

Integrated EFL Listening and Writing Skills of Secondary Stage

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Abstract

The current study was conducted to examine the attempt to integrate EFL listening and writing skills of secondary stage. The study adopted descriptive design in terms of involving an inductive exploration of the data to identify a list of integrated EFL listening and writing skills of secondary stage. To achieve the aim of the study, the researchers designed an integrated EFL listening and writing skills checklist. It was administered to specialized jury members of English Language Teaching (ELT) to determine the degree of importance of each skill on the checklist. Findings of the study showed that the integrated EFL listening and writing skills list would be adequate and appropriate to the secondary stage. In the light of the findings, the researchers recommend the use of the integrated EFL listening and writing skills list for the secondary stage.

Key words: integrated, EFL listening skills, EFL writing skills, secondary stage.

Introduction

Listening is one the most frequently used communication skill in English language, plays a significant role in daily social, educational, and cultural roles in students' lives. Although listening is a significant communication skill because it enables students to acquire other skills, it is rarely taught. In school, students are taught speaking, reading, and writing skills, but in general, there are a few courses devoted to the subject of listening (Woottipong, 2014).

Moreover, writing is a skill of the language main skills. According to (Jumba et al., 2015) who affirmed that learning to write in a foreign language is not merely learning to put down on paper the conventional symbols of the writing system that represents the utterances one has in mind, but it is also purposeful section and organization of ideas, facts and experiences. In order words aims at compactness and precision in expression as well as grammatical, idiomatic and orthographic accuracy.

In addition, listening is recognized as the basis for writing, especially in education settings. The integration of listening into writing enables students to develop both listening and writing together. The integration process regards listening as a perceptive skill that allows students to process the information and structure

their prior knowledge with another text in writing (Karagoz et al., 2017).

Listening Skills

Listening is a key for all effective communication. The ability to listen well is quite as important as the ability to speak well. Communication becomes effective only in partnership with a good listener. It is obvious that unless someone listens, any effort to communicate is lost. According to (Yang, 2015) who insists that it is well known that listening plays an important role in foreign language teaching. Listening is assuming more important place in foreign language teaching and learning process. Yet the present situation is far from satisfactory. Students are still frustrated and helpless against listening.

According to (Rost, 2011), listening is not only a skill in language performance, but also a critical means of acquiring a foreign language. It helps students to acquire good speaking habits as a result of the spoken English they have absorbed, and helps them to improve their pronunciation. Listening texts often provide excellent examples of functions such as apologizing, inviting and refusing. The process of listening, especially the bottoms-up and top-down model and the schema-building activities are also applicable

for reading. Applied linguistics recognizes that listening is the primary channel in which the students gain access to foreign language data. Therefore, it serves as incentive for acquisition.

Listening definition

Listening is seen as a passive activity. However, it's an active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand words and grammar, interpret attention, and retain information long enough to interpret it in the context or the setting where the exchange takes place (Martinez, 2010). Also, (Tyson, 2011) defines listening as a daily relational activity, a way of being with someone, and how one can make sense of what is happening in the world around. Additionally, (Barreto, 2017) mentions that listening is similar to reading that should possess knowledge of phonology, syntax, semantics and text understanding since there is an active listening going on and is critical for effective communication. When the listening skill is there, the process becomes more than just hearing because the brain has to understand and interpret the meaning of a conversation. As a result, the better of acquiring listening skills, the better ones get in workplace, family and society.

The importance of listening

Listening is vital in the language classroom as it provides input for the learner. Without understanding the input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin (Yildirim & Yildirim, 2016). (Hedge, 2015) states that listening is the most frequently used skill in everyday life situations compared to the other three skills since 45% corresponds to listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading and 9% to writing. Also, (Yavuz & Celik, 2017) affirm that listening has a great concern for language teaching theoreticians and teachers since it is regarded as one of the prior conditions of oral output in language learning process. Researchers assume that foreign language learning is quite similar to native language acquisition, hence listening is important in language learning in that listening is the primary tool of learners to create their understandings in target language and acquire the input. In general sense, language learning is a matter of input and output process.

Listening processes

Listening has many processes until achieve the listening properly. (Rost, 2011) mentions that there are four components of the listening process; hearing, sounds categorization, word recognition, and comprehension. Moreover, (Tyagi, 2013) elucidates

that the process of listening occurs in five stages; hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.

1- Hearing: It is referred to the response caused by wave of sounds which stimulating the sensory receptors of the ears; it is physical response; hearing is a perception of the wave of sounds (Walker, 2014).

2- Understanding: It helps to understand symbols that are seen and heard, then analyze the meaning of the stimuli which are perceived (Berne, 2004).

3- Remembering: Remembering is an important stage of listening because it means that an individual does not only receive and interpret a message, but also add it to the mind storage bank. In listening, the attention is selective, so too is the memory, what is remembered may be quite different from what is originally seen or heard (Schoeffler et al., 2014).

4- Evaluating: At this stage, the active listener weighs evidence, sorts fact from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message (Yavuz & Celik, 2017).

5- Responding: It requires that the receiver must complete the process through verbal and nonverbal feedback because the speaker

has no other way to determine if the message has delivered or not (Seferoglu & Uzakgoren, 2004).

Listening sub-skills

Teaching listening sub-skills is expected to have a positive effect on students' listening. According to (Brown, 2007) states that through a checklist of sub-skills learners can get a good idea of what their techniques need to cover in the domain of listening comprehension. For teachers who plan a specific technique or listening module, the list of listening sub-skills helps to focus on clearly conceptualize objectives. In terms evaluation listening sub-skills can become testing criteria.

However, (Ayuanita, 2013) declares that the micro and macro skills of listening should be taken into consideration, from processing tiny bits and pieces of language to strategic, interactive and complex skills of extended discourse. These two related taxonomies are indispensable to valid, reliable assessment of student's listening comprehension ability. The more closely can pinpoint exactly what want to assess, the more reliably draw the conclusions.

- **Listening for gist**

Listening for gist, also known as listening for global understanding is a basic comprehension similar to the one of skimming in reading. Therefore, understanding the gist in listening implies understanding a passage at a global level. In other words, it is not a mechanical process in which someone listens for each and every word. But rather involves listening selectively and processing the information in an oral passage at a holistic level with the listener establish the topic, the purpose, the main ideas, or the overall message of that oral passage (Nemtchinova, 2013). Most often the activity of listening for gist requires the listener to synthesize the main ideas or arguments being put forward in order to come up with the overall idea the speaker is attempting to get across (Lynch, 2009).

- **Listening for specific information**

In contrast to listening for gist, listeners frequently go to spoken text because they want specific details; they may listen to the news, only concentrating when the particular item that interests us comes up. The listeners in this case almost ignore all the other information until they come to the specific item they are looking for. In discussions about this skill is frequently referred to as scanning. This activity helps motivate students by raising their confidence and

self-esteem (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). It is a process that requires concentration and vocabulary management that are used to make emphasis on the important points of the text, so, bearing in mind that in this sub-skill the listener applies the top-down process, in view of activating the previous knowledge and the importance of the context. As such, at the time of listening, the students are able to recognize some information in an easy way and they are not out of context when listening (Galindo & Correa, 2021).

Writing Skills

Writing is an important skill for EFL student. Through writing students can express their ideas, feelings and thoughts by writing. Almost every part of a student's learning is documented in writing, such as assignments, papers, and even final examinations. Writing, on the other hand, is an activity that spans the spectrum of uses that students undertake in their daily use of language, such as drafting lists, writing letters or messages to friends, filling forms, taking notes, and filling out academic applications. Writing exercises must be meticulously planned in order to be successful. However, it needs to be developed during learning EFL.

Also, (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014) report that students in English as a foreign language need English writing skills ranging from a

simple paragraph and summary skills to the ability to write essays and professional articles. Therefore, it is of main concern of this study to look into digital writing as an approach in EFL writing instruction to aid student teachers in producing better essays. (Maarof & Murat, 2013) add that successful writing depends much on the execution of strategies in the process of writing. However, (Jumba et al., 2015) affirms that learning to write in a foreign language is not merely learning to put down on paper the conventional symbols of the writing system that represents the utterances one has in mind, but it is also purposeful selection and organization of ideas, facts and experiences. In other words aims at compactness and precision in expression as well as grammatical, idiomatic and orthographic accuracy.

Writing definition

(Harmer, 2007) defines writing as an integral part of a larger activity where the focus is on something else such as language practice, acting out or speaking. According to (Akkaya & Kirmiz, 2010), writing is a powerful mode of communication through which students learn to express themselves more effectively. In addition, (Brown et al., 2003) states that writing is the nature of the composing process of writing. Written products are often the result

of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally.

Also, (Harmer, 2004) defines writing as a process of discovery as well as a process of productivity. Writing can provide students with chance to work at their own pace, especially if it is done at home or without any limited time assigned by teachers and allows them to think the task over before producing language. (Archibald, 2001) gives a definition of writing as a complex skill saying writing is a skill that needs knowledge and proficiency in many areas. It is a multidimensional skill. It is a complex skill that results from the interaction of the writer's knowledge, experience, skills, and the cognitive demands of the task.

The importance of writing

The importance of writing for students is illustrated by (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014) who states that students in English as a foreign language need English writing skills ranging from a simple paragraph and summary skills to the ability to write essays and articles. Furthermore, (Graham & Harris, 2005) state that writing is critical to student success. It is the primary means by which students demonstrate their knowledge in school but even more important, it provides a flexible tool for gathering, remembering, and sharing

subject-matter knowledge as well as an instrument for helping students explore, organize, and refine their ideas about a specific subject.

(Klimova, 2013) affirms that writing is important because it's used extensively in education. If students don't know how to express themselves in writing, they won't be able to communicate well with teachers, peers, or just about anyone else. Much of scholastic communication is done in writing; assignments, proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are part of the daily life of a student.

In addition, writing has a unique position in language teaching since its acquisition involves a practice and knowledge of other three language skills, such as listening, reading and speaking. Moreover, it requires mastering of other skills, such as metacognitive skills. EFL Learners need to set an objective for their writing, plan it carefully, think over its layout and logical structure, and revise it. In the process of writing they have to use cognitive skills; they have to analyze their sources and then synthesize them in a compact piece of writing (Janikova, 2006; Zajicova, 2011). Writing can facilitate comprehension and reminiscing of the learning purpose (Graham et al., 2013). Also, (Nation & Newton, 2009) remark that written input can be a very authoritative factor to patronize speaking.

Writing processes

Writing involves such processes as generating ideas, discovering which to write, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating what is going to be written as well as what is written, and searching for language with which to express exact meaning (White & Arndt, 2001). However, (Capretz et al., 2003) assert writing process consists of a variety of stage; students pre-write, draft, revise, edit, publish and share.

In addition, (The University of Capella, 2021) reports that writing process consists of four steps to be followed by whoever want to write. The four steps writing process are:

- 1- Prewriting; in the first stage, the writer should consider the reader needs, determine his purpose of writing, and specify the field of what he shed lights upon, brainstorm his ideas regarding the intended topic.
- 2- Drafting; in the second stage, the writer should make a case and structure his evidence for that case.
- 3- Revising; in the third stage, the writer should put himself in the reader's shoes, rethink about the coherence and the cohesion and make sure of them, reconsider his way of

writing, and make the needed changes, which can enhance his work.

- 4- Publishing; in the last stage, the writer should edit and proofread to knock out the mistakes, to improve both coherence and cohesion, and to better the reliability of his work.

Whereas, (Hedge, 2005) admits that writing has a complex and recursive nature and the interaction between the different processes which may occur with each other. For this reason, (Brown, 2001) asserts that if the teaching of writing is divided into separate stages to reflect the various moments involved in the process of writing then perhaps many of the obstacles experienced by both students and teachers could be addressed.

Writing sub-skills

Writing has sub-skills namely; micro and macro skills which should be taught for EFL students. The first aspect of writing skill is its micro and macro components. (Brown, 2001) mentions that micro and macro skills for written communication focus on both the form of language and the function of language. Firstly, the macro skills of writing cover several important aspects as writing that topic sentence, main idea, supporting ideas, and summarizing. Meanwhile, the micro skills of writing cover some other aspects as producing an

acceptable core of words, using appropriate word order patterns, using acceptable grammatical systems, and etc. To add Brown's ideas on the micro and macro skills of writing, it can be said that writing involves several sub-skills. These skills of writing must be introduced in every stage of writing composition. This enables the students to get used to writing more effectively by using and practicing those skills of writing.

- **Content of writing**

The content of writing is a skill of the writing skills which cover some aspects of global or general topic. It is a basic writing sub-skill often opposed to the competence of organization of writing. In other words, it is not a mechanical process in which the students focus on the spelling, grammar, or paragraph structures (Cumming, 2016). Accordingly, the content of writing skills includes some sub-skills as; 1) writing a topic sentence in which a shift in focus from mere attention to the structural aspects of writing grammar rules and vocabulary items, mainly addressing intra-sentential relationships, to one attending to both structure and content, addressing inter-sentential as well as intra-sentential, relationships (Mirzaii, 2012), 2) writing the main ideas where the main idea is a general statement about the paragraph. It is a sentence that provides the subject for discussion. It is usually supported by a list of details (Van der Steen

et al. 2017), 3) summarizing the ideas that involves stating a work's thesis and main ideas simply, briefly, and accurately (Hacker, 2008).

- **Organization of writing**

The writing organization skill enhances the central idea and its development. When the order, structure and cohesion are strong, they enable the reader to move easily through the text (Tosuncuoğlu, 2018). Organization refers to relations based on theme, communicative purpose, and the cohesion of information. Organization, in simple words, refers to the sense relations among single textual units, i.e., propositions or sentences. It makes the texts semantically as well as logically consistent for readers (Irvin & Lennie, 2010). Accordingly, the organization of writing skills includes some sub-skills as; 1) structuring a three component paragraph where most paragraphs of writing follow the basic structure of introduction, body, and conclusion (Champa & Sasikumar, 2010), 2) supporting ideas with reasons and examples which support details to directly support the topic sentence (Wali & Madani, 2020), 3) accurate use of writing mechanics which include sentence structures, word choice, and grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spellings, all these mechanics make the writing easy to read (Connelly et al, 2006; Jones, 2004; Peverley, 2006).

Integrated Listening and Writing

Listening and writing are two main skills of the English language skills. However, a lot of researchers are interested in integration of language skills which is existed in pedagogy, (Gholami & Alinasab, 2017) consider integrated skills as conjunctive skills to be practiced in the classrooms in order to make teaching and learning truly communicative and authentic. On the other hand, (Hartley, 2007) states that in the field of academic writing, students cannot conceive of writing without considering reading, speaking and listening because the four skills are interrelated. Also, (Karagoz et al, 2017) mention that listening is a basic skill of language and it is an essential process at interpretation surroundings. Listening, as writing, is important in many cases such as school life and interfamilial communication. Thanks to listening; students acquire comprehension skills and expressing themselves in all areas.

However, various tasks are used in integrated listening and writing skills. The types of integrated listening and writing most commonly include summary tasks (Baba, 2009; Li, 2014; Wolfersberger, 2007; Yu, 2010). Summary tasks can vary in length from a one sentence summary of a text as in the Pearson Test of English Academic to much longer, more complex open-ended tasks

marked according to holistic or analytical criteria, as in the TOEFL iBT (Cumming, 2014, p. 224), or essay response tasks (Ascención Delaney, 2008), in which students are asked to summarise the input and provide a response. Alternatively, if several input texts are provided, students may be asked to provide a structure of the different input texts or to discuss opposing views of a problem presented in the input texts (Knoch & Sitajalabhorn, 2013, p. 301).

Furthermore, Sbai (2016) states that integrating the main language skills and sub-skills have many advantages; 1) language become not just an object of academic interest but a real means of interaction among learners, 2) skill integration allowed mutually supportive growth in all the main skills and the subsidiary skills, 3) in an integrated-skill format, language instruction promoted the learning of real content, rather than the discussion of language forms, 4) the learning of authentic content through language is highly motivating to students of all ages and backgrounds, 5) teachers are given the power and the opportunity to track students' progress in multiple skills at the same time.

Study Problem:

The problem of the study lies in teaching and learning EFL listening and writing skills separately. Hence, this study attempt to integrate EFL listening and writing skills of secondary stage.

Questions of the Study:

To tackle this problem, the present study attempted to find answers to the following main question:

- 1- What are EFL listening skills appropriate to secondary stage students?
- 2- What are EFL writing skills appropriate to secondary stage students?
- 3- What is integrated EFL listening and writing skills list that appropriate to secondary stage students?

Variables of the Study:

Independent variable: this refers to the treatment implemented in this study (integrated skills list)

Dependent variable: this refers to the secondary stage EFL listening and writing skills.

The Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to investigate the attempt to integrate EFL listening and writing skills of secondary stage.

Significance of the Study:

The current study is useful for the following:

1- Students: Improving secondary stage students' EFL listening and writing skills and encouraging them to be more positive and active in the learning process.

2- Teachers: This study enables teachers to integrate the secondary stage students' EFL listening and writing skills.

3- Curriculum designers: This study enables curriculum designers to modify, and enrich English language curriculum based integration of EFL listening and writing skills.

Tools and of the study:

The present study used the following tool:

1. A checklist of integratde EFL listening and writing skills.

Limitations of the Study:

The present study is limited to the following:

1. EFL listening and skills (listening for gist, listening for specific information) in the prescribed school text book "New Hello! English for Secondary Schools – Year 1 – Term 2".
2. EFL writing skills (content, organization) in the prescribed school text book "New Hello! English for Secondary Schools – Year 1 – Term 2".

The Writing Skills Checklist:

The checklist aimed at identifying the required EFL listening and writing skills for the first year of Al-Azhar secondary stage students. Validity of this checklist was used to determine the required EFL listening and writing skills of EFL the first year Al-Azhar secondary stage students. It includes 7 skills.

The checklist was submitted to a panel of jury members who indicated that the checklist was valid. Content of the checklist: Having reviewed the related literature of integrated EFL listening and writing skills and the required EFL listening and writing skills in the prescribed school text book "New Hello! English for Secondary Schools – Year 1 – Term 2", the researchers designed an integrated EFL listening and writing skills checklist and submitted it to specialized jury members of English Language Teaching (ELT) to determine the degree of importance of each skill on the checklist. However, the initial form of the integrated EFL listening and writing

skills checklist consisted of 3 main skills and 22 sub-skills. The jury recommended deleting some skills which was considered above the secondary stage EFL students' level. Furthermore, the jury recommended adding some skills which are important for the secondary stage EFL students.

Results:

The researchers took into consideration the jury suggestions and recommendations. As a result, they formed the final form of the integrated EFL listening and writing list which consisted of 7 skills divided into two main skills: 1) Content of writing based on listening for gist which includes 3 sub-skills; writing a topic sentence of the listening text, Writing the main ideas of the listening text, and Summarizing the ideas of the listening text. 2) Organization of writing based on listening for specific information which includes 4 sub-skills; structuring a three component paragraph according to the listening text, supporting ideas with reasons and examples based on the listening text, accurate use of sentence structures, word choice, and grammar, and accurate use of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and handwriting.

Discussion and Interpretation of the Study Findings:

According to the jury recommendation and suggestions the integrated EFL listening and writing skills in the checklist would be generally adequate and appropriate to its purpose. However, the checklist became valid, after it was modified according to the jury members' suggestions to contain (7) skills only. Thus, the questions of the study about the appropriate EFL listening and writing skills for secondary stage students were answered.

Recommendations of the study:

The results of the current study offer several recommendations for teachers and researchers who are eager to improve their instruction, as follows:

- EFL teachers should be trained on teaching integrated English language skills.
- EFL student should learn English language skills in integrated.
- Curriculum designers must take into their account the importance of the integrated English language skills in the syllables of different stages.

Suggestions for further Research:

Within the limitations of the present study as well as the findings that are achieved, the following areas are suggested for further research:

1. Integrated EFL listening and speaking skills to develop students' skills competence.
2. Integrated EFL reading and writing skills to develop students' skills competence. .
3. Developing other language skills among the first Al-Azhar secondary stage students through integrating the English language skills.

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