

**THE EFFECT OF A SUGGESTED UNIT BASED ON JIGSAW LISTENING
ON DEVELOPING ORACY SKILLS AMONG AUDITORY AND VISUAL
SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS**

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ABSTRACT:

This paper reports on a study that was conducted to empirically probe the effect of a suggested unit based on the jigsaw listening strategy on developing the secondary stage, second graders' oracy skills in English. In addition, the effect of learners' perceptual learning styles preferences was also examined. A pre / post design was adopted to assess and compare the effect of treatment on the performance of the jigsaw listening strategy group (experimental 2) and the traditional method group (experimental 1). 49 secondary stage, second graders in a general secondary school, participated in the seven weeks' training. Results of the study revealed significant differences in listening and speaking attainments between the two groups of the study. The Jigsaw listening strategy training was shown to have an enhancing effect on promoting EFL learners' oracy skills. Surprisingly, the learning styles were shown to have neither a main effect nor an interaction effect in this regard. The paper further discusses the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study findings.

INTRODUCTION:

Oracy skills refer to oral communication and comprehension skills. They comprise the ability to convey thoughts and ideas orally in a way that others understand (i.e., speaking), and the ability to understand what other say (i.e., listening). Oracy skills are critical skills as they underlie all verbal communication inside and outside a classroom. Individuals use them all the time, in and out, at home, at work, for entertainment or for academic purposes. The importance of oracy skills has been recurrently asserted in literature since they are the foundation of all language development and, the foundation of all learning. Riley et al, (2004), for example, pointed out that there is a positive correlation between oral language competence and the social and intellectual success. In this sense, the competence in and the comprehension of spoken language are the keys to being able to learn effectively and succeed in life.

Inside the classroom, oracy skills are the most often used skills (Oxford, 1993; Brown 1994; Ur, 1996; Rivers, 1981; Ellis, 1994). They are recognized as critical for functioning in an English language context, both by teachers and by learners (Florez, 1999). These skills are also logical instructional starting points when learners have low literacy levels or limited formal education. Indeed, they are the base for the other language strands. Therefore, oracy skills should be central components of the English language curricula for they provide the basis for growth in reading and writing abilities as well as vocabulary development. In this sense, the classroom should be a place where the use of spoken language is supported and where active listening is maintained and valued.

Despite the importance of oracy skills and the rewards they can bring to the foreign language learning process and learners, there is scarcity in research studies on developing EFL oracy skills. What is more, the interest they have received in teaching practices in the classroom in general (see Holbrook, 1983; Wilson, 1997; Burns, 1998; Bygat, 2001; Smith, 2003; McCarthy and O'Keeffe, 2004; Oxford, 1993; Turner, 1995) and within the

context of the current study (Egypt) in particular seems to be totally absent (see Ghanem, 1983; Celce-Murcia, 1988; Ebraheem, 1994; El-Matarawy; 1998; Habib, 1999; Hamed, 2003). Oracy skills, when compared with literacy skills, have not until recently been acknowledged as skills that need to be developed in their own right or to be taught systematically and explicitly. Instead, they were left to develop as part of the students' general education training on the assumption that the abilities to listen and speak are natural skills that automatically grow with age.

The importance of oracy skills has recently been recognized and the development of such pivotal skills started to attract the attention of teachers and researchers. Since then, many attempts have been made and serious efforts exerted to come to the best methods of teaching such demanding skills; to find out ways that appeal to both teachers and learners and make the teaching and learning of oracy skills easier, enjoyable and more interesting.

Cooperative learning is one of the most widespread fruitful instructional procedures in preschool through to graduate school levels, in all subject areas, in all aspects of instruction and learning in both systematic and nonsystematic learning situations (Slavin, 1992, 1995; Sharon & Sharon, 1992; Johnson, 1995; Johnson, et al., 2000). Research has recommended cooperative learning as being considerably effective in teaching a foreign language (Bassano & Christinson, 1988; Christinson, 1990; Kagan, 1995; Jacob et al., 1996; Hamed, 2003; Mohammed, 1999). Jigsaw listening is a cooperative learning strategy highlighted in literature as having considerable potentials for developing oracy skills by simultaneously teaching oral expression and auditory comprehension (Geddes & Sturtridge, 1979, 1980; Nunan, 1989; Hedge, 2000; Rixon, 1981; Rost, 1990). This strategy provides an ideal environment for students to learn, to understand and use the target language meaningfully. In this environment, students work in small groups in which each group has a role to play for the success of the whole groups; students cooperate with, support and seek assistance from peers. This environment fosters and encourages senses of responsibility, self-importance, cooperation and desire for achievement. Within such environment learners

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work more enthusiastically, free from anxiety and they start talking, discussing and negotiating with peers the task at hands. Therefore, language is used naturally since students are encouraged to attend and listen to others and express themselves while working interactively within groups.

In addition to the method of instruction, learners' learning styles represent another crucial factor that have a direct impact on how as well as the extent to which a learner is able to manage processing, understanding and producing a language. Learning style according to Reid (1995: X111) is "*individual's natural, habitual and preferred ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills*". In this sense, learners of different learning styles tend to approach language learning tasks differently and via different learning strategies. Vandergrift (1997), for example, pointed out that the strategies the learners used to comprehend the spoken messages were related to four factors: *learning styles, level of language proficiency, gender and listening ability*. With regard to the relationship between oracy skills and learning styles, a number of studies underscored the relationship between oracy skills and learners' learning style (see Sargen, Weaver and Kiewitz, 1997; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992; Vandergrift, 1997). Scarcella and Oxford, 1992:140), pointed out that "*listening is easier for auditory learners than for learners with visual or hands-on (kinesthetic) styles*".

Oracy skills, jigsaw listening, and learning styles, are the three constructs addressed in the current study in an attempt to broaden the scope of regarding, as well as provide new insights into teaching listening and speaking, not only in the Egyptian context, but in many other similar or different contexts as well.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Learning a foreign language means developing skills that allow learners to receive, process, and understand what people say in another language, and to communicate what they want to say in that language. These skills of a language are often described in terms of their *direction* and *modality*. Language generated by the learner (in speech or writing) is *productive*, and language directed at the learner (in reading or listening) is receptive (Savignon, 1991). *Modality* refers to the medium of the message (aural/oral or written). Thus, speaking is the productive oral skill and listening is the receptive aural skill. Both skills are known as *oracy* skills whereas reading and writing are referred to as *literacy* skills.

ORACY SKILLS:

Oracy skills can be defined as major skill areas of interpersonal communication. They are so part of our daily life that we tend to take them for granted. However, any interaction that typically involves speaking and comprehending at the same time, be it in first or other languages, involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why and how to listen and mastering complex skills for producing and maintaining interaction.

With this in mind, it might be worth mentioning, at the onset, that due to the high degree of overlap between the two main constituents of oracy skills (i.e., speaking and listening), a fundamental premise underlying this paper is that attention to speaking and listening must proceed in an integrated fashion under the umbrella term oracy. These areas are, however, addressed separately in order to highlight some crucial differences.

SPEAKING :

The ability to speak in a foreign language is indeed at the very heart of what it means to be able to use a foreign language. Our personality, our self image, our knowledge of the world and our ability to reason and express our thoughts are all reflected in our spoken performance (Luoma, 2005: ix). Being able to speak to

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friends, colleagues, visitors and even strangers in a foreign language is surely the goal of very many learners. To most people, mastering the art of speaking is the single most important aspect of learning a foreign language, and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language (Nunan, 1989; Hedge, 2000; Lazaraton, 2001). More importantly, speaking is the skill by which learners are judged while first impressions are being formed. With this in mind, speaking is the target skill in both first and foreign languages and it is so much part of people's daily life (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2002). Indeed, of all the four language skills, speaking seems to be the most important: people who know a language are said to be 'speakers' of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowledge (Ur, 1996: 120).

The ability to speak coherently and intelligibly on a focused topic is generally recognized as a necessary goal for ESL/EFL students (Murphy, 1991; Richards and Renandya, 2002). Speaking is an essential tool for communicating, thinking, and learning. It is a powerful learning tool. It shapes, modifies, extends, and organizes thought. Speaking serves two important functions in the classroom: the interactional and the transactional (Brown, 1989). The interactional function involves establishing and maintaining social relations, establishing rapport, or enjoying in the harmless chitchat that occupies much of the time we spend with friends, while the transactional primarily focuses on conveying information and ideas (Gebhard, 2000; Shumin, 2002). Both social and intellectual functions must have room in classrooms. Instructions must ensure a full range of speaking and allow for crossover between social and intellectual tasks.

WHAT SPEAKING ENTAILS:

The complexity of learning to speak in another language is reflected in the range and types of sub-skills involved in L2 oral production. In order to speak any language we need three main types of skills, namely, language skills, cognitive skills and social skills (Millrood, 1998).

The figure below (see Van Lier, 1995) illustrates the first of the three needed skills, namely the multi-language skill involved in the speaking process.

As it is clear from the pyramid, a speaker has to use many different kinds of knowledge and many different skills all at the same time. At the phonological level, the speaker has to be able to articulate what s/he has in mind. In effect, s/he needs to be able to pronounce speech sounds, which are most probably different from the sounds of his/her L1 (e.g., /p/ and /b/, understand how words are segmented into various sounds and how to use stress and intonation to add meaning to the sounds s/he produces (for more on this see Gumperz and Tarone, 1987).

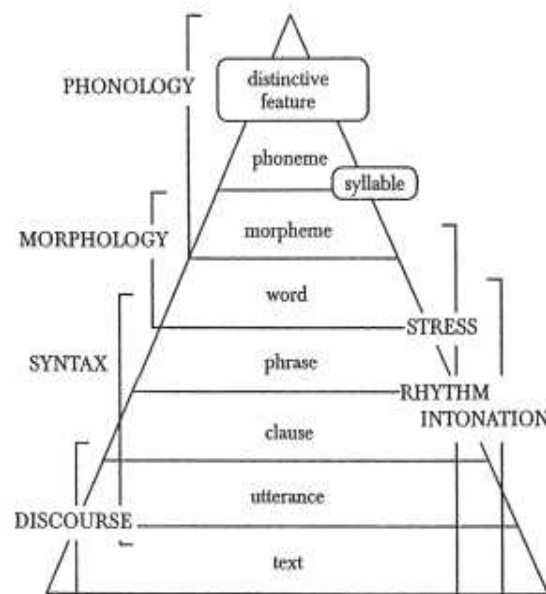


FIG. 5.1. Units of spoken language (van Lier, 1995, p. 15).

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At the morphological level, the speaker must know how to store and retrieve words and phrases (i.e., the building blocks of a given language) from the long-term memory. More importantly, the words and phrases have to be used in appropriate grammar structures (i.e., syntax). This array of language skills enables speakers to use and understand English language structures accurately and unhesitatingly which contributes to their proficiency.

Knowledge of language alone does not adequately prepare learners for effective and appropriate use of the target language. Indeed, speaking is largely a thought process about what and how to say to keep communication going. Thought processes are made possible by the second type of skills needed, namely, the cognitive skills. By cognitive skills, we mean the enabling skills that facilitate the process of communication. The speaker, in principle, must have competence involving knowledge of the world around him/her, the roles and purposes of other people in the communication and more importantly, what is expected socially and culturally on his part by the user of the target language (Burns, 1998; Richards, 1990; Millrood, 1998).

The third main skill needed for speaking is the social skills, which entail, but not conclusively, the ability to know when and how to take the floor, how to keep communication going, how to clear up communication breakdowns and comprehension problems and to close a conversation. Indeed, we all master these skills in our L1, yet the social skills of the L1 may be different from those of the target language (Lynch, 1998; Bygat 2001; Burns, 1998).

SPEAKING: A COGNITIVE PROCESS

Most current approaches draw on the information processing model proposed by Levelt (1989; 1995) when talking about how speaking happens and what processes are involved. In it, Levelt (see figure 2 below) proposed that speech production entails four main processes, namely, *Conceptualization*, *Formulating*, *Articulation* and *Self-monitoring*. By *Conceptualization*, Levelt means thinking of the ideas to be articulated, which draws on the speaker's schema, his/her knowledge about the topic, about the speech situation and knowledge of patterns and discourses. Put differently, utterances begin as non-language specific communicative intentions in the Conceptualizer. The task of the Conceptualizer during the production of a given utterance is to determine the semantic content of it. This is done with the help of the 'monitor', included in the Conceptualizer, which checks everything that occurs in the interaction to ensure that the communication goes to plan. The monitor enables the speaker to self-correct for expression, grammar and pronunciation. The proverbial message generated by the Conceptualizer is maintained in working memory and fed into the Formulator. The *Formulation*, as a process, involves thinking of the way in which the ideas might be worded. The Formulator finds the appropriate lemma or lexical items to express the meanings. Lemma also contain the information necessary for sequencing them and putting in appropriate grammatical markers (e.g., inflections, auxiliaries and articles) to generate the surface structure of an utterance through a process called Grammatical Encoding. The second task of the Formulator is to choose phonological representations or lexemes for the selected lemmas. *Articulation*, the third process, refers to motor controlling the organs of speech in the necessary way to give utterance to the Formulation. *Self-monitoring* is mainly concerned with language users being able to identify and self-correct mistakes.

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The stages of Levelt's model operate in a modular and incremental fashion. Put differently, once the proverbial message has entered the Formulator and the lexical access process has started, it is not possible for the Formulator to check back with the Conceptualizer to verify the intended meaning of the message. By the same token it is not possible for the Articulator to be alerted as to processes currently underway in the Formulator. Modularity and consecutive progression is what makes parallel processing within this model. Put differently, while one word is being uttered, the lemma and lexeme for another word are being selected, and in the Conceptualizer the speaker is still doing what words will follow. Incremental in this model means that the speakers often begin a sentence even before they have determined how they are going to end it.

Levelt's (1989) Language Production Model

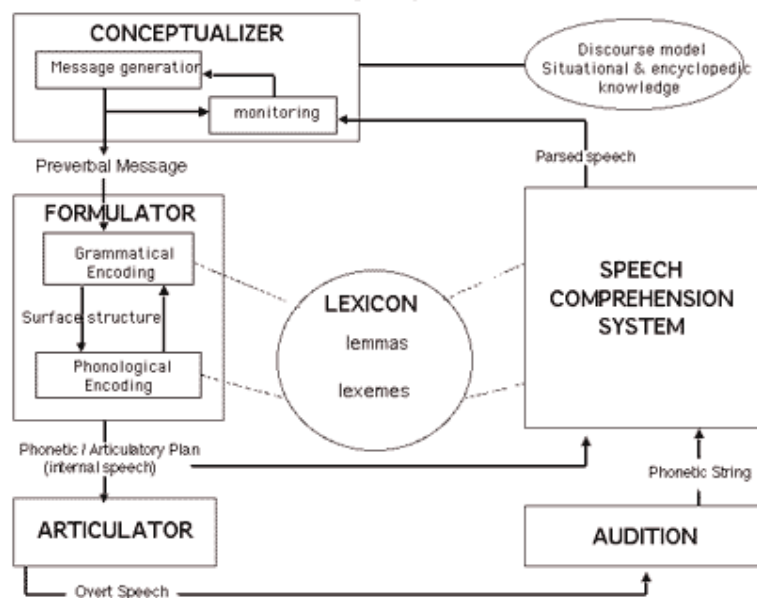


Figure 2: A blueprint for the speaker. (Levelt, 1989, p. 9).

WHAT MAKES SPEAKING DIFFICULT:

What makes speaking a real challenge and a very demanding skill for EFL learners can be broadly categorized into two main factors, those related to the learner and those related to the nature of the message. Among the factors related to the message is the fact that fluent connected speech is packed with reduced forms, such as contractions, vowel reduction, linking, elision and assimilation, so that learners who are not exposed to or who do not get sufficient practice with features of connected speech will retain their rather formal-sounding full forms (Flowerdew, 1994; Buck, 1995; Millrood, 1998; Van Lier, 1995). Indeed, without instruction in using these demanding features of the spoken message, learners are apt to sound bookish. Furthermore, students must also acquire the suprasegmental (i.e., stress, rhythm and intonation) aspects of the language (Gumperz and Tarone,

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1987; Shumin, 2002). More demanding is the fact that spoken message is always accomplished via interaction with at least one other speaker (Lynch, 1998; Hedge, 2000). This feature poses a number of demands and constraints on the part of the student: s/he must monitor and understand the other speaker (s), think about his/her contribution, produce that contribution and monitor (Riley et al., 2004). Finally, speaking is produced on-line: speakers have to decide on their message and communicate it without taking time to check it. Therefore, time pressure means that the process of conceptualization, formulating and articulating (see below: speaking: a cognitive process) may not be well planned or implemented and may need pauses and corrections (Bygat, 2001:16)

On the other hand, speaking as a skill poses a number of difficulties on the foreign language learners, especially those who are the outcome of teacher-cantered approaches. Those students 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 utterances their speech attracts (Ur, 1996; Smith, 2003)). Even if we assume that those learners are not inhibited, they lack the genuine motive to express themselves and therefore, the complaint is often heard that they can not think of a thing to say. Given that those students may find the real motive for communication, examinations are another barrier. Examinations only test knowledge of grammar and vocabulary as well as literacy skills (reading and writing). Therefore, it is not surprising to find that knowledge about the language form is much more important than the ability to use language meaningfully. Also as examinations do not test the oracy skills (listening and speaking), which are almost absent from the practice of teaching English, teachers and students will, by no means give them any interest. One more serious challenge is in classrooms where all learners share the same mother tongue, they generally tend to communicate using their L1 because they feel less tense or because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language.

TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS:

Two major views have informed contemporary debates on the teaching of speaking skills. The first view mainly emanates from the need to build the prerequisites that would enable reception and production (i.e. phonological patterns, lexis and grammatical form and structure). This view focuses on the development of skills for the accurate production of speech. The other view, centers on enhancing fluency through communicative tasks, which in turn enable opportunities for developing functional language use through non-controlled activities (Burns, 1998: 102).

These two views can be broadly categorized as 'direct' or 'indirect' approaches for teaching speaking. The direct approach, according to Richards (1990: 77), involves *"planning a conversational programme around the specific microskills, strategies and processes that are involved in fluent conversation"*. The direct approach, in principle is the one which underscores *skill getting*, where learners focus on specific elements of communicative ability isolated and practiced (see also Rivers and Temperley, 1978; Nunan, 1989; Littlewood, 1990). These activities, drills, pattern practice, structure manipulation, serve to develop enabling skills that can be further facilitated through language awareness (Van Lier, 1995) and conscious raising practice (Ellis, 1993). Such activities might involve analyses of typical structures of spoken genres, the learning of formulaic lexical phrases and institutionalized routines (Lewis, 1993), discussion of the use of feedback devices and backchaining in conversation, learning activities where learners construct their own grammatical awareness inductively, and the development of metalinguistic knowledge.

The indirect approach, on the other hand, perceives conversational competence as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction (Richards, 1990). It is based on the assumption that the focus on the production of more authentic and functional language use would enable learners to be in charge of their learning. The essential focus is on tasks mediated through language, negotiation and sharing of information. Theoretical concepts that underpin indirect approaches are related to skill

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using (see Rivers and Temperley, 1978, Nunan; 1989) and whole task practice (Littlewood, 1992).

The indirect approach, which was the typical teaching practice for communicative language teaching in the late 1970s and the 1980s, involves setting up and managing lifelike communicative situations in the language classroom (e.g., role plays, problem-solving tasks, or information gap activities (for a review of such activities see Ur, 1981; Yorkey, 1985; Fried –Booth, 1986; Fried –Booth, 1986; Ladousse, 1989 Crookall and Oxford, 1990), and leading learners to acquire communicative skills incidentally by seeking situational meaning. Put differently, learners are not explicitly taught the strategies, maxims and organizational principles that govern communicative language use but are expected to work these out for themselves through extensive communicative task engagement (Celce-Murcia, 1997).

In a nutshell, the review highlighted above was an attempt to understand the speaking construct better so as to be able to develop it effectively. Through the review we came to know that speaking skills are by no means easy, especially in a foreign language context. In Bailey and Savage (1994: vi-vii) words, "*speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills*". Given the array of the multi-skills needed for speaking, developing foreign language learners' speaking skills is a real challenge and it takes a long time to develop even in one's native language, let alone when it is a foreign. With this in mind, it will not escape the reader that creating the right supportive atmosphere which creates the opportunity of integrating aural and oral skills in the classroom is very crucial when teaching speaking skills.

Indeed, speaking is by no means possible without listening; it is not possible to produce satisfactorily what one has not heard before. Wolvin and Coakley (1996: 13) emphasized the importance of listening in language learning stating, "*Listening is the most basic of the four major areas of language development. Our ability to speak, read, write and master complex skills is directly and indirectly dependent upon listening* (see also Rost, 1990, 1994; Anderson and Lynch, 1989; Brown, 1990; Rubin, 1994; White,

1998). This seems quite true as listening is central to all learning at all levels; it is the primary channel for language input and acquisition (Peterson, 2001:87).

Listening and speaking are so inextricably interwoven. They are indeed the two facets of the same coin. Listening is a prerequisite for oral proficiency (perception enables production); it is via listening that learners can establish a base for more fluent production skills (Schmitt, 2002; Morley, 2001). Indeed, it seems that listening and speaking are theoretically and practically very difficult to separate (Hughes 2002: 83). There is not any listening without someone speaking, and indeed speaking without somebody listening is an empty gesture (Gebhard, 2000). Indeed, you can not find one away from the other for most everyday listening involves two-way interaction (reciprocal, interactive) where the interlocutors will shift turns as listeners and speakers.

LISTENING:

Listening is central to all learning as students receive 57% to 90% of their school instruction via listening to teachers and to each other (see Wolvin & Coakley, 1996; Feyten, 1991; Oxford, 1993). Brown (1980: 10) underscores the central role listening plays at all levels, stating: *“listening ability lies at the very heart of all growth, from birth through the years of formal education. The better those learning skills are developed, the more productive our learning efforts”*. Listening, by the same token, plays a crucial role in language learning for its contribution to the development of overall language proficiency (Krashen, 1982; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996; Rost, 2002). Morley (1999: 1) spells out this idea stating:

- 1. Proficiency in listening comprehension makes a central contribution to the learner’s overall development of competency in second/foreign language.*
- 2. The systematic development of listening comprehension is of critical importance not only as input for learning to speak the language, but also as a premium skill in its own right.*

WHAT LISTENING ENTAILS:

Despite the key role listening plays in all learning and language learning, it, until recently, has been thought of as a passive skill that is acquired naturally and therefore has received only peripheral or hardly any attention. In many parts of the world, including Egypt, the context of the present study, listening has for long been the overlooked dimension (Feyten, 1991), which is treated like a “neglected step-child” (Oxford, 1993: 205) and is left to be acquired by osmosis (Mendelsohn, 1994). Listening nowadays is perceived as an active process that entails four interrelated processes: receiving, attending to, assigning meaning and responding overtly to an aural stimulus based on on-going complex and multidimensional cognitive processes (for overview see Buck, 1990, 1991, 1995, 2001; Rubin, 1994; Mendelsohn & Rubin, 1995; Brown, 1995; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996, Rost, 1990, 1994. 2002). In these processes, listeners, besides the acoustic input, rely on a number of different types of knowledge to construct the meaning; linguistic knowledge (phonology, lexis, syntax, semantic and discourse structure), and non-linguistic knowledge (knowledge about the topic, knowledge about the context, world knowledge). How these different sources of knowledge are applied to the incoming message and in what order is a theme of an ongoing-debate.

There are different approaches that attempt to explain how a listener is able to derive meaning from aural input, namely, the bottom-up approach, the top-down approach and the interactive approach. A considerable number of researchers and academics such as, Clark and Clark, 1977; Richards, 1986; Anderson & Lynch, 1989; Nunan 1989; Richards 1990; Morley 1990; Brown, 1990; Flowerdew, 1994; Buck, 1990, 2001, have attempted to describe ‘bottom-up’ processes in listening. Broadly speaking, their views can be summarised as follows: comprehension, according to the ‘bottom-up’ view begins with analysis of the message received at successive levels of organisation –sounds - words - clauses and sentence till the intended meaning is arrived at. More precisely, it is assumed that the aural input is first decoded into the smallest sound segments that can carry meaning

(phonemes) and then this is used to identify individual words. Then, processing moves up to the next higher stage, the syntactic level followed by an analysis of the semantic content to arrive at an understanding of the basic linguistic meaning. Then the listener interprets the linguistic meaning in accordance with the communicative situation to understand what the speaker means. In effect, the bottom-up approach views comprehension as a process of passing through a number of consecutive stages and the output of each stage becomes the input for the next higher stage. Comprehension is a process, which happens, in an idealised serial sequential fashion.

Research refutes the assumptions in the serial bottom-up model by showing that the processes are not carried out in sequential order. Anderson & Lynch (1989: 22-23), who contrast the bottom-up view of listener as “a tape recorder”, summarise three arguments against the serial model:

1. *There is no one-to-one correspondence between segments of the spoken signals and the sounds we perceive.*
2. *For many phonemes there are no unvarying distinctive characteristics that mark them off as absolutely different from all others. The context of the surrounding words affects the phoneme's characteristics.*
3. *Even at the word level, as opposed to the level of the phoneme, when individual words are extracted from tape recordings of conversations and played for listeners to identify, only about half of the words can be recognized in isolation.*

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In short, listeners are not mere language processors who perform actions in a linear fixed order regardless of context, instead, s/he is some one who had expectations about what he is going to hear and which surely influence how he approaches the message. This view represents the top-down view of listening.

The ‘top-down’ approach, on the other hand, is primarily based on the assumption that listeners have their own goals and expectations about the text information and select from the heard message what helps them reject or confirm these expectations. Rost (2002: 96) spells this characteristic in his definition of the top-down model: “... a form of language processing that bases inferences on expectations and predictable generalisations cued by the incoming language”. This means that the listener does not receive the meaning as it was assumed in the bottom-up view: instead he constructs it. In constructing the meaning, the listener brings to the task a bank of information that includes prior knowledge, and global expectations about language and the world, which are all used to make predictions about the incoming message is expected to be at any point, and how the pieces fit into the whole. Thus, scholars working with this model posited “higher level” pragmatic and inferential processes as a starting point, with linguistic knowledge at the “lower level” being processed only if required by listeners’ expectations and goals.

In fact, however, neither the bottom-up nor the top-down metaphor is a proper characterisation of the listening process, and it seems more adequate to think of listening process as interactive, where every component can interact with any other component, be it ‘higher up’ or lower down’. Vandergrift (1992: 176) concludes his study stating that his findings provided evidence for an interactive model of listening in which the listener “draws simultaneously on different knowledge sources to interpret the meaning of a given message”. Thus, processing is now thought of as parallel rather than serial.

WHAT MAKES LISTENING DIFFICULT:

Listening is a skill that makes the heaviest processing demands on learners. Listeners must store information at the same time as they are working to understand it (see Brown, 1995; Buck, 1995; Mendelsohn, 1994). This on-line processing is mostly daunting for FL listeners due to the highly fleeting nature of the spoken message which comes at them very fast and is gone (Rost, 1994; Grant, 1997; Higgins, 1997). It is also due to the memory limitations as well as the lack of control over the message; listeners are at the '*mercy of the speakers*' (Mendelsohn, 1994; 9); they have almost no control over what is going to be said, how it is going to be said, and how quickly it is going to be said (Mendelsohn, 1995: 132). The words are past flying very rapidly leaving no control over the message, which forces listeners to process the message immediately, whether they are prepared to receive the information or they are still processing what they have just heard.

TEACHING LISTENING:

Over time, L2 learning and teaching approaches have made different assumption about language skills and their importance which was reflected in the methodologies based on these approaches' interest in (a) given skill(s) more than another. *The Grammar Translation Method*, for instance, assuming that the goal of L2 learning was the study of literature, and that instruction should be in the native language, communication was of no interest and therefore the focus was mainly on literacy skills neglecting totally the oracy skills. The result of this approach was a learner who could not use the language for communication. *The Direct Method* came in reaction to the failure of the Grammar Translation Method to produce learners who could use the target language for communication. It emphasized the need to establish a direct bond between the learner and the language via conversing, reading and writing. However, it required native teachers, who are not available in most cases. Then the *Audio-lingual Approach*, which was prevailing during the 1960s, came with its emphasis on the oral-aural skills as often claimed. Rost (1990: 27) underscores

the negligence of listening as a skill in its own right in this approach pinpointing:

"... Both the audio-lingual and situational approaches emphasized learner identification of language 'products' and the role of listening was mainly to reinforce recognition of those products in the syllabus."

Listening activities were mainly structural-based with numerous repetitions of passages reinforcing the perception of formal similarity between spoken and written texts through repeated access. The audio-lingual instruction did not take notable interest in listening beyond its role in the imitation-repetition of patterns and dialogues. This means that, in spite of the recognition of listening value, no attention was given to listening in its own right as a skill. It was rather seen as a means to another end; learning to speak the language (language production). The development of listening comprehension as a skill in its own right in this approach was a rare consideration.

The field has come a long way in the last two decades and we have a much better understanding of the processes of comprehension, what listening involves and the variables affecting comprehension. With the emergence of *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT), listening was not only emerging and gaining in popularity and pervasiveness in language curricula (Littlewood, 1981; Rost, 1994), but also it was accorded a central role at all levels of learning which, in turn, aided bringing listening into focus in L2 classrooms. Since this change of listening status, much has been published on listening, listening processes as well as teaching instruction that have made major contributions to improving the situation (see for example Brown, 1977, 1990, 1995; Ur, 1984; Anderson & Lynch, 1989; Underwood, 1988; Rost, 1990, 1994, 2002; White, 1998). Nevertheless, it is still possible to meet teachers and educators who believe that listening comprehension is an easy skill developed naturally and needing no systematic instruction.

In short, approaches for teaching EFL listening can be broadly categorized as 'traditional approach' or 'strategy-based approach'. *The traditional approach* is based on the assumption 'practice makes perfection' in which listening is left to develop as part of students' general educational training. This approach assumes that the more listeners are exposed to listening input, the better listening ability they will have. It only provides learners with a lot of listening practice, without teaching them what to do or how to go about such a pivotal skill. In effect, the traditional approach does not teach students how to listen; students are just required to listen to an aural input and answer some corresponding questions. Such an approach has been referred to by a number of researchers as a testing rather than teaching approach, as listening in this approach is often practised but never taught.

This approach according to Brown (1990:8) consists of exercises, which expose the students to a chunk of spoken material on a tape and then ask comprehension questions to try to find out whether the students had understood the language of the text. She goes on commenting that:

"... This does not seem so much an example of 'teaching' as of 'testing'. The students are not receiving any help in learning how to process the unfamiliar language – they are simply being given the opportunity of finding out for themselves how to cope. Many of them (students) of course will not learn how to do this satisfactorily and they will undergo repeated experience of failure and, as a consequence, may choose to withdraw from leaning".

Field (1997: 25) agrees with Brown and succinctly summarises this approach features pointing out that:

"... Listening lessons are often series of tests of skill that has never really been taught. We play one listening text after another, but we do not train learners how to understand them better. Students may learn a little about the information contained in the

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text, perhaps a little more vocabulary – but there is no systematic attempt to improve their ability as listeners”.

The strategy-based approach, on the other hand, assumes that listening needs a real time processing which necessitates listeners to utilise knowledge strategically, to maximise available memory resources and to resolve problems as they emerge (see Vandergrift, 1992, 1996; Mendelsohn, 1994, 1995, 1998; Chamot, 1995). A considerable number of researchers argue for an approach to foreign language listening which is mainly based on strategy training. This approach advocates teaching students to consciously utilise strategies that aid their comprehension to get at meaning. Put differently, it aims at equipping learners with a sense of what successful listeners do to achieve success and to aid them to develop their unique individual pathways to success in listening (see O’Malley et al., 1985b; Rost & Ross, 1991; Schwartz, 1992; Paulauskas, 1994; Rubin, 1994, 1995, 1996; Mendelsohn & Rubin, 1995; Thompson & Rubin, 1996; Grant, 1997). It introduces students to a variety of strategies for working with listening tasks, and gives them opportunities for practice. It strives to expose students to many different ways of approaching the listening task. It also gives them the opportunity to experience working with such strategies and evaluating them so that they can make informed decisions about which strategy, with which type of text, and under which circumstances, can work best for them.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING:

A central goal for teachers is to empower learners to be autonomous. Cooperative learning facilitates this process by assigning students to small groups in which they work collaboratively to maximize their own and one another's learning. The use of cooperative learning so pervades education that it is difficult to find textbooks on instructional methods, teachers' journals or instructional materials that do not mention and utilize it. The widespread of cooperative learning is due to multiple factors. Three of the most important factors are that cooperative learning is clearly grounded in theory and practice, validated by

research and operationalized into clear procedures that educators can use (Johnson et al., 2000).

Research clearly indicated that cooperative learning has considerable potential for teaching English as a foreign language. It provides an ideal environment for students to learn, to understand and use the target language meaningfully. This environment is regulated by three main principles, namely, simultaneous interaction, positive interdependence and accountability (Kagan, 1995). In this environment, language will be used naturally as students are encouraged to attend and listen to others and express themselves while working interactively in groups. In effect, cooperative learning can significantly increase student's language learning and use by creating a genuine motive to communicate with others (Bassano and Christison, 1988; Holt et al., 1991; Kessler et al., 1992). maximizing academic achievement (Johnson, et al., 1981; Slavin, 1983; Christenson, 1990; Slavin, 1992; Anwar, 1996; Brandt & Ellsworth, 1996) it can also enhance overall language proficiency by maximizing exposure for both language input and output (Bromley and Modlo, 1997), develop social skills (working together to learn increases students social skills (Johnson and Johnson, 1995; Holguin, 1997), foster self-esteem (Slavin, 1992; Kayle, 1999; Hill, 1992; Adams, 1995; Brandt & Ellsworth, 1996; Sharon and Sharon, 1992; Banse, 2000; Jules, 1992;).

THE JIGSAW LEARNING STRATEGY:

Cooperative learning is a generic term that refers to numerous strategies for organizing and conducting classroom learning. One of these strategies is jigsaw. Jigsaw is a strategy that has a three-decade track record of success even though it is not an ancient strategy. It was initiated and developed by Aronson (1978), and has since been adapted by a number of researches and practitioners in a variety of ways (Aronson & Good, 1980; Colosi & Rappezalen, 1998; Slavin, 1980; 1995).

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The Jigsaw instructional strategy works in a way very similar to putting pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together to make a whole picture. It is an interesting strategy as it gets each student involved in the learning process. In a jigsaw group, each student has to specialize in one aspect/part of the learning task/unit, which he is responsible to teach to the other students in the group. When all the (jigsaw) students have done their roles (put the jigsaw parts together), the students should have learnt the whole content.

In jigsaw, a class is divided into small groups of five or six students each. Each group member is assigned part of the learning material and is asked to work on this part until he/she becomes an expert in it. This gives each student a feeling of responsibility and self importance especially when they know that they are assigned roles upon which depends the success of the whole group. They must know that “Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, each piece - each student’s part- is essential for completion and full understanding of the final product.”

To help students master their roles, each student meets with members of other groups who are assigned the part and they work together on learning their assigned part, plan and rehearse on how to teach it to the other members of the group. Finally, each student returns to his/her jigsaw group and begin to teach his/her part to the other students in the group. To sum up, the simplest form of conducting the Jigsaw instructional strategy is when:

1. Each student receives a portion of the materials to be introduced;
2. Students leave their "home" groups and meet in "expert" groups;
3. Expert groups discuss the material and brainstorm ways in which to present their understandings to the other members of their “home” group;
4. The experts return to their “home” groups to teach their portion of the materials and to learn from the other members of their “home” group.

Essentially, Jigsaw aims to develop teamwork and cooperative learning skills within all students. It is a remarkably efficient way to learn the material. But even more important, the jigsaw process encourages listening, engagement, and empathy by giving each member of the group an essential part to play in the learning activity. Group members must work together as a team to accomplish a common goal; each person depends on all the others. No student can succeed completely unless everyone works well together as a team.

JIGSAW LISTENING:

Jigsaw listening is the term given by Geddes & Sturtridge (1979) to the application of the Jigsaw strategy in developing the two crucial skills of listening and speaking by simultaneously teaching oral expression and auditory comprehension.

The Jigsaw listening strategy has been highlighted in the related literature (Nunan, 1989; White, 1998; Rost, 1990; Ur, 1996; Rixon, 1981) as having considerable potentials for developing oracy skills. However, there is a dearth in research on the effect of using jigsaw listening as a strategy for promoting EFL oracy skills. To the best knowledge of the researcher, the only study which tried to investigate the effect of jigsaw listening on developing oracy skills was that of Geddes and Sturtridge (1978). This study revealed the positive effect of jigsaw on developing oracy skills to the extent that both authors published a whole textbook based on this strategy, namely, *Listening Links* which inspired and motivated the current study.

In a Jigsaw listening class, students are divided into small groups. Each group listen to an audio-taped extract containing incomplete information about the same topic. Different groups of students listen to different information. In order to complete their information each group must talk to students in the other groups about what they have listened to. Because the information in each of the listening extracts is incomplete, the students have real reasons for communicating with each other. Like pieces in the jigsaw the extracts will only make a complete picture when they are all fitted together.

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The linkage of skills helps students to think in English. As they listen they take notes which they use later when they are talking to each other. By recalling in English what they have heard in English they are helped to think in English. Jigsaw in this sense provides a dynamic and interactive learning environment where sufficient time is provided for practicing and integrating both aural and oral skills (listening and speaking).

The Jigsaw listening procedure, according to Geddes and Sturtridge, (1980) goes in three stages, namely, the listening stage, the discussion stage, and exercises.

A. THE LISTENING STAGE:

In this stage each group listens to a different version of an audio text containing incomplete information about a given topic. While listening, students take notes of what they listen to. Their notes will be useful in the discussion stage. After listening students of the same group discuss with each other the notes they have taken to make sure they each have written down the same information. They might listen to the extract once more, stop the tape and rewind the recorder when they need to.

B. THE DISCUSSION STAGE

This is stage when students put together the pieces of the jigsaw: they put together the information each group has listened to, fill in the information gaps and come up with a whole meaningful version of the topic. Before this stage, students need to regroup making sure that each discussion group contains members from each listening group. The material should be designed to encourage students to communicate freely with each other. Students should see what they are discussing as more important than accuracy. Free communication should be encouraged by not interrupting and correcting students. Teacher may take down students' mistakes for later follow-up. It is essential to insist that students are by no means allowed to use their mother language during this stage.

C. THE EXERCISES STAGE

In this final stage students feel the reward of their work during the whole activity. Exercises should be of two kinds: oral and written. The oral exercises provide practice in the type of language students for the discussion stage. The written exercises should be used as written follow up to the discussion stage. They should be based on the overall information provided in the listening material and the conclusions that the students have obtained through the discussion.

Based on the previously mentioned review of literature about the crucial importance of developing oracy skills as prerequisite for the overall success in language learning, and the potentials Jigsaw Listening holds for such skills, the researcher thought of proposing and empirically propping the effect of a suggested unit based on Jigsaw Listening on developing secondary school second graders' oracy skills.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

It has been previously highlighted that there is dearth in research studies on developing EFL learners' oracy skills though these skills are very crucial in learning a foreign language and that developing these critical skills has always been absent from the classroom teaching practices.

In the Egyptian context, while oracy skills have generally been neglected, literacy skills have always been given priority at all stages of English teaching. Oracy skills are totally ignored or at the best scenario perceived as means to ends rather than ends in themselves; they are more or less taught via a display question or via tightly controlled speech production to reinforce correct habit formation. The teacher poses display questions, focusing on the content of the text, new vocabulary and grammar structures and more ironically the answer is already known.

That the interest in oracy skills seems to be almost absent from the teaching practices in the Egyptian classrooms may be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the teachers themselves are

poor at these skills and do not have enough pedagogical knowledge or confidence to teach them, which is perhaps not only confined to Egyptian teachers, but extends to other contexts (Moriatsu, 2003; Mendelsohn, 1994). Therefore, teachers tend to skip listening and speaking sections in the set book or at best handle them as a source of expanding students' vocabulary and grammar. Secondly and more importantly, there is no room for these two skills in the final examination and as the teacher's whole teaching is mainly exam oriented these two skills are overlooked. Thirdly, Egyptian foreign language learners do not live in a community where English is spoken; English is seldom used socially and is confined to the classroom, where most teachers tend to overuse the students' mother tongue in teaching. Thus, it is too difficult to achieve good command of spoken English since the input learners receive is certainly insufficient.

Therefore, it will not escape the reader that the vast majority outcomes of our educational system at its different stages remain deaf and dumb in English. It is even ironical that some learners might be able to read and analyze original literary works and deal with reading comprehension questions critically, but are, at the same time, unable to ask for a glass of water orally. They are, in fact, too dumb or tongue-tied to be able to orally express their ideas or thoughts in English. They are also too deaf to work out the spoken message coming at them when they assume the role of listeners.

Secondary school students in Egypt, have so often highlighted listening and speaking as their biggest problems in learning a foreign language (see Ghanem, 1983; Keder, 1983; Ebraheem, 1994; El-Matarawy; 1998; Habib, 1999; Hamed, 2003). They manifest difficulty in speaking English despite the many years they have spent studying English. Though oracy skills are the ultimate goal aspired for by EFL learners, most secondary school students are too timid or inhibited to speak wherever they are heard because they are mostly too shy of making mistakes or because they are usually uncertain about how to express what they want to say in English.

With this in mind, the researcher thought that exploring effective methods of teaching oracy skills and empirically probing their impact on promoting such skills may help providing teachers with guidelines on how to facilitate these demanding skills and might be of benefit to EFL learners, teachers and researchers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study was sought to empirically probe the effect of a suggested unit based on the jigsaw listening strategy on developing the secondary stage, second graders' oracy skills in English. In addition, the effect of learners' perceptual learning styles preferences was also examined. More specifically, the present study tried to answer the following questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the effect of a suggested unit on developing the oracy skills of the second year secondary school students regardless of the teaching strategy or the learning styles?**
- 2. What is the effect of teaching a suggested unit using jigsaw strategy on developing the oracy skills of the second year secondary school students regardless of their perceptual learning styles preferences?**
- 3. What is the effect of learning style (auditory vs. visual) on developing oracy skills (listening and speaking) of the second year secondary school students?**
- 4. What is the effect of interaction between learning styles (auditory vs. visual) and teaching strategy (jigsaw listening vs. traditional strategy) on developing the oracy skills of the second year secondary school students?**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The main objective driving this study was:

- 1. To help secondary school student learn how to go about oracy skills and how to get over their problems in listening to and speaking English as a foreign language.**
- 2. To design some materials and activities that are based upon jigsaw listening and integrate both listening and speaking, and to probe their effects on developing secondary school students' oracy skills.**
- 3. To investigate the effect of two different learning styles, namely, auditory and visual on oracy skills.**
- 4. To examine the effect of interaction between learning styles and the method of teaching on developing oracy skills.**

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study mainly tries to test the following null hypotheses:

- 1. There is no statistically significant difference at .05 level in the oracy skills between the mean scores of the first experimental group students (taught by the traditional strategy) in the pre and post testing.**
- 2. There is no statistically significant difference at .05 levels in the oracy skills between the mean scores of the first experimental group (taught by the traditional strategy) and the second experimental group (taught by the jigsaw strategy) in the pre and post testing.**
- 3. There is no statistically significant difference at .05 levels in the oracy skills between the mean scores of the auditory learners and those of the visual learners due to the learning style, in the pre and post testing.**
- 4. There are no interaction at 0.05 level between the instructional strategy (jigsaw vs. traditional) and learning styles (auditory vs. visual) and jigsaw listening strategy on oracy.**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SUBJECTS

The investigation reported here was carried out with a group of second year secondary school students (no. = 49 students) at Sahragat As-Sughra Secondary School, Dakahlia Governorate. These 49 students constituted the total number of two secondary school classes. The first class of 25 students was chosen to be the control (experimental 1) group, while the second class of 24 was assigned as the jigsaw (experimental 2) group.

INSTRUMENTS

A) Listening Comprehension Test

The listening comprehension test tried to measure students' performance in listening to spoken English before and after the experiment. It was also intended to shed some light on the effect of the interaction between teaching strategy (jigsaw vs. traditional and learning styles (auditory vs. visual) on students' listening performance before and after the experiment.

Two parallel forms of matched tests (see appendix 2) were developed to be used in this study as the pre - and post-test to measure students' performance in listening to spoken English. The number of questions in each form is the same and the number of questions allocated to measuring each skill is almost the same too. The maximum score was 50 points. The test was piloted with 30 secondary school students to ensure the comparability of the two forms. In addition, item analyses and reliability were computed employing ITEMAN, an item and test analysis program. Reliability alpha of the two test forms was 0.91 for form - A and 0.92 for form - B. Each text was heard twice and the instructions for each task were heard on the tape and read in the test paper. In the test, learners were asked to listen and fill in gaps, choose from multiple choices, tick true or false, and to agree or disagree. Learners indicated their answers by writing or ticking them as required on the same sheet of questions.

B) Speaking Test

The speaking test (see appendix 3) aimed at assessing the learners' ability to express their ideas in English, take their interlocutor's contributions into account and make use of them in the discussion, and collaborate in the creation of interaction. Ability to express one's ideas in English is reflected in intelligible pronunciation; knowledge and use of relevant and appropriate vocabulary; appropriate and accurate structure use; willingness to talk and initiate; comprehensibility; getting the message across and fluency. Each one of these element was scored on a 5-pointscale rubric (see appendix 4) ranging from 5 (the best performance) to 1 (the poorest performance)

The researcher used information gap with notes and role play with cued information tasks since these kinds of tasks are realistic and create a real need for genuine communication. More importantly, such tasks attend to the students' level of interaction; the ability to take into account and make use of the interlocutor's turns and ability to collaborate in the creation of interaction. Reliability alpha of the test was 0.84.

C) Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire

Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) was developed to be used with non-native speakers of English to identify the ways they learn best – *the ways they prefer to learn*. The questionnaire is a 30 item with a five point Liket-scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire has six subscales that purport to measure preferences for visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic, individual and group learning styles. There are five question statements for each subscale. The questionnaire has been used in a number of studies (see Reid, 1987; Rossi-le, 1989; Hyland, 1993).

TREATMENT MATERIAL

The treatment materials comprised the suggested unit which incorporated a twelve lessons listening and speaking content. Each lesson consisted of:

- ◆ Three audio-taped extracts,
- ◆ Oral exercises, and
- ◆ Students' worksheets.

The material was mainly selected from Geddes and Sturbridge's (1980) Listening Links.

PROCEDURES

With the aim to classify the sample in accordance with students' learning styles, Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) was administered to the 49 students before starting the treatment. In the light of students' highest scores in the questionnaire, students were classified into two groups: the visual learners (n=35), and the auditory learners (n=14). Next to that, the pretesting was done.

Students in each group started the experimental treatment. Students were not told that each group was receiving different kinds of instruction. Each of the two groups met twice a week in a 45-minutes session for 7 weeks. However, each of the groups was taught the same material, in the same sequence and spent approximately the same amount of time on each of the tasks used. The only difference between the two groups of the study was the teaching strategy used.

A) The Traditional group (experimental 1)

The main focus of the training for the traditional group students (experimental 1) was using the content for answering comprehension questions. They listened to the content material and did the tasks in the traditional way.

The Intervention

B) The jigsaw group (experimental 2)

The jigsaw listening group was divided into three small groups of eight students each. Then before starting the treatment, the teacher explained the procedural steps clearly so that each group understood what exactly they were expected to do. Students understood that each group would listen to a different version of an audio-taped text about a given topic. Each of the three versions contains a different part of the topic so that the three versions when put together, make up the complete picture about the topic. To ensure the smooth operation of the sessions, the teacher encouraged students to participate in establishing regulations or "golden rules" for individual behavior, for within group and in between groups' interaction.

Some established golden rules were:

- Listen attentively
- Listen selectively
- Concentrate on your listening extract
- Ignore sounds coming from other groups
- Keep on listening
- Do not worry about understanding every word
- Never give up trying
- Speak only during the discussion stage
- Use eye contact, nodding, smiling
- Never speak in Arabic
- Speak directly to each other
- Don't interrupt
- Listen to the other

- **Help others with spelling or notes problems**
- **Keep noise level to a minimum**
- **Respect other group members**
- **Be willing to help others**
- **Do not be shy to ask for help**
- **Show responsibility**
- **Take notes when you can**
- **Respect differences in the group**

Specific procedures for the jigsaw group (Experimental 2):

1) The listening stage:

- **Each group sat at a specific corner (the same place each session) and started listening to their version of the text.**
- **They took notes while listening.**
- **They would listen again to the extract as often as they needed to.**

Teacher's role: during this stage, teacher's role was to organize the seating of groups before starting listening, remind students of their expected roles and behaviour while listening. Once the listening began, teacher sat down and kept silent.

2) The discussion stage

This stage included:

a) The within group discussion

- **Students in each group discussed the content they had listened to, the notes they had taken and made sure they all have full understanding of their listening extract.**
- **Students listened once more and answered the related questions in the task sheet provided.**
- **Students regrouped into new jigsaw groups. Each new group was to include members from the three original groups.**

b) The between groups discussion

- **Within each new group, students from original groups took their turns in conveying the information they had to peers from other groups.**
- **Peers asked each other questions and asked for clarification when they did not understand (all the talking was insisted to be in English).**
- **Students exchanged, discussed their notes and filled in the missing information in their task sheets.**
- **By the end of this stage, each student had the whole information about the topic presented.**
- **Finally students returned to their original groups for the exercises stage.**

Teacher's role: during this stage, teacher encouraged communication between students by:

- reminding them to speak in English
- reminding them to address each other
- Not interrupting them to correct their mistakes.
- Answering their questions when they failed to manage
- Taking notes of students' recurrent mistakes to be revisited in upcoming lessons.

3) The exercises stage

- During this stage, students practiced orally the type of language they would need for the Discussion Stage in the next unit.

Teacher's role: same as in the discussion stage.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of this study is positivistic in nature, a pre-post 2 × 2 factorial design was used in this study to assess and compare the effect of a suggested unit on developing oracy skills among secondary stage, second graders of auditory and visual learning styles. In addition, the effect of the teaching strategy (traditional vs. jigsaw) was also examined. Table 1 below resents a schematic illustration of the research design, where the independent variables are represented as factor A (Learning Styles) and factor B (treatment).

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Factor A: Learning styles	Factor B: The treatment	
	Jigsaw training group	Traditional group
Auditory		
Visual		

The dependent and independent variables were as follows:

The independent variables were:

1. Treatment
 - a) jigsaw strategy
 - b) Traditional
2. Learning styles
 - a) Auditory
 - b) Visual

The dependent variables were:

1. Oracy skills
 - a) Listening performance
 - b) Speaking performance

DATA ANALYSIS

1. T-test was used to find the effect of the suggested unit on developing oracy skills.
2. The Multivariate Analysis of Variance was used to determine differences between study groups in oracy skills after the treatment5.

FINDINGS

A) THE EFFECT OF THE SUGGESTED UNIT ON ORACY SKILLS

Null hypotheses one (Ho1): *"There is no statistically significant difference at .05 level in the oracy skills between the mean scores of the first experimental group students (taught by the traditional strategy) in the pre and post testing"*, was tested using t-test. Table 2 below presents the results obtained from pre and post testing of the experimental 1 group in listening and speaking.

Table 2: Results of pre-post experimental group 1 in listening/speaking performance

Construct	Mean	SD	T	DF	Sig.
<i>Listening</i>					
<i>Pretest</i>	22.12	2.69	2.15	46	.036
<i>posttest</i>	24.33	4.23			
<i>Speaking</i>					
<i>Pretest</i>	17.08	4.58	1.72	46	.091
<i>Posttest</i>	19.87	6.27			

As clear from the table, results of t-test indicated that the observed effect was statistically not significant in listening ($t = 2.15$) and speaking ($t = 1.72$) at 0.05 level and consequently the first null hypothesis of the current study was verified.

This means that there is no statistically significant difference at .05 level in the oracy skills (listening and speaking) between the mean scores of the first experimental group students (taught the content using the traditional approach) in the pre and post testing and consequently the first null hypothesis of the current study was verified. In other words, the effect of the

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content of the suggested unit apart from the teaching strategy was not significant in developing oracy skills (listening and speaking).

Several interpretations could be given for the insignificant effect of the suggested unit on developing oracy skills. Perhaps, the first interpretation lies in the fact that the content in itself is not enough to develop students' oracy skills. A given content needs to be coupled with a teaching strategy. In this case, the content was primarily developed to be taught via the jigsaw strategy. Therefore, when listening to this content, the students taught via the traditional approach did not show any improvement in their listening or speaking performance, especially that they received no help on how to go about processing or producing the aural input, but were left to sink or swim. This, in fact, had a demoralizing effect on students in this group. Having been, over and over, exposed to the aural input and failing to go about it seemed to have diminished the high spirit of motivation with which they started the treatment (this was highlighted by the teacher). Another, interpretation lies in the fact that the traditional method is not effective in developing oracy skills as it lacks the potentials (e.g., heightening students' motivation, fostering self-confidence and reducing or warding off anxiety) necessary for overcoming the challenges oracy skills pose; challenges such as the fleeting nature of the spoken message, the limitation of the memory and the anxiety level accompanied with oracy skills.

**B) THE EFFECT OF THE TEACHING STRATEGY
ON ORACY SKILLS (LISTENING)**

Null hypotheses two (Ho2A): *"There is no statistically significant difference at .05 level in the oracy skills (listening) between the mean scores of the first experimental group students (taught by the traditional strategy) in the pre and post testing"*, was tested using the *Multivariate Analysis of Variance procedure (henceforth MANOVA) within the SPSS for Windows Release 09*, with teaching strategy (jigsaw listening vs. traditional approach) and learning styles (auditory, visual) being the independent variables (factors) and the students' scores on the listening comprehension test being

the dependent variables. Students' listening comprehension post-test scores were analysed using the listening comprehension pre-test scores as a covariate.

Table 3: Results of MANOVA in Listening Performance

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: listening skills

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1596.284 ^a	4	399.071	45.289	.000
Intercept	79.541	1	79.541	9.027	.004
LESPRE	55.617	1	55.617	6.312	.016
LS	121.586	1	121.586	13.798	.001
GROUP	445.516	1	445.516	50.559	.000
LS * GROUP	.173	1	.173	.020	.889
Error	387.716	44	8.812		
Total	43600.000	49			
Corrected Total	1984.000	48			

a. R Squared = .805 (Adjusted R Squared = .787)

Results of MANOVA (table 3 above) yielded an R^2 coefficient of .805. This means the variation in treatment accounted for 81 % of the variation in the listening comprehension test after it was adjusted by the covariate. They also showed that the observed effects were statistically significant in treatment effect ($F(50, 56)$ (.005) and consequently the first null hypothesis of the current study was not verified. This means that there are significant differences between the adjusted mean scores of the two groups in listening performance due to the teaching strategy utilized. In other words, students' listening performance is dependent on the type of treatment received. Comparing the means of the two groups indicated the out performance of the jigsaw group.

Several interpretations could be given for the out performance of the jigsaw group over the other group in listening performance. One interpretation may be due to the game like nature of the jigsaw strategy which appealed to students and encouraged them to participate in the listening activities. It also might be due to the cooperative and supportive environment created by the jigsaw listening strategy in which students felt they could work more confidently, being reassured by the help of their peers. Students listened with more confidence, and missing parts of what they listened to did not render them disparate since they

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could catch up with that later in the discussion with their group mates. Therefore, they went on listening without hesitation or frustration. They rather did it willingly, and with a spirit of responsibility since each student in a group knew he/she had a role to play upon which the success of the whole group depended. Therefore, each student did not only do his/her best but they also struggled with whatever they listen to. In fact each student had kind of a personal strong goal for working hard. This goal is to prove his/her personal importance as a participant in the overall success of the group.

This finding gives evidence for the positive effect of using the jigsaw strategy on developing EFL listening. This finding goes in line with the findings of other studies that indicated the positive effect of using the jigsaw strategy on developing EFL listening (Geddes & Sturtridge, 1978, 1980).

**C) THE EFFECT OF THE TEACHING STRATEGY
ON ORACY SKILLS (SPEAKING)**

Null hypothesis two (Ho2B): "*There is no statistically significant difference at .05 levels in the oracy skills between the mean scores of the first experimental group (taught by the traditional strategy) and the second experimental group (taught by the jigsaw strategy) in the pre and post testing*" was tested using MANOVA with teaching strategy (jigsaw listening vs. traditional approach) and learning styles (auditory, visual) being the independent variables (factors) and the students' scores on the speaking scale being the dependent variables. Students' speaking post-test scores were analyzed using the speaking pre-test scores as a covariate.

Table 4: Results of MANOVA in oracy (speaking)**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Total score

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2374.092 ^a	4	593.523	99.882	.000
Intercept	117.954	1	117.954	19.850	.000
TOTPRE	956.909	1	956.909	161.035	.000
LS	15.568	1	15.568	2.620	.113
GROUP	437.287	1	437.287	73.589	.000
LS * GROUP	.417	1	.417	.070	.792
Error	261.459	44	5.942		
Total	33914.000	49			
Corrected Total	2635.551	48			

a. R Squared = .901 (Adjusted R Squared = .892)

Results of MANOVA (table 4 above) yielded an R^2 coefficient of .901. This means the variation in treatment accounted for 90 % of the variation in the speaking scale after it was adjusted by the covariate. They also showed that the observed effects were statistically significant in treatment effect ($F(73, 59) > (.005)$) and consequently the second null hypothesis of the current study was not verified. This means that there are significant differences between the adjusted mean scores of the two groups in speaking performance due to teaching strategy. In other words, students' speaking performance is dependent on the type of teaching strategy used. Comparing the means of the two groups indicated the out performance of the jigsaw group.

Again the out performance of the jigsaw group (experimental 1) over the other group (experimental 2) in speaking performance might be interpreted in terms of the distinctive features and procedure of the jigsaw strategy. The encouraging, supportive and non-threatening environment the jigsaw provided helped warding off students' inhibition about trying to speak in English. Instead, those features helped fostering self –confidence and gave students the plunge to speak with no fear of making mistakes or losing faith. Indeed, the jigsaw listening provided an ideal environment

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for students to learn, understand, perceive and produce the target language. Language was used naturally as students are encouraged and required to listen to others and express themselves while working interactively in groups to fill in the gaps and get the jigsaw puzzle completed. This, in turn, created a real and genuine motive for communication between groups.

Moreover, taking notes might be another plausible interpretation for the better speaking skills. Notes served as a source to talk from or to refer to while talking which might give them some hints about how and what to say. Teachers' role during the discussion stage was another interpretation as the teacher disallowed students from resorting to their L1 and instead encouraged free communication in the target language. The teacher himself refrained from interrupting or correcting students to encourage their fluency. The material is designed to give students the opportunity to communicate; accuracy is not of first importance. Discussion stage was very useful: the students communicated at a more sophisticated level calling on all their linguistic resources to agree or disagree with each other or to ask another student to express himself more clearly.

In summary of the findings discussed in the above sections, this study gave evidence that while the traditional method in teaching the content of the suggested unit was not effective in developing oracy skills, using the jigsaw listening strategy had a positive effect on enhancing EFL students' oracy (listening and speaking) skills. Several elements that might account for the realization of these findings have been dwelt on above. However, there still is one crucial element which is an effect of using the jigsaw listening strategy and which itself provides a further interpretation of those findings. This element is motivation. Motivation is generally enhanced by achievement and is, at the same time, a catalyst for more achievement and success. In the case of the experimental 1 group, students' motivation started declining session after session as a result of the lack of achievement, and students' performance did not improve. In contrary, the motivation of the experimental 2 group students increased session after session and whenever students scored an

achievement, they were motivated to go on doing their best to attain more and more success. The teacher of this group pinpointed that after the end of the experiment, students kept asking to be taught via jigsaw. In this sense students of the experimental 2 group liked the way they were taught and were eager to listen and speak with kind of enjoyment. The result was that they worked hard and their performance improved as revealed in the findings. This goes in line with what was stated in literature that highly motivated students work hard, persevere in the face of difficulties and find satisfaction in the accomplishment of the learning task (Chamot et. Al. 1996:178). In a nutshell, motivation in this case acted as a driving force that urged students to work hard and achieve, and at the same time is ignited by the achievement and in turn triggers more achievement and so on.

D) THE EFFECT OF LEARNING STYLES ON ORACY SKILLS

Null hypotheses three (Ho3): *"There is no statistically significant difference at .05 levels in the oracy skills between the mean scores of the auditory learners and those of the visual learners due to the learning style, in the pre and post testing"* was tested using MANOVA.

Results of MANOVA (table 3 and 4 above) showed that the observed effects were not statistically significant in learning styles effect (listening) ($F(13, 79) < (.005)$) and speaking ($F(2, 62) < (.005)$) consequently the third null hypothesis of the current study was verified. This means that there are no significant differences between the adjusted mean scores of the two learning styles on oracy skills. In other words, students' oracy skills are not dependent on learning styles.

Several interpretations could be given for this finding which seems to be inconsistent with what literature highlighted about the positive relationship between learning style and oracy skills. Scarcella and Oxford (1992:140), for example, point out that "listening is easier for auditory learners than for learners with visual or hands-on (kinesthetic) styles. One plausible interpretation may be due to the small number of auditory

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students within each group (visual = 35, auditory = 14). Those learners who were deemed as auditory were not in fact pure auditory as their scores on the subscale of visual learning were very close with those obtained on the auditory subscale. Such small number and the closeness of score did not allow for the variance to be evident in the findings. More importantly, apart from the highest score, there was no cut-off point that would help assigning one student to a preference rather than to another. How high the score should be was undefined. To illustrate, the following table gives some students' scores in the visual and auditory subscales. Taking highest scores as a criterion, S4 is considered a visual learner even though his/her score is equal to the auditory score of S5, who is, however, considered a visual learner. The same contradiction is revealed by comparing the scores of students S4 who is considered visual and S12 who is also considered visual though s/he has the same visual scores as the auditory scores of S4.

Students no	Visual	Auditory
S4	23	21
S5	25	23
S7	22	23
S12	21	18

Another interpretation is related to the perceptual learning style preference questionnaire itself and its internal structure. Reid's questionnaire included some statements where the respondents were asked to state their preferences for one of two learning style types included in the statement. These were items nine, twenty-four and twenty nine:

No	Statements
9	I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read.
24	I learn better by reading than by listening to someone.
29	I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.

An intuitive concern with such statements was that respondents might not always prefer one style to another in every situation and that asking them to compare their preference might lead them to make instant comparisons which may in other cases be incorrect. A further concern with such statements was that the questionnaire items that were in favor of one or another style of learning were not equal. There were two statements in favor of the visual learning style while there was one for the auditory learning style. This could lead to a problem in consistency in the structure of the questionnaire. One more concern was that the wording of some items was not clear and it was not possible to infer which learning style it was referring to. For example, item eight stated:

8-	When I <u>do</u> things in class, I learn better
----	--

The word 'do' here is confusing. Although this item was intended to measure a kinesthetic learning style, it could readily be interpreted as a statement for a tactile learning style. All these factors might have lead to the finding obtained regarding the effect of learning style which might be at odds or inconsistent with what was highlighted in literature.

E) THE EFFECT OF INTERACTION ON ORACY SKILLS

Null hypotheses four (Ho4): *"There is no interaction at 0.05 level between the instructional strategy (jigsaw vs. traditional) and learning styles (auditory vs. visual) on oracy skills"* was tested using

MANOVA.

Results of MANOVA (table 3 and 4 above) showed that the observed effects were not statistically significant in oracy skills due to teaching strategy by learning styles effect (listening = $F(0, 173) < (.005)$ and speaking = $F(0, 417) < (.005)$ and consequently the fourth null hypothesis (H04) of the current study was not verified. This means that the effect of the teaching strategy (jigsaw vs. traditional) seems to be the similar to auditory and visual learners.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The overall findings of the study have specific and broader implications which may contribute to the pedagogical and methodological implications for future research. Implications of this study are summarized in the following.

- ❖ The findings obtained in this study have added to the growing body of research on developing oracy (listening and speaking) skills in an integrated way, especially those studies which maintain that oracy skills are teachable and do not develop naturally, and that they must be incorporated, systematically and explicitly in the everyday classroom activities.
- ❖ Oral language is not only a link in the process of students' learning and thinking skills, but also and more importantly a foundation for the development of other language skills. Therefore, promoting oracy skills is an issue which deserves serious attention from both teachers and researchers.
- ❖ Students' oracy skills develop best in dynamic, interactive environments, where students have ample time to share and listen to a variety of ideas, safely and comfortably. Such environments are like the ones created when using the jigsaw learning strategy. This atmosphere is critical for the development of productive communication channels in the classroom for all students. This was substantiated by the findings of the current study which gave evidence that

the jigsaw listening strategy has a considerably potential for promoting both EFL listening and speaking skills regardless of learners' learning styles.

- ❖ On another hand, the present study findings showed that the suggested unit content is not effective in enhancing students' oracy skills if it is not coupled with a suitable teaching strategy.
- ❖ In regards to learning styles, the findings of this study revealed that within the limitations of the current study, students' learning styles did not make a difference in their overall performance in oracy skills.
- ❖ Finally the findings this study showed that there is no significant effect due to the interaction between the students' prepared learning styles and the teaching strategy on promoting students' oracy skills.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ This study was conducted with a small sample of students which did not allow for categorizing them into groups according to their perceptual learning styles preferences, which might have affected the results regarding effect of learning styles as well as their interaction effect.
- ❖ The methodological concerns raised in the literature review about the structure of Raid's questionnaire might have lead to the inaccurate grouping of the sample subjects in accordance with their perceptual learning styles preferences. Such inaccurate grouping might have affected the overall findings of the study.
- ❖ This study was conducted for a short duration of instruction which was probably not enough for verifying the effect of interaction between the teaching strategy and the learning styles.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- ❖ The study beforehand makes a case for reconsidering the position of oracy skills development in both curriculum and assessment practices for the central role these skills play in the overall social and academic development of learners.
- ❖ Those who are responsible for planning the preparation and training courses for prospective EFL teachers should consider incorporating the jigsaw strategy in their courses as an effective strategy that have considerable potentials for developing language skills.
- ❖ In-service teachers should be trained on how to develop their students' listening and speaking skills especially via the use of the jigsaw listening strategy, given that they always complained that they do not have the sound methodology for developing these two cognitively demanding skills. .
- ❖ The unit suggested in the current study coupled with the suggested teaching strategy (jigsaw listening) might be utilized for developing secondary school students' oracy skills as well as the oracy skills of students in other stages of education.
- ❖ The present study was conducted with a small number of students. It is recommended that a larger group of students be included in future similar research studies. A larger sample would allow for categorizing students into different learning style groups and is likely to yield a fuller picture of the interaction between different perceptual learning styles and the use of the jigsaw listening strategy on enhancing oracy skills.
- ❖ The present study showed that the jigsaw listening strategy has a considerably potential for promoting both EFL listening and speaking skills. Future research studies might investigate the effect of other instructional strategies in the same regard or hope to duplicate the same study to verify

the impact of this strategy on different group samples and contexts.

- ❖ **The present study used Reid's questionnaire for grouping the sample subjects in accordance with their perceptual learning styles preferences. Future research studies might try different instruments for the same purpose and compare the findings.**
- ❖ **The framework used in this study emphasized the need to focus the attention on developing listening and speaking in an integrated way since they are the two crucial components underlying oracy skills. Further research might hope to attend to developing other crucial sub-skills underlying oracy skills, e.g., pronunciation and stress patterns.**

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