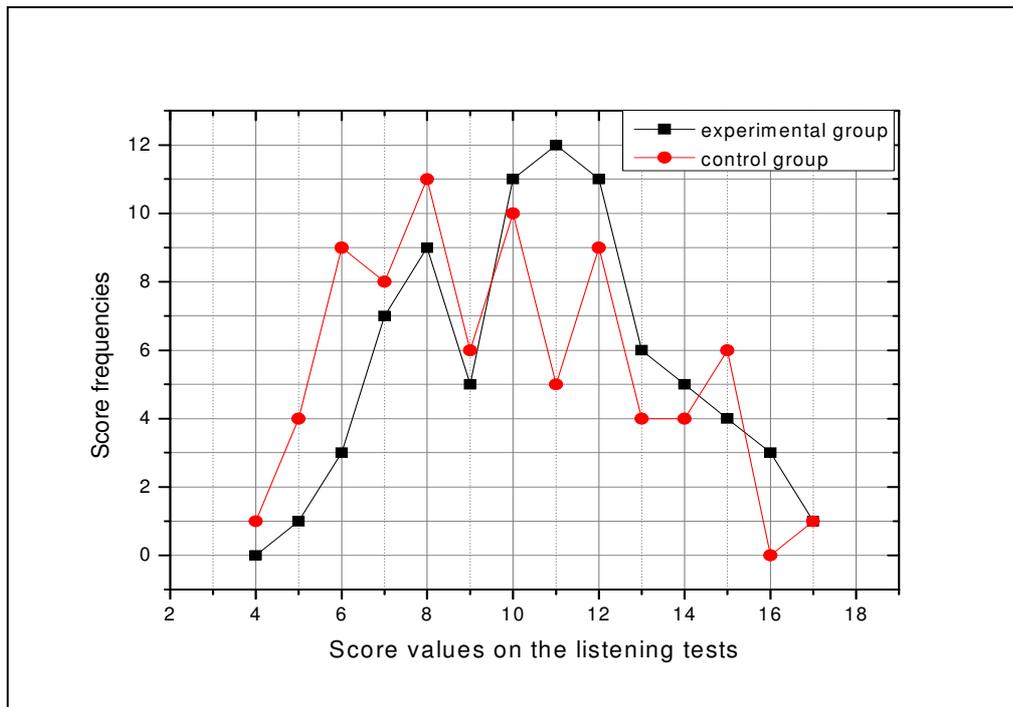


Figure 08: frequency polygon for the listening tests of both groups

The frequency histogram clearly indicates how the values of scores 8, 10, 11 and 12 are more frequent in the experimental group, while the experimental group recorded 6, 8, 10 and 12 as the more frequent scores in the listening tests.

Now, let's have a look at the frequency distribution of score values in speaking tests

Experimental group		Control group	
Score “Xe”	Frequency “F”	Score “Xc”	Frequency “F”
05	00	05	02
06	03	06	11
07	09	07	09
08	07	08	10
09	12	09	07
10	08	10	10
11	06	11	08
12	06	12	06
13	07	13	04
14	07	14	02
15	09	15	06
16	02	16	01
Sum of “F”	N= 76	Sum of “F”	N= 76

Table 93: frequency distribution of both groups’ score values in the speaking tests

The following results revealed from the table:

- the score values of speaking tests range from **05** to **16**
 - 45 scores > 10
 - 31 scores < 10
- } The experimental group
- 37 scores > 10
 - 39 scores > 10
- } the control group
- The experimental group recorded 07, 09 and 15 as the most frequent scores
 - The control group recorded 06, 08 and 10 as the most frequent scores

The following frequency polygon shows clearly the above results.

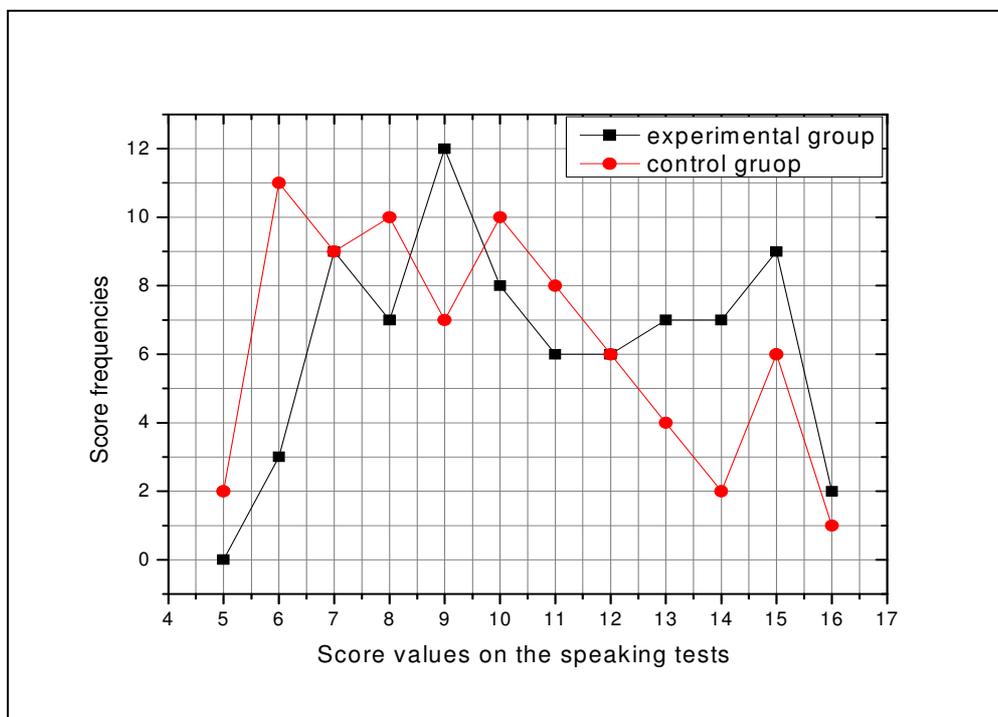


Figure 09: frequency polygon for the speaking tests of both groups

8. SETTING UP STATISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to determine the differences between the experimental and control group in a detailed statistical picture, certain procedures should be taken which are those related to the mean, standard deviation, degree of freedom, observed statistics, critical values and hypotheses testing. We do so to see “to what extent the data are similar and the degree to which data differ” (Nunan: 1999.28)

8.1 NECESSARY CALCULATIONS FOR LISTENING TESTS

The mean:

The mean is the most frequently employed measure of similarity. It is symbolized in writing by \bar{X} . The formula of this statistic is as follows

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Fx}{N}$$

\bar{X} : mean **Fx**: score frequency N: number of scores Σ : the sum

The standard deviation

The standard deviation **SD** measures the dispersion (the extent to which a set of scores varies in relation to the mean). The formula of this statistic is as follows

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum Fx^2 - \bar{X}^2}{N}} \text{ (The square root of the variance } S)$$

The calculation of the mean and standard deviation is presented below.

Score “Xe”	Frequency “F”	Frequency score Fx	Frequency score Fx ²
04	00	00	00
05	01	05	25
06	03	18	108
07	07	49	343
08	09	72	576
09	05	45	405
10	11	110	1100
11	12	132	1452
12	11	132	1584
13	06	78	1014
14	05	70	980
15	04	60	900
16	03	48	768
17	01	17	289
	N= 78	ΣFX=836	ΣFX²=9544

Mean

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Fx}{N} = \frac{836}{78} = 10.71$$

$\bar{X} e =$ **10.71**

Variance :

$$S^2e = \frac{\sum Fx^2}{Ne} - \bar{X}e^2 = \frac{9544}{78} - (10.71)^2$$

$$= 122.35 - 144.70$$

$$= -7.46$$

$S^2e = 7.46$

Standard deviation :

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum Fx^2 - \bar{X}^2}{N}} = \sqrt{7.64} = 2.76$$

SDe= 2.76

Table 94: calculating the mean and the standard deviation of listening test scores obtained by the experimental group

Score “Xc”	Frequency “F”	Frequency score FX	Frequency score FX ²
04	01	04	16
05	04	20	100
06	09	54	324
07	08	76	456
08	11	88	704
09	06	54	468
10	10	100	1000
11	05	55	605
12	09	108	1296
13	04	52	676
14	04	56	748
15	06	90	1350
16	00	00	00
17	01	17	289
	N=78	ΣFX=774	ΣFX²=8086

Mean

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Fx}{N} = \frac{774}{78} = 9.92$$

$$\bar{X}_c = 9.92$$

Variance :

$$S^2_c = \frac{\sum Fx^2}{N_c} - \bar{X}e^2 = \frac{8086}{78} - (9.92)^2$$

$$= 103.66 - 98.40$$

$$S^2_c = 5.26$$

Standard deviation :

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum Fx^2 - \bar{X}^2}{N}} = \sqrt{5.26} = 2.29$$

$$SD_c = 2.29$$

Table 95: calculating the mean and the standard deviation of listening test scores obtained by the control group

Having a clear idea about the differences between the two groups’ descriptive statistics, the following table shows the comparison between them.

Descriptive statistics	Experimental group	Control group	The difference
Mean	10.71	09.92	0.79
Standard deviation	02.76	02.29	0.47

Table 96: comparing the means and standard deviation of both groups in the listening tests

According to the results revealed in the above table, one can argue that laboratory-based language teaching (the treatment which the experimental group experienced) gave its expected results. The difference in the means of the listening tests (0.79) is an evidence of the experimental group better performance. The difference of (0.47) in the standard deviation confirmed the assumption which claims that the good results obtained by the experimental group are due to the laboratory instructional treatment.

The t-test:

To check our assumption, the appropriate testing and statistical procedure is the **t-test** which is considered to be the most suitable test to compare two means. To calculate the **t** value, the following formula needs to be applied:

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_{N_1 + N_2} &= \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2 + N_2S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}} \\
 &= \frac{(10.71 - 9.92)\sqrt{(78 + 78 - 2)78 \times 78}}{\sqrt{(78 \times 2.76^2 + 78 \times 2.29^2)(78 + 78)}} = \frac{0.79\sqrt{154 \times 6048}}{\sqrt{(594.17 + 406.03)(156)}} \\
 &= \frac{0.79 \times 967.95}{\sqrt{1003.2 \times 156}} = \frac{764.68}{395.59} = 1.93
 \end{aligned}$$

t=1.93

Degree of freedom:

Following (J. D. Brown: 1995.167), “the degree of freedom (*df*) for the t-test of independent means is the first sample size minus one plus the second sample size minus one”. It helps to find the critical value for “t”.

$$\begin{aligned}
 df &= (N_1 - 1) + (N_2 - 2) \\
 &= (20 - 1) + (20 - 1) = 38 \\
 df &= 38
 \end{aligned}$$

Alpha decision level:

“The language researcher should once again set the alpha decision level in advance. The level may be at $\alpha < .05$ or at the more conservative $\alpha < .01$, if the decisions must be more sure” (Brown: 1995.159).

In this statistical test of listening comprehension, we decided to set alpha at $\alpha < .05$ which means only 05% chance of error can be tolerated. The test is directional (tailed) because there is a theoretical reason and a sound logic to expect one mean to be higher than the other (laboratory instructional treatment)

Critical value:

Since alpha is set at $\alpha < .05$ for a one-tailed decision, $df = 38$ and the corresponding critical value for “*t*”, in Fisher and Yates’ table of critical values, is **1.69**, then we get $t_{obs} > t_{crit} (1.93 > 1.69)$.

Hypothesis testing:

Now, we have collected the necessary information for testing our hypothesis.

<p>Statistical hypotheses: $H_0 : \overline{X}_E = \overline{X}_C$ $H_1 : \overline{X}_E > \overline{X}_C$</p> <p>Alpha level: $\alpha < .05$, one-tailed (directional) decision.</p> <p>Observed statistics $t_{obs} = 1.93$</p> <p>Critical statistic: $t_{crit} = 1.69$</p> <p>Degree of freedom: $df = 38$</p>
--

Table 97: information necessary for hypothesis testing

Since the observed statistic is greater than the critical value ($1.93 > 1.69$), the null hypothesis is rejected. Having rejected the null hypothesis, then the alternative

hypothesis H_0 is automatically accepted. This means that there is only 05% probability that the observed mean difference: $\overline{X_E} - \overline{X_C}$ (10.71 - 9.92) occurred by chance, or a 95% probability that it was due to other than chance factors.

8.2 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The interpretation of results should have two parts: significance and meaningfulness. The results revealed that the two means in listening tests are significantly different: $\overline{X_E} - \overline{X_C}$ (10.71 - 9.92). The null hypothesis H_0 is rejected at $P < .05$ which means that we are 95% sure that the relationship between the dependent variable "D" (the listening tests' scores) and the independence variable "I D" (laboratory instructional treatment) did not occur by chance. It was due to the role of laboratory-based language teaching which contributed in developing and improving experimental group subjects' listening skill. In fact, the notion of significance does not certainly suggest meaningfulness. Therefore, we are in a position where we can not over interpret the results in terms of meaningfulness even though they are statistically significant.

8.3 NECESSARY CALCULATIONS FOR THE SPEAKING TESTS

Score "Xe"	Frequency "F"	Frequency score FX	Frequency score FX ²
05	00	00	00
06	03	18	108
07	09	63	441
08	07	56	448
09	12	108	972
10	08	80	800
11	06	66	726
12	06	72	864
13	07	91	1183
14	07	98	1372
15	09	135	2025
16	02	32	512
	N=76	ΣFX=819	ΣFX ² =9451

Mean

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Fx}{N} = \frac{819}{76} = 10.77$$

$$\bar{X}_e = 10.77$$

Variance :

$$S^2_e = \frac{\sum Fx^2}{Ne} - \bar{X}_e^2 = \frac{9451}{76} - (10.77)^2$$

$$= 124.35 - 115.99 = 8.36$$

$$S^2_e = 8.36$$

Standard deviation :

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum Fx^2 - \bar{X}^2}{N}} = \sqrt{8.36} = 2.89$$

$$SD_E = 2.89$$

Table 98: calculating the mean and the standard deviation of speaking test scores obtained by the experimental group

The mean and the standard deviation of the speaking test scores obtained by the control group are calculated in the following table.

Score “Xc”	Frequency “F”	Frequency score FX	Frequency score FX ²
05	02	10	50
06	11	66	396
07	09	63	441
08	10	80	640
09	07	63	567
10	10	100	1000
11	08	88	968
12	06	72	864
13	04	52	676
14	02	28	392
15	06	90	1350
16	01	16	256
	N=76	ΣFX=728	ΣFX ² =7600

Mean

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Fx}{N} = \frac{728}{76} = 9.57$$

$$\bar{X}_c = 9.57$$

Variance :

$$S^2_c = \frac{\sum Fx^2}{N_c} - \bar{X}e^2 = \frac{7600}{76} - (9.57)^2$$

$$= 100 - 91.58 = 8.42$$

$$S^2_c = 8.42$$

Standard deviation :

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum Fx^2 - \bar{X}^2}{N}} = \sqrt{5.26} = 2.29$$

$$SD_C = 2.29$$

Table 99: calculating the mean and the standard deviation of speaking test scores obtained by the control group

The means and standard deviation of both groups are compared in the following table

Descriptive statistics	Experimental group	Control group	The difference
Mean	10.77	09.57	01.20
Standard deviation	02.89	02.90	0.01

Table 100: comparing the means and standard deviation of both groups in the speaking tests

The differences of means and standard deviation in speaking tests are again another statistical evidence to claim that laboratory-based language teaching resulted in better outcomes of oral performances.

T-test:

As the t-test is the statistical procedure used to check the validity of any comparison-based experiment, then one should apply it in order to get the observed statistics which guarantee the validity of the speaking test.

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_{N_1 + N_2} &= \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2)\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2 + N_2S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}} \\
 &= \frac{(10.77 - 9.57)\sqrt{(76 + 76 - 2)76 \times 76}}{\sqrt{(76 \times 2.89^2 + 76 \times 2.90^2)(76 + 76)}} = \frac{1.2\sqrt{150 \times 5776}}{\sqrt{(634.75 + 639.16)(152)}} \\
 &= \frac{1.2 \times 930.80}{\sqrt{1273.91 \times 152}} = \frac{1116.96}{440.03} = 2.35
 \end{aligned}$$

t= 2.53

Hypothesis testing:

To test our hypothesis, the following statistical data required to be stated:

Alpha level: is set at $\alpha < .01$, one-tailed (directional) decision

Observed statistics: $t_{obs} = 2.53$

Critical statistic: $t_{crit} = 2.43$

Degree of freedom: $df = 38$

We notice that the observed value of “t” is greater than the critical value (2.53 > 2.43), hence the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected at $P < .01$ and the alternative hypothesis H_1 is

accepted. This indicates that there is only 01% probability that the observed mean difference occurred as a fluke, or 99% probability that it was due to factors other than chance.

8.4 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The significance of the speaking tests' results is statistically proved i.e. $\overline{X_E} > \overline{X_C} = 10.77 > 9.57$ and the H_0 rejected at $P < .01$ which indicates that the researcher is 99% sure about the relationship between the dependent variable (score tests) and the independent variable (laboratory instructional treatment). However, meaningfulness of the experiment results can be associated with many factors such as: the language level of the teaching material (does it really fit the linguistic level of second year students?), the type of tasks and activities (their difficulty), the allotted time for both groups to accomplish the test, the class psychological atmosphere (motivation, teacher and students' mood)...etc.

All these factors and others may have things to do with the speaking tests' results.

“You have not finished your critical reading just because you have found a study that was correctly and logically conducted from a statistical point of view” (J. D. Brown: 1995.170).

CONCLUSION

During the three months of the experimental treatment, our second year students received laboratory-based language instruction in a serious attempt to enhance their aural-oral skills. The progress of the experimental group in all the listening and speaking tests has proved the effectiveness of language laboratory as an instructional tool in improving students' level of language proficiency. The statistical validity of tests' results put us in a better position to confirm the hypotheses set for the research study which claim that the exposure to the authentic oral language in language laboratory can significantly be a real language experience that helps EFL learners at the university level to develop and reinforce their listening and speaking skills.

It is worth-while mentioning that the interdependence of listening and speaking tasks in the language laboratory during the experiment cancelled the common assumption about the passive nature of listening skill. It has been revealed that learners who experienced success in listening comprehension are those who scored better in speaking performance.

Finally, we are now convinced, more than any time, that taped laboratory material is still one of the most convenient means to reinforce students' aural-oral abilities, even though it is widely considered to be out of teaching fashion.

CHAPTER VI

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Depending on the results obtained from the questionnaires and the experimental study, the researcher tries in this chapter to suggest some pedagogical implications concerning the role of laboratory-based language teaching in developing students' aural-oral skills. However, one should bear in mind that adequate care has been taken to avoid any sort of overgeneralization of results simply because the current study was conducted with a small representative sample. The following teaching recommendations are set out to reevaluate the effectiveness of language laboratory in teaching listening and speaking skills.

1. A REVISED STRATEGY FOR LABORATORY WORK PRACTICE

Language laboratory has come to be an invaluable teaching aid to the language learner and teacher as well. It represents the single largest investment of audio resource in education. In spite of all the critical judgments on its effectiveness, it has never been an issue whether to use it or not but it has been a question of how.

Teachers' mastery and control over language laboratory's functions and procedures determine its instructional validity, and their lack of mastery should not be an excuse for them to under-use it. In fact, teachers' questionnaire revealed that although our department provides a number of language laboratories, they are still under-used. R. R. Jordan (2000. 350) claims that: "this is wasteful of an excellent resource that can be used either for group sessions or for self access/library purposes".

All along the language laboratory's history, research studies have been conducted to prove its effectiveness as an educational technology in the language classroom, regardless to the questions they are intended to answer. However, "the effectiveness of laboratory work is still something that requires experimental investigation" (Dakin: 1973. 165).

As any researcher is supposed to trust his own experiments' findings to draw his suggestions up, we are, then, attempting to give a sort of help and advice for both teachers and learners showing them how they could use the language laboratory most fully.

1.1 PREPARATION

Teacher's good preparation is the key to laboratory work' success. It demands an insightful vision to every step of the laboratory practice process. Each step should be previously planned, studied and clearly determined in terms of aims, purposes and procedures.

In fact, good preparation prevents the teacher from getting into such an instructional mess. It really guarantees a smooth learning process where no gaps or accumulation are allowed. Language laboratory preparation starts from the teacher's awareness of the instructional tool's value he is exploiting. Moreover, he can take into consideration the following points.

- Before carrying out any task with students, the teacher must experience it himself first to find out if it really works as it is intended to. This step allows him to establish what is suitable and appropriate for students and improve his way of teaching as well. In this sense Dakin (1973. 02) declares that: "our success in teaching is dependent on our understanding of learning".
- If *you* are supposed to teach in the language laboratory, *you* are required to establish *your* own laboratory library. It should contain all teaching material needed for laboratory practice (cassettes, worksheets, work and practice books...). The lab material should be classified into categories according to its function (listening for comprehension, pronunciation practice, grammar, vocabulary, speaking, drill patterns...etc) and according to its level (elementary, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced). This classification of laboratory material does certainly facilitate and organize the whole lab teaching/ learning process.
- A clear determination of the course aims put the teacher in a good position to achieve his target in terms of the linguistic input and output he wishes to submit to his students.
- The teacher must always bear in mind that most laboratory courses are designed to teach and improve aural-oral skills rather than to test them.
- Having the 'right' or 'wrong' choice of teaching material depends on the teacher's insightful vision and his well thought decision. He gets the right choice if he selects what fits his students' needs, interest and level, and of course vice versa.
- Finally, try to use the course planning sheets as much as possible to be a guidance of your work. You can write down the course title, allotted time, the reference (the book and its cassette)...etc.

1.2 PRE-LAB PRACTICE' STEP

This step is very important in spite of its short duration. It provides students self-confidence and comfort. It may take up to 5-10 minutes; yet it determines the success of the whole time work. Pre- lab practice step is intended to:

- Make students fully aware of the current task (what to learn, how to accomplish it and what should be focused on).
- Create motivation, interest and feeling of security, so that the student feels engaged and then can perform appropriately the task.
- Make students fully aware that the listening task is closely associated with the speaking task so that they will make efforts to exploit the listening text to the full.

1.3 WHILE-LAB PRACTICE STEP

As every thing is ready to begin your task in the language laboratory, follow these instructions to help you and guide your work.

- Any lab practice should cover the two components of communication (listening and speaking) and they should be interdependent.
- The listening task should contain the three main stages: pre, while and post-listening in order to make the most of the listening extract.
- Make clear, precise and well-formed instructions to avoid any sort of misunderstanding. All your students are supposed to accomplish appropriately the task. Your help, guidance and monitoring is quite necessary from time to time to deal with students' serious difficulties. The appropriate use of the console switches will certainly guarantee the success of your monitoring and supervision.
- Remind your students that looking at the script (if it is available) while listening to the passage changes the purpose of the task from listening to reading.
- Listening carefully to the recording is the key basis to the success of the task achievement.
- In the case of speaking practice, inform your students that their booths are equipped with a tape-recorder in which he can listen to a pre-recorded lesson and record his own voice at the same time. Hence, any student should made aware that to speak up in a clear, strong voice when doing "imitation of a model" or recording his own performance version. "The front and the sides of the booth have been constructed of sound-absorbing materials so nobody else will hear your voice" (Stack: 1971. 270).

- Bear in your mind that "Audio-Active-Compare" lab procedure is the students' space for speaking practice, therefore, you must frequently control and check the lab equipment for their suitability and well-functioning.

1.4 POST-LAB PRACTICE STEP

This step is said to be the checkpoint of your students' degree of understanding. After finishing the task (listening or speaking), ask your students about their reaction, impression and general comments of the material being presented in terms of difficulty, interest and motivation. You can hold a small debate at the end of the lab-practice to submit further advice and feedback concerning the task being performed. In this step, you can seize the opportunity to give the headlines of the coming course to prepare them in advance.

Post-lab practice fosters the intercommunication between the teacher and his students i.e. they can share and discuss ideas, suggest their own tasks and give critical judgments concerning the current task and the method of work in general.

2. LABORATORY MATERIAL SELECTION

The present study tries to find out the appropriate way of exploiting laboratory material in order to develop and improve second year students' aural-oral skills. The selection of lab material should be built on well-thought criteria; many points can be taken into account (most of them are adapted from Stack: 1973. 76).

- The quality of the recording should be good, clear and free of hiss, background noise, sudden changes in volume and other distractions.
- The speakers should have pleasant and well-modulated voices; they also have to sound enthusiastic and interesting.
- Careful attention should be given to the speed of speech delivery (not too fast and not too slow).
- The content of the tape (dialogues, drills, interviews, stories...) must be properly constructed in terms of learners' conceptual and linguistic competence.
- The duration of extracts are supposed to be short in order not to feel bored and uncomfortable. The present study revealed that short extracts create motivation and interest in learners more than the long ones. If the listening extracts are long, the teacher, then, can divide it into sections and allow students to remove their headsets to rest their ears.

- Variety of laboratory material should be also stressed on. The teacher must frequently vary the type of recording to bring different speakers, accents and topics. Variety can range from simple pattern drill to dialogues, narration to pronunciation practice.

3. AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS INTEGRATION

The conventional language laboratories provided by the department of English at Biskra University are typically audio-based equipments; they allow only the use of audio-taped materials. Although they offer certain facilities that can not be found in a typical classroom, many language teachers saw that its failure to achieve 'perfect' effectiveness in teaching and learning is due to the absence of the 'visual potentiality'. This later can be defined in terms of video materials and computer programs.

In fact, modern language laboratories are equipped with "Dial-access Video". Stack (1971) claimed that:

"Dial switching may also be used in conjunction with video tape players located in the source room. This will permit a student to receive programs consisting of video taped visual material plus sound on the TV receiver located in his booth"

P. 15

This clearly shows the possibility of video integration in the language laboratory in order to add another vital dimension of language learning process (audio-visual aids). The use of video in L.L, as Harmer (2001. 282) declares, is "just listening with pictures".

Thus, if the conventional L.L in our department is equipped with "Dial-access Video", it will certainly offer extra advantages and facilities for both teacher and students especially those of paralinguistic features and visual clues (gestures and facial expressions...). Moreover, it demonstrates native speakers' cultural and social aspects of life both in audio and video forms. Providing language laboratory with video will certainly increase the level of motivation and interest in students since they "have a chance to see language in use as well as hear it" (Harmer: 2001. 282).

Modern labs are also equipped with computers; hence there is another possibility to add another facility to the conventional L.L. this will offer students the chance to study grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening to texts, practicing speaking via recording system device and practice writing with "word processor".

So, integrating language laboratory with video and computers will make it really a "perfect" teaching aid that can help students to improve their language skills especially aural-oral ones.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AURAL-ORAL SKILLS

The questionnaires used in the current study revealed that our second year students encounter serious learning problems in listening and speaking. The experimentation, which has been conducted to prove the effectiveness of laboratory materials in developing students' aural-oral skills, took into account the following considerations to hopefully overcome their learning barriers.

- Providing a real atmosphere conducive to the two skills and making students sense the purpose of listening or speaking.
- Creating interest and motivation became an urgent necessity when practicing listening. This vital skill requires students' full engagement to approach comprehension process. In this sense, Harmer (1998) says:

"Listening demands listener engagement, too. Long tapes on subjects which students are not interested in at all will not only be demotivating, but students might well 'switch off'.... Comprehension is lost and the listening becomes valueless"

P.98

Therefore, the teacher should give more attention to the subject of the listening tape i.e. it should meet the needs, the level and the interest of students. In fact, the same thing can be said about speaking tasks.

- Grading the tasks in terms of the three stages (pre, while and post) guarantees the involvement of students and keeps their concentration all along the task.
- Varying the style of work (individual, pair and group) may break the feeling of routine and let students discover their sharing potentialities. It makes them ready to exchange their ideas with their partners especially while speaking practice. Pair and group work encourage students to make their own evaluation and appreciation of the subject under study.
- The last consideration that can be mentioned is to keep the factor of interdependence between the two skills in each session of oral expression. It really

contributes in developing aural-oral skills especially when it is well thought and built.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we tried to suggest some pedagogical implications which we think they may contribute in helping oral expression' teachers to use appropriately the language laboratory as an educational aid in developing students' listening and speaking skills. We have found that it is the job of the 'good' teacher to exploit the provided teaching equipments and instructional tools to the full in order to hopefully achieve his teaching goal. In fact, the lack of experience and mastery could never be an excuse for the oral expression teacher to waste such a unique and invaluable teaching aid like language laboratory especially when it is equipped with video and computers. Therefore, he should look for real training and establish his own method that suits him to deal with his learners' aural-oral barriers.

Generally speaking, language laboratory with all the facilities it offers can stand as communicative medium for the teacher and his students if it is appropriately exploited.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

We carried out this study aiming at confirming or rejecting the hypotheses stated in the introduction which claimed that laboratory-based language teaching can be a real language experience for learners of English at the University level to develop and reinforce their listening and speaking skills.

Different research procedures were followed to test this hypothesis. At the very beginning, two kinds of questionnaires were administered to both teachers and students to obtain their standpoints and perspectives concerning the items under investigation. Besides, their barriers in dealing with language laboratory as a teaching aid and the difficulties they encounter in teaching/ learning aural-oral skills were also revealed. The analysis and interpretation of responses allowed us to establish for another significant research procedure which is the experimentation. The experimental study based on treating students with the introduced laboratory instructional material, then testing and evaluating their proficiency level's progress in listening and speaking. It really provided us the adequate evidence to set the ground for the pedagogical implications which we think can be helpful for the oral expression teacher to deal with these two skills in language laboratory.

These research procedures allowed us to draw up some points resulted from the questionnaires and the experimental study. To start with, students' difficulties in listening and speaking –as their teachers reported in their questionnaire- are due their less of practice and the lack of exposure to the language in its natural, spoken form. Teachers' lack of mastery and under use of the language laboratory functions inhibited them to make the most of it; so that they can help their students improve their aural-oral abilities. In the other hand, the experimentation revealed that the progress of the experimental group came as a natural result of the language exposure they receive during laboratory treatment.

Therefore, as a research requirement, we suggested some teaching implications aiming at "bringing the lab back to life" and giving reconsideration for the laboratory instructional material. What should be mentioned is the importance of listening-speaking interdependence in designing any laboratory task. The integration of audio-visual potentialities of video and computers with the language laboratory can make a "perfect and unique" teaching aid in the language classroom to effectively improve students' aural-oral skills.

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