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Diagnosing Students' Listening Obstructions in Distinguishing English Varieties

Case Study: Second Year LMD Students of English at Mohamed Khider University-Biskra-

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as partial fulfillment for the
Master Degree in English Language: Sciences of Language

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious, Most Merciful
All the praise is due to Allah alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds.
I dedicate this work to:

My dear parents Lazhar and Zohra....I love you so much and I appreciate your sacrifice during these years.

My dear parents in-law: Abdellah and Fatma.

My dear husband Adel who encouraged and inspired me to pursue my interests. I am forever grateful for your patience.

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Thank you my sweet heart for all the time being within me.

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To all who I know and love me.

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Abstract

The present research aims at diagnosing students' listening obstructions. In addition, it aims at examining the effects of developing students' familiarity of English varieties on students listening comprehensions. We hypothesized that if EFL learners overcome their listening problems, they will be able to distinguish and understand English varieties. A descriptive research has been conducted to investigate second year LMD students who study at Mohamed Kheider University, Biskra. This research work consists of three chapters. Chapters one and two present the theoretical parts, and chapter three introduces the fieldwork of the study. For the nature of this research, we have administered questionnaires for both 08 teachers of English and 50 students from two groups of second year LMD students. The gained results helped us to explore the main obstacles that impede EFL learners effectively; also, the teachers sample claimed that student's inability to listen well affects their achievements. In combination with the use of English varieties, teachers and students argued that speaking with different accents of English block the comprehension of the message. As it is required, some pedagogical implications are mentioned to reflect the necessity of improving listening through identifying English varieties and some other difficulties that are related to the learner himself.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DEDICATION.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEENTS.....	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	V
LISTE OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	X
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XI
LIST OF TABLES.....	XII
LIST OF GRAPHS.....	XIII
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	XV
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	2
AIMS OF THE STUDY.....	3
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
HYPOTHESIS.....	4
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH TOOLS.....	5
POPULATION.....	5
STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION.....	6

CHAPTER ONE ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION.....	8
1. VARITIES OF ENGLISH AROUND THE WORLD.....	8
1.1 BRITISH ENGLISH.....	8
1.1.1 ENGLISH SPOKEN IN ENGLAND.....	9
1.1.2 ENGLISH SPOKEN IN WELS.....	9
1.1.3 ENGLISH SPOKEN IC SCOTLAND.....	10
1.2 AMERICAN ENGLISH.....	10
1.3 RECEIVED PRONCIATION.....	11
1.4 OTHER VARIETIES.....	12
2. LEVELS OF ENGLISH VARIETIES.....	13
2.1 PHONOLOGY.....	13
2.2 GRAMMAR.....	14
2.2.1 MORPHOLOGY.....	14
2.2.2 SYNTAX.....	15
2.2.3 SPELLING.....	16
2.3 PRONCIATION AND SPEECH RATE.....	17
2.3.1 ACCENT.....	18
2.3.2 STRESS AND INTONATION.....	19
3. COMPARAISON BETWEEN BRITISH ENGLISH AND AMERICAN BRITISH.....	19
3.1 VOCABULARY.....	20
3.2 LEXIS.....	20
4. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.....	21
4.1 IDIOMS.....	22

4.2	CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE.....	22
	CONCLUSION.....	23

**CAPTER TWO AN OVERVIEW ON LISTENING SKILLS AND LISTENING
OBSERVATION**

	INTRODUCTION.....	26
1.	DEFINITIONS OF LISTENING SKILLS AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION.....	26
2.	THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING.....	27
3.	STAGES OF LISTENING.....	29
3.1	RECEIVING.....	29
3.2	ATTENDING.....	30
3.2.1	SELECTIVITY OF ATTENTION.....	30
3.2.2	STRENGTH OF ATTENTION.....	30
3.2.3	SUSTAINMENT OF ATTENTION.....	30
3.3	UNDERSTANDING.....	31
3.4	RESPONDING.....	31
3.5	REMMERBERING.....	31
4.	TYPES OF LISTENING.....	32
4.1	INTERNATIONAL/ TRANSACTIONAL LISTENING.....	32
4.2	APPRECIATIVE/ AESTHETIC LISTENING.....	32
4.3	INFORMATIVE LISTENING.....	33
4.3.1	VOCABULARY.....	33
4.3.2	CONCENTRATION.....	33

4.3.3	MEMORY.....	33
4.4	CRITICAL LISTENING.....	34
4.5	DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING.....	34
5.	THE PROCESS OF LISTENING.....	34
5.1	TOP-DOWN PROCESSING.....	35
5.2	BOTTOM-UP PROCESSING.....	35
6.	LISTENING STRATEGIES.....	36
6.1	BEFORE LISTENING / PRE-LISTENING.....	36
6.1.1	PRE-TEACHING VOCABULARY.....	37
6.1.2	ESTABLISHING CONTEXT.....	37
6.2	WHILE LISTENING.....	37
6.2.1	PRE-SET QUESTIONS.....	37
6.2.2	CHECKING ANSWERS.....	37
6.3	AFTER LISTENING.....	38
6.3.1	FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE.....	38
6.3.2	INFERRING VOCABULARY.....	38
7.	FACTORS AFFECTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION.....	39
7.1	MESSAGE-RELATED DIFFICULTIES.....	39
7.1.1	VOCABULARY.....	39
7.1.2	GRAMMAR.....	40
7.2	SPEAK-RELATED DIFFICULTIES.....	41
7.2.1	THE RATE OF DELIVERY.....	41
7.2.2	LACK OF SPEAKING PERFORMANCE.....	42
7.3	LISTENER- RELATED DIFFICULTIES.....	42
7.3.1	LACK OF MOTIVATION.....	42

7.3.2	ANXIETY.....	43
7.3.3	BIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.....	44
7.3.4	PHYSICAL ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS.....	44
	CONCLUSION.....	44
	CHAPTER THREE FIELD WORK.....	46
	1. INTRODUCTION.....	47
	2. DESIGN AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO QUESTIONNAIRES.....	47
	2.1. QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENTS.....	47
	2.2 QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS	49
	3. ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES	50
	4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRES.....	51
	5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES.....	77
	CONCLUSION.....	95
	6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	96
	GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	98
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	100
	APPENDICES.....	105
	APPENDICE 1.....	106
	APPENDICE 2.....	110
	ملخص.....	113

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AE: American English

AusE: Australian English

BBC: British Board casting Corporation

BE: British English

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EIL: English as an International Language

EL: English Learners

ESL: English as a Second Language

NZE: New Zeelan English

RP: Received Pronunciation

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SND: Scottish-National Dictionary

USA: United States of America

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 01: STAGES OF LISTENING.....	29
FIGURE 02: THE PROCESS OF LISTENING; TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP.....	35
FIGURE 03: A SAMPLE PAGE FROM A WORD STUDY NOTEBOOK.....	40

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE01:	Some of British and American differences in Syntax.....	16
TABLE02:	British and American Spelling differences.....	17
TABLE03:	British and American diversity in using some vocabulary.....	20
TABLE04:	Students' Gender Distribution	51
TABLE05:	Students' age Distribution	52
TABLE06:	Students' number of years in studying English	53
TABLE07:	Students' choice of English Language.....	54
TABLE08:	Students' attitudes towards listening comprehension course	55
TABLE09:	Teachers' encouragement frequency of students to listen to English	56
TABLE010:	Students' self-motivation to listening.....	57
TABLE011:	Students' level in listening comprehension.....	58
TABLE012:	Students' reason of having weak or moderate level in listening.....	60
TABLE013:	Students' use of listening process (relating what they know to the passage content	62
TABLE014:	Confirmation of students' predictions.....	63
TABLE015:	Students' psychological factors that affect their comprehension	64
TABLE016:	Students' justification of the difficulty of answering the question.....	65
TABLE017:	Students' self-evaluation of listening proficiency comparing to their classmates.....	67
TABLE018:	Pronouncing English differently by EFL Teachers.....	68
TABLE019:	Students' guesses if the variety used by their teachers.....	69
TABLE020:	Levels of teachers talk differences.....	71
TABLE021:	The effects of using English varieties on students listening comprehension.....	72

TABLE022:	Teachers' contribution in distinguishing English varieties.....	73
TABLE023:	The existence of cultural differences in teachers' talk.....	75
TABLE024:	Teachers' Gender Distribution.....	77
TABLE025:	Teachers' Qualifications and Diplômas.....	78
TABLE026:	Teachers teaching Experience.....	79
TABLE027:	Teachers opinion concerning which language skill their students suffer from.....	80
TABLE028:	Teachers point of view on listening comprehension difficulties'.....	82
TABLE029:	Teachers use of listening strategies.....	83
TABLE030:	Teachers views about making their students aware of the use of English varieties.....	84
TABLE031:	Teachers estimates about students' improvement in distinguishing between English varieties	86
TABLE032:	Teachers encouragement for an extensive listening.....	87
TABLE033:	Kind of listening materials that teachers advice their students to use.....	88
TABLE034:	Teachers' views on providing special sessions for teachinglistening.....	89
TABLE035:	Teachers' techniques that may enhance students understanding of English varieties.....	90
TABLE036:	Teachers' use of English accents	91
TABLE037:	Teachers' opinions on the influence of English varieties on students listening comprehension	93
TABLE 038:	Teachers' comments and suggestions.....	94

LIST OF GRAPHS

GRAPH 01:	Students' Gender Distribution.....	51
GRAPH 02:	Students' age Distribution	52
GRAPH 03:	Students' number of years in studying English.....	53
GRAPH 04:	Students' choice of English Language.....	54
GRAPH 05:	Students' attitudes towards listening comprehension course	55
GRAPH 06:	Teachers' encouragement frequency of students to listen to English.....	56
GRAPH 07:	Students self-motivation to listening.....	57
GRAPH 08:	Students level in listening comprehension.....	58
GRAPH 09:	Students' reason of having weak or moderate level in listening	60
GRAPH 10:	Students' use of listening process (relating what they know to the passage content).....	62
GRAPH 11:	Confirmation of student's predictions.....	63
GRAPH 12:	Students' psychological factors that affect their comprehension	64
GRAPH 13:	Students' justification of the difficulty of answering the question	66
GRAPH 14:	Students' self-evaluation of listening proficiency comparing to their classmates.....	67
GRAPH 15:	Pronouncing English differently by EFL teachers.....	68
GRAPH 16:	Students' guesses if the variety used by their teachers.....	70
GRAPH 17:	Levels of teachers talk differences.....	71
GRAPH 18:	The effects of using English varieties on students listening comprehension	72
GRAPH 19:	Teachers contribution in distinguishing English varieties.....	74
GRAPH 20:	The existence of cultural differences in teachers' talk.....	75

GRAPH 21:	Teachers Gender Distribution.....	77
GRAPH 22:	Teachers' Qualifications and Diplomas.....	78
GRAPH 23:	Teachers' teaching Experience	79
GRAPH 24:	Teachers' opinion concerning which language skill their students suffer from.....	81
GRAPH 25:	Teachers' points of view on listening comprehension difficulties.....	82
GRAPH 26:	Teachers' use of listening strategies.....	83
GRAPH 27:	Teachers' views about making their students aware of the use of English Varieties.....	85
GRAPH 28:	Teachers' estimates about students' improvement in distinguishing between English varieties	86
GRAPH 29:	Teachers' encouragement for an extensive listening.....	87
GRAPH 30:	Kind of listening materials that teachers advice their students to use....	88
GRAPH 31:	Teachers' estimates about providing special for teaching listening.....	89
GRAPH 32:	Teachers' techniques that may enhance students understanding of English varieties.....	90
GRAPH 33:	Teachers estimate about the English accents they speak with.....	92
GRAPH 34:	Teachers' opinions about the influence of English varieties on students listening comprehension.....	93
GRAPH 35:	Teachers' comments and suggestions.....	94

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDICE 1.....	106
APPENDICE 2.....	110

General Introduction

Many researchers like Brown, Rost and Kline have dealt with the issue of poor listening and the reasons behind the failure of EFL learners in understanding and grasping the intended meaning, for example; lack of concentration and learners' attitudes (interest and motivation). Learners' failure can be described in terms of the inability to distinguish the English language varieties, which compose of British English, American English, Black English, Australian English and its branches. As a consequence; there will be inefficient communication inside the classroom which is one of the main objectives of academic study for teaching listening to EFL learners.

Kline (1996) claimed that "we spend nearly half of our communication time listening. But few of us make any real effort to be better listener". According to him being active listener requires efforts starting from knowing the reasons beyond the failure of the listening process. As a matter of fact, EFL learners consider English varieties at best as preventing and at worse as misleading concept in reaching an effective listening. Another key point is that EFL learners fail in distinguishing the variety of English because of the cultural differences ,each variety has its own culture that includes celebrations, customs and language which the learner is unfamiliar with.

Other factors can be categorised as follows; physical setting (such as noise, absence of listening materials); psychological situation which is about learners attitudes (lack of interest and low motivation). In addition to the language itself (i.e. lack of vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, biological problems like brain and ear damage are also considered as an obstacle for many listeners.

1) Statement of the problem

Listening comprehension is seen as the basis of any classroom communication (Team FME, 2013). The former is “an important skill, it enables language learners to receive and interact with language input and facilitate the emergence of other language skill (Vendergrift and Goh, 2012.p.56). Unfortunately, not all the students can listen effectively especially when it comes to the varieties of English language, which include British English, American English, black English, Australian English and the Received Pronunciation (RP). Those varieties appear at many levels of the language such as pronunciation, spelling and the use of vocabulary .EFL learners are unfamiliar with this varieties of English language which the teacher may use in his sessions and that what makes them fail in catching words and loose the complete meaning of the passage , this represent the influence that the Englishes have on the non-native learners of English.

Moreover, cultural differences (celebrations ,customs and values) can also prevent the learners’ listening comprehension during the teacher’s talk. For example, Turkey (2014) gave us the following statement to be analyzed orally. Puerto Rico student: Are there poinsettia at Christmas?. Sri Lanka student: Does monkeys build a house? .Our interpretation to this sequence was wrong , we no idea that poinsettia are kinds of tropical flowers that found in Puerto Rico and not found in Britain also Christmas celebration is done in September. Besides, the other student used the term monkey that is one of Sri Lanka’s famous animals. According to Dooley and Levinson (2000), when we analyse a discourse, the base on which we construct our mental representation is surely becoming familiar with the target language culture.

The present research investigates the reasons of poor listening and its reflection on the learners' ability to distinguish the English varieties. It also focuses on listening obstruction such as learners learning styles and attitudes, physical setting and listening materials which represent an impediment on the learners' understanding of the language used by the teacher. Then, it shows its consequences not only on the learners but also on the environment surrounding them. As an illustration; poor listeners usually lose their concentration, understanding, and remembrance of information, this namely leads to waste the opportunities of successful learning as well as it ends with breakdown of social relationships and the absence of an effective communication.

Nevertheless, it is not impossible to improve the students' ability when there is a mismatch between their listening comprehension and what a listening passage requires. At one hand, there should be special sessions where teachers focus on training the listening skill through providing materials such as CDs, DVD or videos in the classroom. On the other hand, learners should be aware, interested and have a purpose while listening to help them build knowledge in different aspects of knowledge and make difference between its varieties and its cultural differences.

2) Aim of the study

This study aims to draw both teachers and learners' attention to the most significant obstacles affecting listening comprehension in distinguishing English varieties. It aims to find out the obstructions that hold back the learners from fulfilling the objectives of their communication when they do not master the listening skill. It also aims to explain how those obstructions impede the learners' ability to recognize and differentiate the varieties of English language. Moreover, the study explains how the learners can bridge the gap between his/her listening comprehension and the content of the language whatever its variety.

In details, this study aims to accomplish the following objectives; first, clarify the concept of listening and its obstructions. Second, show the different varieties of English language. Third, improving listening skill through providing special training sessions accompanied with suitable materials such as CDs, DVDs, and videos. Finally, showing the importance of listening skill that improves learners' communication (fluency).

3) Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the most important obstructions that stand beyond the failure of EFL learners during the listening process?
- 2- Is the variety of English language one of the obstructions that impede the learners' listening comprehension?
- 3- Is it the teacher duty to schedule special training courses for listening or is it the learner self-responsibility to look for the English varieties and try to learn them using CDs, videos and songs?
- 4- In what ways cultural and social differences are considered within the learners' problems while listening to the teachers' talk?

4) Hypothesis

If EFL learners overcome their listening problems, they will be able to distinguish and understand English varieties.

5) Significance of the study

The significance of this study is to discover and trait the main problems that EFL learners face during the listening process. Meanwhile, it shows the importance of the

listening skill through the improvement of the learners when they speak fluently and do well during classroom conversation. Furthermore, this study is significant for teachers too; it will help them diagnose the learners' listening problems in which they can prevent it from expanding and re-occurring. Meanwhile, the learners themselves will be engaged in a variety of Englishes. In addition, this study deserved much interest because it shows the learners' right to maintain an efficient time for listening using the suitable materials.

6) Research Methodology and Research Tools

The research method that is used in this study is the descriptive method in order to diagnose the reasons of poor listening and how they impede EFL learners from differentiating and understanding the variety of English language.

6.1 The choice of the method

The descriptive method is seems to be the appropriate one for this study, it provides information about natural behaviours and attitudes of a certain group and describes the phenomenon as it exists and our purpose is to discover the difficulties that learners face during listening to English by describing its varieties.

6.2 Research tools

The tool that is chosen for this study is questionnaire that will be submitted to both teachers and students. Using both close-ended, open-ended questions and what is called semi-structured questionnaire.

6.3 Population

This study is concerned with second year English students at Mohamed Kheider university because we believe that they to some extent experienced listening during their

lectures in their first year and faced certain problems since they still unfamiliar with the English varieties . The sample which will be chosen for this study is a random group of student from Science of the Language .

7) Structure of Dissertation

The present research is divided into two parts; the theoretical part and field work. The former consists of two chapters; the first one introduces English varieties that includes British English, American English and Received Pronunciation. The second represent students' listening obstructions that are related to the learner, to the speaker and to the language itself. The latter is about the analysis of the questionnaires that are addressed to both teachers of English and Second year LMD students at Mohamed Khider University.

CHAPTER ONE ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION	8
1. VARITIES OF ENGLISH AROUND THE WORLD.....	8
1.1 BRITISH ENGLISH.....	8
1.1.1 ENGLISH SPOKEN IN ENGLAND.....	9
1.1.2 ENGLISH SPOKEN IN WELS.....	9
1.1.3 ENGLISH SPOKEN IC SCOTLAND.....	10
1.2 AMERICAN ENGLISH.....	10
1.3 RECEIVED PRONCIATION.....	11
1.4 OTHER VARIETIES.....	12
2. LEVELS OF ENGLISH VARIETIES.....	13
2.1 PHONOLOGY.....	13
2.2 GRAMMAR.....	14
2.2.1 MORPHOLOGY.....	14
2.2.2 SYNTAX.....	15
2.2.3 SPELLING.....	16
2.3 PRONCIATION AND SPEECH RATE.....	17
2.3.1 ACCENT.....	18
2.3.2 STRESS AND INTONATION.....	19
3. COMPARAISON BETWEEN BRITISH ENGLISH AND AMERICAN BRITISH.....	19
3.1 VOCABULARY.....	20
3.2 LEXIS.....	20
4. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.....	21
4.1 IDIOMS.....	22
4.2 CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE.....	22
CONCLUSION.....	23

Chapter One: English as a World Language

Introduction

The spread of the English language under the following nicknames English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has touched all aspects of one's life; politics, business, media and education. It also leads to the emergence of the so-called world Englishes, which consist of many countries that speak English as the first language such as British English, American English and Received Pronunciation. Regardless to its historical and Geographical dimensions, the linguistic structures are given more importance to be studied and distinguished in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language.

This chapter is devoted to explore the varieties of English Language. It starts with British English, American English and Received Pronunciation. Then it tries to trace the Ways through which each variety constructs its own language structure and use depending on the following levels: phonology, grammar and pronunciation. After that, a brief comparison between British and American English will be presented before ending with social and cultural differences that are found in the world Englishes.

1. Varieties of English language

English language is used in different countries around the world. The research focus is directed to English spoken by native speakers such as in Britain, USA and Australia passing to some of its extensions.

1.1. British English

British English variety consists of many complicated varieties that had been developed from the spoken English derived from the British Empire. According to Hickey

(2014), the geographical designation of the British island consists of England, Wales and Scotland. British English is the term that is used in England and used for English spoken throughout the British island where the differences across England, Wales and Scotland are apparent. In addition, Kortman(2004) claimed that the British Isles are divided into Scotland, Ireland, Irish, Wales and England, those latter are the most intensive areas of the British Isles. This intensity leads to the emergence of more dialects and accents.

1.1.1. English spoken in England

Linguistically speaking, England has been divided into many different areas which vary according to the variation of dialects and accents. Beal (2004) claimed that Eliss(1869_1889) divided North England into six major areas which is based on the four following phonological features; the pronunciation of the definite article “the”, the way of producing “r” sound, and pronouncing words such some words that contains the vowel “ʌ” and other words that consist the diphthong “aʊ” such house. Moreover, the most common division of Southern England is shown by Altenddorf and Watt (2004) in terms of southeast and southwest England, these latter are nearly similar but the most apparent distinction is that in counter to the south easterners, south westerners pronounce the “r” sound when it is in the final position like in “*far*” and “*farmer*”.

1.1.2. English spoken in Wales

Spoken English in Wales is closer to the one spoken in England; Welsh English is also diagnosed in terms of north and south based on the following criteria: phonology, grammar and lexis. Hickey (2014) pointed the following phonological features:

-The schwa /ə/ found in words such as cut /kət/ and but /bət/ instead of /ʌ/ in the same words/ kʌt /, / bʌt /.

- Having long vowel in a final position like / i: / in sorry / səri: /.

-The realization of dental /t/, /d/ and /n/.

-Having a clear /l/ in all position.

-Using voiced fricatives in the initial position such as pronouncing first and four with /v/.

In addition, Hickey claimed some grammatical and lexical features of Wales language:

-First, left disorder in a sentence elements such “*Books in linguistics he is keen on reading*”.

-Second; “*we don’t speak no English in the home*”. This shows the use of double negation.

-Finally, the use of “as” as an adjective for example “the woman as went abroad”.

1.1.3. English spoken in Scotland

English spoken in Scotland is more difficult than the one that is spoken in Weles and England ,which is shown in terms of grammar, spelling and pronunciation. Kortman (2004), claimed that in grammar, forms of verbs differ from the other English’s forms in numerous ways; for examples the past tense of the following verbs, *dang* and *dung* is the past of *toding*, the verb go in Scots is *gae* and its past is *gaedor geed*. The verb *gane* conjugated as *geen* in the past. In addition, taking the plural form of eye which is “*een*” can be considered as one of the most variation of English language in Scotland .In spelling, Scottish English consists of wide range of different spelling that can be found mainly in the Scottish-National-Dictionary (SND), some examples of these variations are as the following: *to carry*, *to cairrie*, *lik* instead of *like*, *tittlin* instead of *titlin* and *beke* instead of *beek*. These differences are taken in forms of omitting the e vowel and having single or double consonants or vowels.

1.2. American English

According to Hickey (2014), American English appeared with the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and exactly during the period of British colonization to

America, this led to the emergence of New England that consisted of Virginia, North and, South Carolina, Georgia New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware. In addition, the immigration of quarter of a million Ulster Scots to these colonies contributed to spread of varieties of American English. He also stated that one of the most common variety is AfricanAmerican English which was known as Black English, this latter brought to America by African slaves who were put to work on tobacco and cotton plantations. Their pronunciation is characterized with the following features, producing /æ/ as /ɛ /, /ɪ / as /ə /like in bit /bit/ / bət /, /ɑ: / rounded to /ɔ: / and /d / replaced by / t / like in bread / bret /.Moreover, African English does not have the / θ / and /ð/sound instead of that they use /f / sound.

Nonetheless, American English shows differences at various levels, Bauer (2002) claimed that a dictionary of American English meaning was an attempt to create new English words meaning far from the British ones and the same thing about grammar dictionary and dictionary of pronunciation. According to Woltfram and Eastes (2006), American English sounds are produced differently; for instance, production of th/ð/ can take many forms such as “*they*” ispronounced as /dei/ and *thing* is produced as *ting*. Besides, “*th*”is produced as /f/ or /v/ such as *toof* for *tooth* and *brover* for *brother*. Another distinction can be seen in grammar. As an illustration, using past tense as participle and vice versa like in “*I had went down there*” and “*He may took the wagon*”,Other differences are in using superlatives and comparatives for example, *bad* used as *badder* and *most* as *mostest*, also the use of two model verbs in one sentence just to soften the impact of attitudes and some obligations like “*I might could go there*”. (qtd in kortman, 2004).

1. 3. Received Pronunciation (RP)

According toRoach (2004) Received Pronunciation is the accent that has been pronounced in all British English and there is no conventional definition for this accent but

a number of its interesting characteristics are mentioned by Jones (1917) and Wells (2000). First, speakers of this accent are few derived from Ireland, Scotland and Wales, hence Received Pronunciation is considered as an accent of British English. Second, Received Pronunciation speakers are classified from middle-class or upper-class and they are educated in special schools. Third, South-east of England is the place where speakers of this accent live. Finally, RP is the accent that is used in all multimedia in Great Britain specially newsreaders, announcers on radio 3 and 4 and all television channels and more important Received Pronunciation is used by BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation).

The description of Received Pronunciation is a matter of sounds which create its phonological base. Upton (2004) presented the twenty one vowels that RP contains, two of them are unstressed which are /ɪ/ and /ə/ and the others are ɑ, ʌ, ʊ, ε:, ɪ:, ɑ:, ɔ:, ʊ:, ə:, eɪ, ɔɪ, ʌɪ, aʊ, əʊ, ɪə, ʊə, ɪ, ε, a. This phonemic structure is characterized with specific distributions of monophthongs and diphthongs, as an illustration, bath, palm and strut with /ɑ:/ yet strut can also produced with /ʌ/. Then, the optional use of /ʊə/ or /ɔɪ/ with some words such as cure and the use of /ɪ/ or /ɪ:/ with happy (Hannisdal 2006). These descriptions show that Received Pronunciation is a matter of distributing vowels and taking different manners to produce them.

1.4. Other Varieties

English extends its roots to other countries such as Australia and New Zealand. According to Blair and Collins (2001), many researchers in the field of linguistics like Mitchell “the founder of Australian English (AusE) claimed that this variety of English came from the dialects spoken in the north-east of England. In addition to, New Zealand is another famous country that speaks with English language. Peters et al (2009) pointed that

New Zealand English (NZE) focused its attention to the necessity of using some verbs such as *do*, *need used* and *dare* in their speech. Accordingly, AusE and NZE as other English varieties differ in the level of syntax and share some English language features, those features are common even in British and American English.

2. Levels of English Varieties

Foreign learners of English face a wide range of English varieties that emerged according to the variation of English regions. However, many scholars studied and examined those varieties linguistically starting from the chronological development of English language as it is shown previously. Those studies are based on the main levels of variation which are phonology, grammar and pronunciation.

2. 1. Phonology

Phonology is one of the language systems that studies the science of sounds and creates the pronunciation of a certain variety. Pellegrino et al (2009) define phonology as “the cognitive organization of sounds as they constitutes the building blocks of meaningful units in language”. Starting with phonemes, English variation shares in the same phonemes with slight deference in the number, Received Pronunciation contains 24 consonants and 23 vowels; however, American English uses 25 consonants and 18 vowels. Those phonemes vary in the use ; for instance, the word “*a lot*” is transcribed as / lɒt / in RP and transcribed as /lɑt / in American English. As far as, allophones are concerned, /ə / is followed by / r / in other varieties like beer /biər / which is called breaking where the case of RP is different, this latter produces the dropped / r / such as / biə / and AERE replaced /ər / with one single sound , having the same example beer / bir /.

Other examples are mentioned by Ghali (2006) in which he remarked that /æ/ is defined as low front vowel in American English, whereas, in British English it is defined as the low central vowel /ɑ/ such as /glæs/, /glas/ and /pæθ/ and /pɑθ/. In addition, the use of /i/ like in /fertil/ in *AE* yet *BE* produces it as /ay/ with the same word /fartayl/.

Furthermore, in British English /r/ is a fricative voiced vowel in all position but in American English it is a semi-vowel.

2.2. Grammar

DeCapua (2008) asserted that grammar has different definitions and approaches. It has been defined linguistically as “a set of blue prints that guide speakers in producing comprehensible and predictable language. Every language, including its dialects or variants, is systematic and orderly. Languages and their variations are rule-governed structures, and are therefore grammatical”. In other words, each language has its own system of creating sounds and patterns which build its existence. Therefore, English learners should pay attention to the variety of English they use and considering Received Pronunciation as one of British English accents. The focus will be on English grammar variation of the two major Englishes spoken by most native speakers and studied by most foreign learners which are British English and American English.

2.2.1. Morphology

Morphological differences that both English varieties contain are not as much as vocabulary and pronunciation diversity. First, some irregular verbs are used by American English creatively and conservatively. On one hand, American English innovated the form of some conjugated verb in the past participle such as learned, burned and spelled. On the other hand, it kept the same form of other verbs like the verb gotten as the past participle of

got, it is the case of British English but the difference is in semantics. *Gotten* as an American English verb is used occasionally to mean “*acquire / obtain*” and does not carry the British English meaning “*have / possess*”. In addition, some studies shows that British English uses more regular verbs than the American English does (Rohdenburg and Schluter, 2009).

Second, the fact of this diversity in using verbs does not mean that such words exist in British English and do not exist in American English and vice versa. It is the matter of how frequent those words are used in each variety and in which context their meanings are used, to illustrate, British English uses the single word “*sport*” to refer to all sports in the world which means there is no distinction between sport and sports owing it gives the sense of plural whereas American English uses sports as plural form and sport as a single word (Algeo,2006).

2. 2. 2. Syntax

Miller (2002) defined syntax as the way we combine words to build phrases, clauses and Sentences. Syntax build a correct language but it takes different forms according to the variety of that language. Syntax is another shape of British and American differences; Darragh(2000) pointed the following elements; First, the use of past simple and present perfect by American speakers interchangeably as a counter to British people who uses present perfect accompanied with some adverbs like ever, just and already to show that an action in the past is continuous until now. Second, position of some adverbs differ according to the purpose of the speaker, BE use the adverbs after the auxiliary to show a normal statement and it place these adverbs before the auxiliary to show the emphasis. Yet, AE considers the two cases as a normal statements. Finally, prepositions are used differently, some are used by British speakers and not used by American people whereas

some other prepositions are used spontaneously by Americans yet not known in British English. Examples of those three syntactical differences are shown in the table(1).

	British English	American English
Past simple and Present perfect	I am not hungry, I have just had breakfast	1) I am not hungry, I have Just had breakfast 2) I am not hungry, I just had breakfast
Adverbs positions	1) She <u>has probably</u> arrived bynow (normal). 2) She <u>probably has</u> arrived by now (emphasis).	Both cases are used as a normal statement
Prepositions	1) I would like you to go Now 2) I will write <u>to</u> you as soon as I get back.	1) I would like <u>for</u> you to go now. 2) I will write you as soon as I get back.

Table 1:British and American Differences in Syntax(Cited in Darragh, 2000).

2. 2. 3. Spelling

Miriam-Webster’sCollegiate Dictionary for American words and the Concise Oxford Dictionary for British are two data sources of distinguishing the two varieties in spelling level, since the two latter becomes difficult to be distinguished especially what concerns using and dropping hyphenation. Thedifficulty is the endless list of spacing in compound nouns in one variety and the other one is marking the hyphen as unnecessary punctuation.As an illustration, Antiaircraft (BE), Anti-aircraft (AE), bookkeeper (BE), bookkeeper (AE) and ultramodern (BE), ultra-modern (AE). One other important point should be notedin spelling differences is that British and American diversity can be in one morpheme, some examples are given in the following table (Darragh2000):

	British English Examples	American English Examples
our / or	Behaviour	Behavior
tre / ter	Centre	Center
ize / ise	Criticise / criticize	Criticize
Fill / fil	Fulfil	Fulfill, fulfil
tion / xion	Connection, connexion	Connection
se / ce	Defence	Defense

Table 2: British and American Spelling Difference.(Cited in Darragh, 2000).

2. 3. Pronunciation and Speech rate

EFL teachers' pronunciation has a great influence on their learners, which may account for the fact that whether English learners may understand their teachers pronunciation or not. On one hand, Kelly (2000) assumed that the best way to teach pronunciation to foreign learners is to break it down into its components, pronunciation is a combination of first, phonemes that branches out to voiced and voiceless consonants and vowels that is found as single or diphthongs. Second, suprasegmental features that contain intonation and stress of both words and a sentences.

Furthermore, Kreidler (2004) believed that pronunciation is a combination of two Aspects:

- 1) Language which is the knowledge being interpreted and decoded by people to understand the message.
- 2) Speech which is the characteristics of the heard voice in which extra messages can be appeared such as the speaker's mood. On the other hand, Laroy (1995) assumed that the best way to learn any English pronunciation is to allow the learners choose the variety they

prefer. Returning to British English and American English, accent, stress and intonation are three of the main distinctive aspects of British, American pronunciation.

2. 3. 1. Accent

Cook (2000) defined accent as “a combination of three main component, intonation (speech music), liaisons (word connection) and pronunciation (the spoken sounds of vowels, consonants and combinations)”. Accent is considered as one of many features that identifies which part of the world the one belongs to. It is the strongest factor that attracts the addressee first impression of the addresser (James *and* Smith, 2007).

Description of British English and American English accents can be rendered in the different ways some vowels and consonants are produced. Starting with vowels and semi vowels, pronunciation of the word new is /nju:/ when it is British English but in American English it is /nu:/, the first vowel when pronouncing surely is /ɔ:/ in BE yet Americans produce it as /u/ like in *put*. The word rather its first vowel is pronounced by British people as /a:/ and as /æ/ by Americans who also pronounce the semi vowel /r/ which is not the case in Britain (Hewings 2007). Ending with consonants, they are categorized into voiced and voiceless consonants and they are nearly similar in both Englishes. Cook (2000) has mentioned many examples of voiceless consonants that are; p, f, s, sh, t, ch, c, h, th like in *threat* and voiced consonants b, v, z, d, j, g, y, w, l, r, m, n and th like in *that*. Correspondingly, Hancock (2003) addressed that each pair of voiced and voiceless consonants such as “p” and “b” share the same position of production. However, the produced voice that comes through the throat [vibration] creates the voiced consonants /b/ yet the absence of this sound creates the unvoiced consonants /p/.

2. 3. 2. Stress and Intonation

Underhill (2005) defined stress as being on the characteristics of stressed syllable that is found longer, louder and clearer when producing it because of an exploded air that forces its production and makes the primary stress; while the secondary stress is formed with less force. Furthermore, Underhill explained the term intonations "*it's not what you say, but the way you say it*". According to him, intonation is the most important factor that makes the listener catch the meaning intended by the speaker because intonation takes place during pitch variation that is to say, sequence of phonemes that forms the whole utterance.

Henceforth, stress and intonation are complementary parts when producing any variety of speech. For instance, American people speak rapidly in such words that contain unvoiced consonants and precedes a vowel, that one is almost pronounced quickly. In this sense, intonation is constructed by making stops in pitch, lengthen the word wanted to emphasize on or raising the voice when it is needed like *Dogs eat bones* producing this statement for the first time requires stressing the nouns and the intonation will be up, down then up. However, when replacing those nouns by pronouns *They eat them*, it requires stressing the verbs and the intonation will be down, up then down again (Cook 2000).

3. Comparison between British English and American English

Foreign learners of English are in need to be familiar with the variety of language they learn in order to be familiar with British English or American English. The following comparison focuses on vocabulary and lexis.

3. 1. Vocabulary

British people and American people understand the English they use in every day life. However, there are some expressions that are used differently. For instance, Gali (2006) stated that AE uses *fall* but BE uses *autumn*, *baggage-car* as AE and *luggage-van* as BE besides, ticket-office is classified as AE yet BE has booking –office. Furthermore, Davies (2005) stated that this diversity in using expressions should not be avoided by British when dealing with American and in the same time Americans should avoid undesirable expressions with British people. For more details, see the table below:

What to avoid in American English and it is used in British English	
some expressions (AE)	Instead use (BE)
Carry on	Go ahead / after you
My mate	Refers to a husband or wife instead use buddy
Solicitor	Longer / attorney
Pot plant	House plant
Ring me up	Give me a call

Table 03:British and American Diversity in using some Vocabulary (Cited in Davis, 2005).

3. 2. Lexis

In USA and Britain, English is spoken quickly and fluently, this English is built on “ready-made elements and chunks” that is to say, having a stock of fixed phrases and patterns in each variety is more helpful to recognize which English variety this lexis refers to. For example, in giving a phone number in French we would say seventy two, twenty

one or thirty tree but in Britain this number combination does not work instead we would say seven two three or double two one (Willis 2003).

English lexis usually referred to us in forms of grammar patterns. Schur (2007) stated many phases of grammar that both Englishes (American and Britain) contain. Those distinctive aspects are linked to Briton addition of “ing” to many single nouns just to lengthen them such as *washing-day* and *dancing-hall*. Another aspect is adding ‘s’ to many single nouns that is to say balancing the singular and plural form like saying brains trust, overheads and insurances. Also, Britons have a tendency to end such words with *ed* like closed company and twin-bedded room. However, American lexicon are different in terms of usage, they tend to use verbs only without adding *ing* with omitting the verbobject like saying *to move house and /or to shower oneself*. Besides, Americans try to shorten the words ,instead of saying sunken garden, they produce sunk garden and drive for driveway.

4. Cultural Differences

Higgins et al (2010) claimed that studying any culture gives us a reflective picture on the activities and practices that contribute in building oneself identity(...). He added that language is one of the main aspects that builds culture in the sense that old events remain alive because of idioms and the developments occurring in linguistic patterns and vocabulary. Also, according to Corbett (2003),“cultural studies seek to understand and interpret the way that members of a group represent themselves through their cultural products (whether those products are poems, songs, dances or sport events)”.

Henceforth, cultural differences are another face when coming to distinguish between British and American English. Each one has its own expressions that preserve their

peculiarity core. Idioms, customs and etiquette are three components of British and American cultural differences.

4. 1. Idioms

Gillet (2004) stated that the best way that foreign students can follow just to speak like native speakers of English is mastering English idioms and expressions because they add a color for a language and facilitate what is written and heard. For an illustration, Americans usually express their satisfaction when they taste any food by saying « *this food is out of this world* ». Besides, instead of saying simple expressions Americans complement on their team who is winning a game after a game by saying « our team is on a winning streak ».

American idioms are different from to British idioms and this is presented by Davis (2005) in the following examples, Americans use some expressions to demonstrate anything which is not important by saying *put on the dog* while Britons find it difficult to process so they use instead *put on side* . Also in Britain, they use some expressions to refer to old ages such as *in donkey's years*, yet in USA they prefer to say *in a coon's age*. In addition to the use of *what the Sam hill* ? by American people while Britons say ;*what the hell* ?.

4. 2. Customs and etiquette

People of Britain and USA display some lifestyle differences. Davies (2005) explained them in terms of customs and etiquette. Starting with British holidays, Britons celebrates the New Year's Day, Good Friday and Easter Monday in which some events occur in this day like the first Mai and the spring holiday. In contrast, America celebrates legal holidays

that include the New Year's Day and Martin Luther King Day, they celebrate them on Monday as a remembrance of men and women who were killed in the war.

Customs and etiquette differences are not limited. Another wave of British and American common habits is found in the shared places by all people such as restaurant. American people visit those places and prefer to have lunch and dinner outside more than Britons do. American sandwiches often contain different ingredients served with some pickles and chips or crisps whereas Britons prepared their sandwiches with a thin filling and they eat their meal by holding the fork with left hand but Americans do the reverse.

In addition, shopping is another huge field in which people meet and share their culture. Shopping also differs from one country to another even from one state to another, that is to say, shops sell different products under different names. For example, *if a British woman went to the USA shops, she is in need to know that cravat is called there ascot, turtle neck is named crew neck and trainers are known as sneakers.*

Conclusion

Teaching English to foreign learners necessitates the awareness of both teachers and learners of the varieties of this language in order not to fall in a confusion which misleads and impedes the operation of learning. English varieties are a construction of a unique language which is old English and the occurring modifications that are put just to create the features that foreign learners need to master in order to distinguish each variety alone. The main feature that obviously shows this variety is British English pronunciation and American English pronunciation.

CAPTER TWO AN OVERVIEW ON LISTENING SKILLS AND LISTENING OBSERVATIONS

INTRODUCTION	26
1. DEFINITIONS OF LISTENING SKILLS AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION.....	26
2. THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING.....	27
3. STAGES OF LISTENING.....	29
3.1 RECEIVING.....	29
3.2 ATTENDING.....	30
3.2.1 SELECTIVITY OF ATTENTION.....	30
3.2.2 STRENGTH OF ATTENTION.....	30
3.2.3 SUSTAINMENT OF ATTENTION.....	30
3.3 UNDERSTANDING.....	31
3.4 RESPONDING.....	31
3.5 REMEMBERING.....	31
4. TYPES OF LISTENING.....	32
4.1 INTERNATIONAL/ TRANSACTIONAL LISTENING.....	32
4.2 APPRECIATIVE/ AESTHETIC LISTENING.....	32
4.3 INFORMATIVE LISTENING.....	33
4.3.1 VOCABULARY.....	33
4.3.2 CONCENTRATION.....	33
4.3.3 MEMORY.....	33
4.4 CRITICAL LISTENING.....	34
4.5 DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING.....	34
5. THE PROCESS OF LISTENING.....	34
5.1 TOP-DOWN PROCESSING.....	35
5.2 BOTTOM-UP PROCESSING.....	35
6. LISTENING STRATEGIES.....	36
6.1 BEFORE LISTENING / PRE-LISTENING.....	36
6.1.1 PRE-TEACHING VOCABULARY.....	37
6.1.2 ESTABLISHING CONTEXT.....	37
6.2 WHILE LISTENING.....	37

6.2.1	PRE-SET QUESTIONS.....	37
6.2.2	CHECKING ANSWERS.....	37
6.3	AFTER LISTENING.....	38
6.3.1	FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE.....	38
6.3.2	INFERRING VOCABULARY.....	38
7.	FACTORS AFFECTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION.....	39
7.1	MESSAGE-RELATED DIFFICULTIES.....	39
7.1.1	VOCABULARY.....	39
7.1.2	GRAMMAR.....	40
7.2	SPEAK-RELATED DIFFICULTIES.....	41
7.2.1	THE RATE OF DELIVERY.....	41
7.2.2	LACK OF SPEAKING PERFORMANCE.....	42
7.3	LISTENER- RELATED DIFFICULTIES.....	42
7.3.1	LACK OF MOTIVATION.....	42
7.3.2	ANXIETY.....	43
7.3.3	BIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.....	44
7.3.4	PHYSICAL ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS.....	44
	CONCLUSION.....	44

Chapter Two: An overview on listening skill and listening obstructions

Introduction

Listening is a key skill for a successful everyday communication. It is considered to be one of the main language skills that both teachers and learners should put into consideration due to the different difficulties EFL learners might encounter during the listening process. This usually includes learners' concentration to catch the meaning included in the teachers' talk. Henceforth, improving learners' ability to be good listeners is related to what extant teachers and learners develop this skill during classroom conversation.

This chapter aims to shed some light on the importance of listening skill in developing students listening comprehension, passing through the different approaches that adopt the concept, regarding the listening process and other strategies that are prepared as final element to determine the underlying suggestions to overcome students listening comprehension difficulties, that are mentioned as the last element in this chapter.

1. Definitions of listening skill and listening comprehension

Listening is one of the skills involved in language learning, it is a receptive skill like reading unlike the other division that is the productive skills that are speaking and writing. Purdy (1977.p.10, 11) defined listening as the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering and responding to the expressed (verbal and non-verbal) needs, concerns and information offered by the human beings.

In addition, Rost(2002) clarified that the term listening has many meaning and this can

be extracted from four orientations and perspectives. First, the receptive meaning that is an elective process in which the listener can understand what is being said (aural symbols). Second, from a constructive and representative meaning, this point of view relies on decoding the speaker's messages that carry a sense for a listener. Third, from a collaborative meaning, this latter is about the identification of ideas that are relevant and acceptable to the listener. Finally, the transformative meaning in which the listener creates meaning through participation, visualization and empathy.

The same idea is shared by Lynch (2009) who proposed that there is no standard definition of listening because there is no specific way to speak and to understand that speech yet invisibility, it is the arbitrary term that it is used for listening just to measure listeners understanding and comprehension. Keeping the same idea, Richards (2008) equalizes listening and listening comprehension owing the main objectives of listening is comprehension.

2. The importance of listening comprehension in language teaching

Listening as a communicative skill is very important for obtaining the necessary knowledge; it facilitates the process of receiving information, memorizing it and recalling it when necessary. Harmer (2007) pointed out that English students are in need to be able to understand their teachers' speech and that can be improved by listening. This latter is also beneficial to their pronunciation, that is to say, the more they listen and understand the spoken English the more they absorb appropriate pitch, intonation and sounds patterns.

In addition, the importance of listening is brought within the approaches involved in second language acquisition. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) focused more on the approaches

that are interested in teaching listening because of its importance to the learners. First, the direct method which focused more on teaching listening before the other skills, it attempted to improve learners listening capacity to enable them answer the questions related to listening comprehension. Second, the audio-lingual approach emphasized primarily on teaching listening through programmed drills and training in which learners are pushed to listen carefully whether to a recording material or to their teachers' talk. This significantly aimed to improve the learners' pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary which are all related to their aural fluency. Third, the discrete item approach, which is an extension of the oral method, dealt with all aspects of a spoken text, the segmental features that concern vowels and consonants and supragmentals that include stress and intonation. Forth, A communicative approach this latter focused more on the importance of extending learners' communication outside the classroom in order to teach the learner how to listen and interact with the speaker and complete the task. Fifth, the task based approach, improving learners listening comprehension can be by creating active listeners through asking them to listen then they transfer their comprehension to graphic form. Finally, the learner-strategy approach, it emphasized the concept of autonomous learners who are encouraged to use a variety of listening techniques effectively in order to achieve their objective which is comprehension.

Furthermore, the importance of listening appears not only in its influence on learners' level but also it touches the teachers' role inside the classroom. Schultz (2003) assessed that instead of delivering punishments, the teacher should act with a peaceful resolution, which is listening because this application will help the teacher not only to maintain the soul of the classroom and manage the students in their academic activities but also to change and improve their behavior inside and outside the classroom.

3. Stages of listening

The process of listening moves through several necessary stages that are receiving, attending, understanding, responding and remembering. According to Kline (1996) the first three stages (receiving, attending and understanding) are the essential ones but the two last ones (responding and remembering) may occur and they may not.

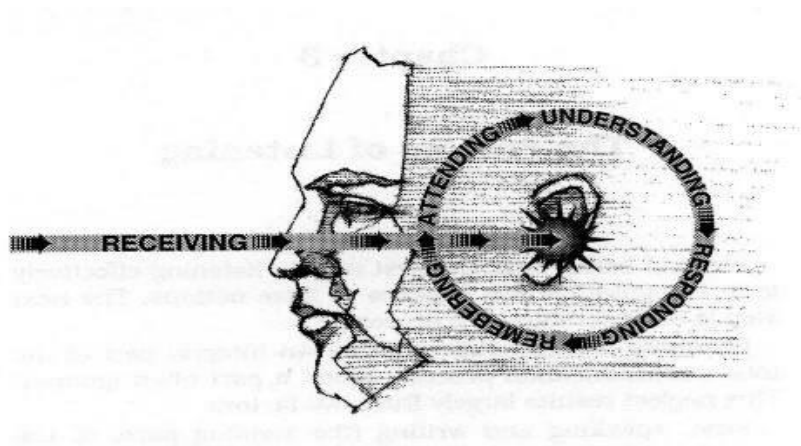


Figure One: Stage of listening (Kline, 1996).

This image presents the way human beings process their listening capacities, the five steps are ranked according to which stage occurs first.

3.1. Receiving

It is the ability to receive the sent message and being aware of what the sender expects from the receiver. An analogy was made in this sense by Kline (1996) in which the sender may send a clear and well-constructed message to an interested receiver but if this receiver does not turn on his computer he cannot receive the message. The description of the addresser and the addressee relationship is when the receiver receives the sounds (which is hearing) and attaches the meaning (and this called listening).

3.2. Attending

It is the process of focusing on what has been said before, but attendance sometimes does not occur because the listener pays no attention to the speaker and he/she may be absent-minded. Kline (199) relied on the computer example to explain whether attending is occurring in certain conversation or not. Attending takes place according to the stimulus that pushes the listener to attend certain messages, if he received an email message but he has another thing to do than he will neglect it “absence of attending” because of that stimulus that can be external or internal. Kline stated three factors affecting the choice of attending:

3.2.1 Selectivity of attention

It refers to the reasons that push the listener and encourage him/her to listen. For example, the listener pays attention to think if he is familiar with and if he/she shifts quickly his attention, it is just because the lecturer had mentioned the listener name or something he/she favors.

3.2.2. Strength of attention

It is more than selecting the attention, it is the efforts and the energy made by the listener to choose his/her desire. For example: someone wants to do two things at the same time such as reading a book and watching television, the listener will lose his attention to both activities sooner. In another way, the listener can give an attention only to one stimulus not more.

3.2.3. Sustainment of attention

Reaching comprehension when listening to the spoken language is not affected just by selectivity and strength but also by the time being spent while listening. As an illustration,

duration of listening to some people is more than others and this is affected by a subject, a setting and the way of delivery, the listener also may change his directions because of his body needs.

3.3. Understanding

Comprehension and understanding are the result from an effective communication. The operations of receiving and attending are not sufficient to accomplish the needs of the listeners, henceforth, understanding is the key concept that build the relationship between the listener and the speaker. However, even the listener receives and attends, understanding may not take place because of many reasons. Kline (1996) mentioned that wrong expectations about what is received, the failure to get the right point since the events that the listener is supposed to understand come all together which creates confusion in the listener's ear, the meaning of one word differs in meaning according to the differences found in the people and many different words have the same meaning and this refers to the users.

3.4. Responding

An effective communication sometimes needs more than understanding; responding is needed too. It is the act of showing that one has understood by stating a direct verbal response such as immediate reply to the speaker since he needs an agreement about a subject matter. The purpose of responding is seeking clarification; it takes the form of feedback in any conversation.

3.5. Remembering

Kline (1996) claimed that it is the last stage in the process but it is not necessary as much as the other once because the listener sometimes is not in need to clarify and respond

to what is said . For example, we usually say: “*I can remember faces, but I cannot remember names*”. In this sense, remembrance is related to listening operation in terms of both short-term memory and long-term memory. The former is characterized with rapid forgetting rate and the remained information are limited because they are used immediately. The latter allows us to recall the information stored in our memory for many years ago yet this operation can cause only by the right stimulus.

4. Types of listening

Many researchers such as Brown, Derrington and Newton claimed that there are more than five types for listening. Students might use a variety of those types that suit their tasks. They may listen for the sake of maintaining information and entertainment or sometimes they look for points of judgments that create interaction between them and their teachers.

4.1. Interactional /transactional listening

Nation and Newton (2009) stated two types for listening. On one hand, transactional listening which he named “*one-way listening*”, it is the one that is used to transmit information. On the other hand, interactional listening or *two-way listening* is the type which transcribes the way of maintaining social relationships. These kinds of listening are found in dialogues and conversations.

4.2. Appreciative /Aesthetic listening

Derrington (2004) mentioned that listening is aesthetic that is we listen to for the sake of entertainment appreciative listening is the feel of enjoyment while listening to an interesting that attracts one’s attention such as music and poetry.

4.3. Informative listening

According to Kline (1996) informative listening occurs when the listeners successfully understands the message. As an example, students gain information from lectures and teachers' instructions but their learned material depends on how well they listen and how well they understand the listened material. Informative listening is crucial for learners to understand and it demands three crucial terms to be successful.

4.3.1. Vocabulary:

The relationship between vocabulary and listening cannot be denied in the sense that as much as the listeners increase the vocabulary luggage as much as they increase their chances for better understanding.

4.3.2. Concentration

It is another crucial element for informative listening. Listeners need to concentrate on only one stimulus not to lose their understanding of the passage being delivered. Loosing concentration can be because of lack of curiosity, interest or tiresome.

4.3.3. Memory

It is not less important than the previous variables. It comes as a result of concentration and students are in need to process their information by activating their memory that helps them recall the stored information. It raises the students' expectations and predictions to what is next and memory is the space in which the listeners are able to keep the meaning of words, understand and interact with others.

4.4. Critical listening

According to Brown (2006), listeners are supposed to analyze every word that is heard by making inferences because the speakers do not always mean exactly what they say. He also claimed that the speaker implies his delivery extra meanings but it is the role of the listener to "listen between the lines". Besides, an important aspect of listening which is about listening for details and for main ideas.

4.5. Discriminative listening

According to Kline (1996), the speaker may make changes in his speech' rate, volume and emphasis. For this reason, listeners need to have a strong sense for differentiating the speakers' sounds; this sense is called "good discriminatory listening ability". He added that this type of listening is related to pronunciation more than the other aspects of language, it consists of hearing ability, awareness of sound structure and integration of non-verbal cues.

5. The process of listening

Listening process have been developed to describe the way listeners use language information to construct meaning. It consists of two processes: top-down and down-up process as it is shown in figure" 2".

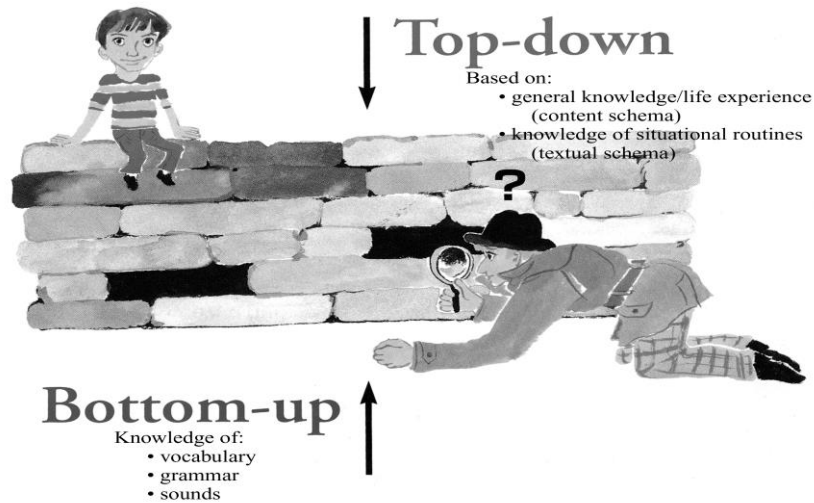


Figure two: The process of listening, top-down and bottom-up (Brown, 2006).

Top-down and Bottom-up process is an operation of looking for information, the researcher may start either from the top or from the bottom, this depends on his mental capacities.

5.1. Top-down processing:

It assumes that the process of translating and understanding the meaning of the spoken language begins with the listener's prior knowledge. Students seek to figure out how the meanings carried in the teachers' speech are constructed starting from the general meaning. Brown (2006) stated the term top-down to capture the idea of using experience and background knowledge to build the meanings of an existed sounds and words.

5.2. Bottom-up processing

It assumes that the process of translating meanings ceases on the information that the listener possesses like sounds, word meaning and discourse markers like "first" and "second" in which the listeners interrelate them to create their understanding and draw general ideas from the listened passage.

Richards (2008) claimed that the two processes of listening: top-down and bottom-up are complementary; they happen together and they are not separated. However, the listener may use the former more than the latter and this depends on the listeners' familiarity with the topic. For example, an experienced cooker might use top-down process while listening to a radio chef just to compare between his/ her existed knowledge of a certain meal with the one presented by the chef, another cooker might listen carefully in order to understand and remember the recipe, in this case; bottom-up processing is more applicable.

6. Listening strategies

Teaching English to foreign learners requires providing them with the necessary strategies that help them for better understanding; those strategies are considered to be the key element for listening comprehension. Whatever the type of the strategy, it helps listeners to grasp the meaning being stated either implicitly or explicitly via overcoming the problem, they face during listening process. The benefits of using listening strategies is not just to construct knowledge and content understanding, but also to help the students for further future use. (Lynch, 2004.p.2.qtd in Wang, 2011) mentioned that students 'listening comprehension can be improved by taking notes during listening and this process goes through three stages: before, while and after listening.

6.1. Before listening/ Pre-Listening

This stage is related to top-down process in which the teacher prepares some activities to help students predict information and brainstorm ideas through drawing mind maps. According to field (2008), pre-listening requires practicing the following steps in order to create motivation and keep the listeners ambitious and curious to what they are going to listen:

6.1.1. Pre-teaching vocabulary

It is the first step that teachers should encounter in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion, teaching new vocabulary to students before listening will increase their ability for correct predictions.

6.1.2. Establishing context

Teachers are supposed to give student a general idea about the listened record and prepare them to draw an image about who is the speaker and imagine the setting and the situation of the characters. However, teachers should be careful not to exaggerate in giving details not to break the listeners' curiosity.

6.2. While listening

It focuses on directing students' listening attention to what is more important in the recorded passage:

6.2.1. Pre-set questions

Students are asked to take notes during listening process, then the teacher should ask question before the second time of listening in order to help students direct their attention to a certain part of the recorded passage. As a result, students will be able to respond without referring too much to their memory.

6.2.2. Checking answers

This step requires providing much time for the listener to answer the given question. However, many difficulties may appear; listeners are slow in responding and give uncompleted answers and this situation requires listening again to the passage for the third

time. Then, checking answers can be done by comparing students' answers with the whole class in which the learners are working in pairs.

6.3. After listening

Post-listening is the last step in listening strategies in which the teacher can evaluate the listeners' comprehension. It ceases on:

6.3.1. Functional language

Students' listening comprehension appears when they give responses to their teachers' questions, interact with each other and being aware of correct language forms and functions such as "*refusing, apologizing and threatening*" especially those latter are difficult to teach in isolation.

6.3.2. Inferring vocabulary

Applying the above strategies ends with inferring vocabulary, which is another benefit after listening to a conversation because it helps students to gain new experiences with vocabulary and enrich their language baggage. Students build a bridge between unknown vocabulary and its context to construct its meaning; the teacher should focus on repeating the necessary passages and try to choose new vocabularies by writing them down. Inferring vocabulary passes through two stages: Paused Play and Final Play. In the former.

The teachers make pauses when playing the recorded passage in order to check whether the students have divided the sections of the passage and to what extent they are near from its meanings. The teachers may use paused play to identify intonation and stress being used in the passage as well. The latter stage is considered as the last chance for those who failes in dividing the recorded passage according and missed some necessary related concepts.

7. Factors affecting listening comprehension of foreign learners

Learners of English language need to be supported by their teachers, encouraged and motivated in order to accomplish their academic objectives. Furthermore, they need to be skillful especially in processing listening inside the classroom; having the sense of listening experience will help them more in understanding the teachers' delivery, henceforth; this understanding will appear in their achievements, output and increase their chance to be an active listeners by producing a response to the speaker during conversations. Unfortunately, processing listening is not easy as much as many learners think; these difficulties appear in three levels; difficulties related to the message, difficulties related to the speaker and difficulties related to the listeners themselves (Brown, 2006).

7.1. Message-Related Difficulties

Listening abilities differ from one student to another, and those who suffer from poor listening; their problem may refer to the message itself in which the content maybe higher than the level of listeners with the use of difficult vocabulary and grammar. Krashen (1982) emphasized on the necessity of delivering comprehensible input for the learners without neglecting the role of linguistic information, that is to say; teachers should provide the information just at the learners' level and not too high or too low. According to Krashen, the difficulties that are found in the level of the message are:

7.1.1. Vocabulary

In EMC Publishing (2009), it is claimed that English language has the largest number of vocabulary than the other languages. However, the unknown vocabulary items are billion more than the known. This unfamiliarity with English vocabulary is one of EFL learners'

obstructions that impede their comprehension. Therefore, the resolution of this issue is to relate the unfamiliar vocabulary with its context and pronunciation using the so called “words study notebooks”.

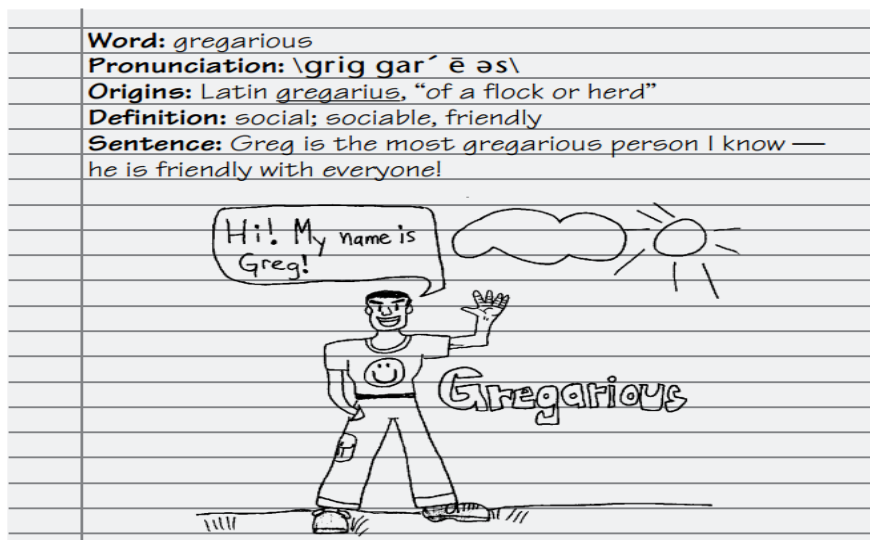


Figure Three: A sample page from a word study notebook (EMC Publishing, 2009).

Words study notebooks is a personal notebook to record new vocabularies with its definition, origin and pronunciation. In addition, adding an example is for better remembrance.

7.1.2. Grammar

Willis (2003) assumed that grammar should be given a priority in teaching English as a foreign language and vocabulary come later since the students still face difficulties with grammar patterns especially when it comes to “do_ question”. The aim of teaching grammar is improvisation through helping the students obtain the necessary and sufficient language grammar patterns in order to enable them later understand and grasp the produced meaning spontaneously. Furthermore, Rohdenburg and Schuluter (2009) declared that the language used in this world is one which is English but with two different

grammars. The emergence of English varieties such as British English and American English brought the use of a wide range of language structures and grammar-roles, this diversity makes teaching grammar without referring to its variety, put the learners in a confusion (which grammar is correct? and should it be followed?).

7.2 Speaker-Related Difficulties

Listening difficulties also appears at the level of the speaker too; non-native speakers of English may speak too fast and they may have bad pronunciation that affects the listeners understanding.

7.2.1. The rate of delivery:

The spoken discourse is different from the written one. As we read something printed is easier than listening to something being delivered, for that, the listener should pay more attention to the rate or the speed of the speakers' speech. because in many occasions and in order to gain time, EFL teachers who speak faster inside the classroom, they may not repeat the passage again taking into account the different accents used by those teachers (Richards 2006).

In addition,(Boan,1972qtd in Boulfelfel, 2010.p.21.) has discussed the issue of delivering fast speech to the learners' listening comprehension; although, the benefits they get from to understand and sound like native speakers, "of course students must be capable of understanding native pronunciation under normal circumstances of production and not require of his interlocutors a special style for his personal use",

7.2.2. Lack of speaking performance:

Most of students usually refer their failure in understanding the message to their teachers' delivery, some may say his pronunciation is bad and others comment on the way the teacher organize his speech. Brady and Leigh (2005) assumed that for many reasons the listener fails in understanding the message and the one important cause is that the speaker delivers his speech in different ways; he may talk fast, show heavy accent and he may tighten and prettify his expressions. However, the real reason behind this failure is that the listener judges the delivery rather than the content.

7.3 Difficulties related to the listener

EFL learners suffer more from some psychological obstructions such as Lack of motivation and anxiety. The two letters are the most common causes of listeners' misunderstanding.

7.3.1. Lack of Motivation:

The concept of motivation triggered in ones minds many notions and descriptions such as goal, ambition and willing. A great amount of studies on motivation raised the problem of low motivation that affect learners' achievements and understanding. Brown (2007) defined it as "the most frequently used catch-all term for explaining the success or the failure of virtually any complex task, motivation is a star player in the cost of characters assigned to (...) language scenarios around the world". This latter added that motivation is considered as an inner drive that pushes the learners' perform in a certain actions.

However, many students face difficulties in understanding their teachers' delivery, which make them, considered as poor listeners. One of their reasons is the low or the absence of motivation; poor listeners have no desire and no goals to achieve; therefore, their energy and efforts that are supposed to be fired will disappear. Explaining how low of

motivation leads to students failure is proposed by Tilla (2007) in which she stated that Aremu (1998) referred that failure to when students lose their interest in a subject they will react negatively and they will not give their teachers the required answers which means the absence of students-teachers interaction inside the classroom. In contrary, Wentzel (1998) assumed that interest during classroom activities will encourage the students to formulate their goals and then they will push themselves to achieve them.

7.3.2. Anxiety

It is another psychological obstruction that impede the learners listening comprehension. Anxiety is always accompanied with learners through their learning process. According to Spielberger et all (2005), anxiety as it is related to the psychology if individuals, is divided into three types, First, anxiety-trait that some students build attitudes and reactions when facing a stressful situation, those kind of people had built a safety arm in facing anxiety because whenever they face hard times and threatening situation they are already ready to face it. Second, state anxiety is considered as the type that touches the emotions of one individual. As an example, when a person hears a bad news about one of his/her relatives, he/she remains anxious and this state affects the students listening comprehension in two ways losing their concentration and being absent-minded which lead them to miss probably the whole speech of the teacher, and those kind of students are unable to confront any type of stress. Finally, situation-specific anxiety, this type concerns learning students' situation in which they feel anxious both when they are unable to reach proficiency in learning a second or foreign language and when they are unable to master its four skills. (Abderrezzag 2009-2010).

7.3.3 Biological problems

Clason (2015) pointed that sensorineural disease is the most common illness that affects one's listening. It happens when there is a damage in the inner cells of the ear or sometimes it is related to the nerve pathway that links the inner ear with brain. Furthermore, the major cause of the sensorineural illness is the exposure to loud noises especially when listening to music.

7.3.4 Physical/ attitudinal problems:

Tiagi (2013) referred the physical problems to the noise that surrounds the listener and the uncomfortable environment such as smoking and the room is overheated. Besides, the physical distraction that occurs during conversation is caused by phone-rings as well. In addition, attitudinal problem is another disturbing factor that prevent listening comprehension. As an illustration, someone who is engrossed with work or personal thing finds difficulties to focus his/her attention to what is important in a delivered speech. Moreover, egocentrism, which is the feeling of being better and thinking, better than the others is another attitude that creates poor listener.

Conclusion:

Listening, by then, is one of the main skills in English language learning; its importance appears when the students reach the comprehension that helps them to be active participants in any classroom conversation. Students listening obstructions do not concern only the students' abilities, but also it touches the teacher use of the language in terms of the way of delivery that consists of speed and the use of different pronunciations that are related to a specific accent to a specific variety of English language.

Comprehension is considered to be an ultimate goal of listening; for this to happen, students need to apply their cognitive and metacognitive abilities which are related to listening strategies during the listening process. It is not only the role of the learners to deepen the comprehension, teacher also have to help in facilitating the listening tasks as well.

CHAPTER THREE	FIELD WORK	39
1.	INTRODUCTION	47
2.	DESIGN AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO QUESTIONNAIRES	47
2.1.	QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENTS	47
2.2	QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS	49
3.	ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES	50
4.	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRES	51
5.	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	77
	CONCLUSION	95
6.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	96
	GENERAL CONCLUSION	98
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	100
APPENDICES		105
	APPENDICE 1	106
	APPENDICE 2	110
	ملخص	113

1) Introduction

Investigating a research about English language skills necessitates including the questionnaires. In order to enhance our research we prepared questionnaire for both teachers and second year LMD students in which they gave us their points of view about some factors that stand as an obstruction in the process of learning foreign language through the listening to different accents and English varieties.

2) Design and description of the two questionnaires

Questionnaires are the most commonly used instrument for collecting data in any research. They are used with large groups or small ones. Questionnaire structures are easy to construct and analyze. We adopted this tool in order to facilitate the task of knowing students listening obstructions from themselves and their teachers. Besides, when planning the questionnaire, questions were arranged from general to specific, the aim behind this is to make the students firstly be familiar with the topic of research, thus the questionnaires was intentionally divided into three sections that are general background knowledge, students' listening obstruction and the use of English varieties.

2.1. Questionnaire for students:

The questionnaire that was distributed to two groups of 2nd year LMD students are fifty and we received all of them. So our sample consists of 50 students.

Students' questionnaire consists of twenty-one items divided into three sections. Each one represents different problem with related purpose.

All copies include three open-ended questions, which aim at giving the students the opportunity to present their opinions freely about the given topic. It also contains some

questions about their teachers' contribution as a motivation especially what concerns listening comprehension. The rest of the questions (18) are close-ended questions.

2.1.1. Section One:

It includes factual questions to find out certain facts about the respondents; it is entitled "students' background information". It includes four questions about the students' gender, class and years of studying English.

2.1.2. Section Two:

This section is entitled "Students listening comprehension". It contains six questions that aim to seek the students' opinions about their level in English and their problems that concern listening skills process. Other questions are related to the attitudinal and behavioral reasons of such problems especially those that are related to the varieties of English language.

2.1.3. Section Three:

It is entitled "The use of English Varieties". This section includes seven questions that aim to discover the use of English varieties by English teachers and if this mixture raises the students' confusions about what they are listening to. This section allows the students to evaluate their listening abilities.

2.2. Questionnaire for teachers:

Teachers' questionnaire was distributed to (10) of English teachers at Biskra University, but the received copies were only eight (8), so our sample of teachers is eight $N^{\circ}= 08$. Similar to students' questionnaire; teachers' questions include both types of questions: four are open-ended questions and eleven are close-ended questions. Its main aim is to survey teachers' points of view about their students' observation in the listening process. Besides, it aims to look for the ways that teachers proceed in helping their students to overcome the obstacles that concern English varieties.

2.2.1. Section One:

This section is entitled "Teachers' Background Information". It represents teachers' gender, and years of teaching English at university. Knowing their experience will help us to discover the most common difficulties that students face in learning English as a foreign language.

2.2.2. Section Two:

It is entitled "Students listening comprehension". This section seeks teachers' opinions about students' difficulties in general and listening comprehension in particular and how they deal with certain difficulties. It contains 03 questions; two of them are close-ended questions, they are related to language skills especially listening difficulties and the other one concerns the use of listening strategies.

2.2.3. Section Three:

This section is entitled "Introducing English Varieties to listening comprehension". It aims at examining teachers' attitudes concerning whether developing students' listening comprehension skills will enhance their understanding of English Varieties or not. It also

aims at exploring their opinion about the necessity of scheduling special sessions of teaching listening as additional sessions. Finally, the last question of this section provides a free space for teachers' personal evaluation about the study subject.

3. Administration of questionnaires:

The questionnaires had been administered to the students and teachers at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2015. We chose two sessions of the same teacher. After distributing and mentioning the purpose of questionnaire, the teacher explained to the students that they should answer the questions honestly, also; there is no right or wrong answer; they are just required to answer them freely. Then, students were asked first to fill in the identifying information spaces (Names, Ages). Next, as the teacher is explaining the 07 questions, students are ticking in the right boxes. Students are encouraged to ask about any question, request and clarification in order to help them answer all the questions truthfully. These questionnaires was given at the last quarter before the end of both sessions.

In addition to, teachers' questionnaire was distributed to 10 of them in the same day. 08 of the teachers requested at least two hours to give back the answers and the other two did not reply. Besides, one of the teachers commented on many points in which he thinks it would be better to correct it. First, the question how long have you been teaching English at University should be divided into two parts. How long have you been teaching English in general then at the university in particular? Second, in section one, it is not necessary to ask for gender because our variables do not concern male or female. Finally, such interesting topics that are related to learning process "language skills" should be experimentally investigated.

4. Analyzing the questionnaire of the students:

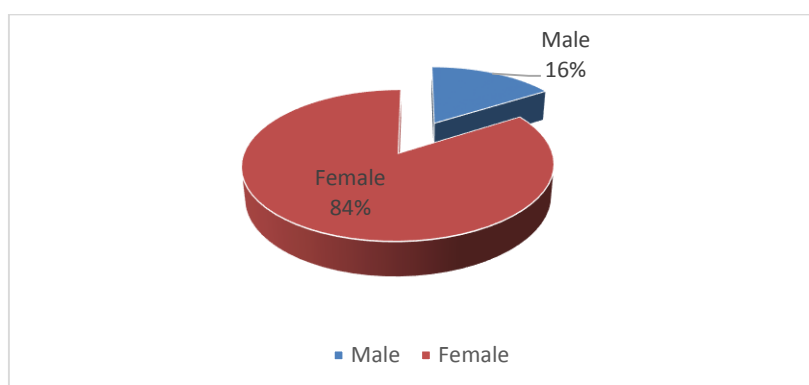
Section One: Students' Background Information

This section aims at gathering students' personal information in order to explore their backgrounds and experiences in dealing with English language.

1. Gender :

Response	Male	Female	Total
Number of Participants	08	42	50
Percentage	16%	84%	100%

Table 04 :Students'Gender Distribution



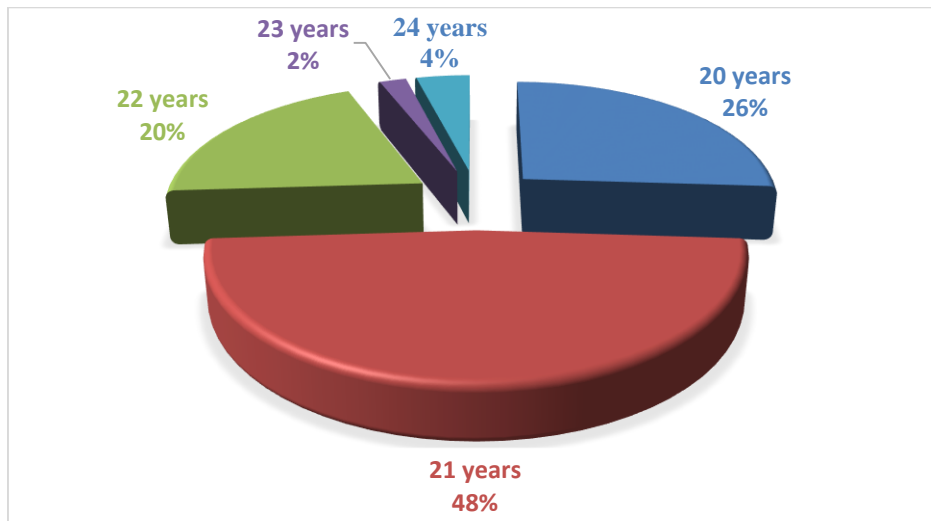
Graph 01:Students' GenderDistribution

The table reveals that out of 50 participants, '8' are males (16%) and '42' females (84%). They were chosen randomly from two groups of second years LMD English students at Mohammed Khider University – Biskra. The results show that females are more than males, this may mean that females are more interested in learning English as a foreign language.

2. Age :

Response	20	21	22	23	24	Total
Participants	13	24	10	1	2	50
Percentage	26%	48%	20%	2%	4%	100

Table 5 : Students'ageDistribution



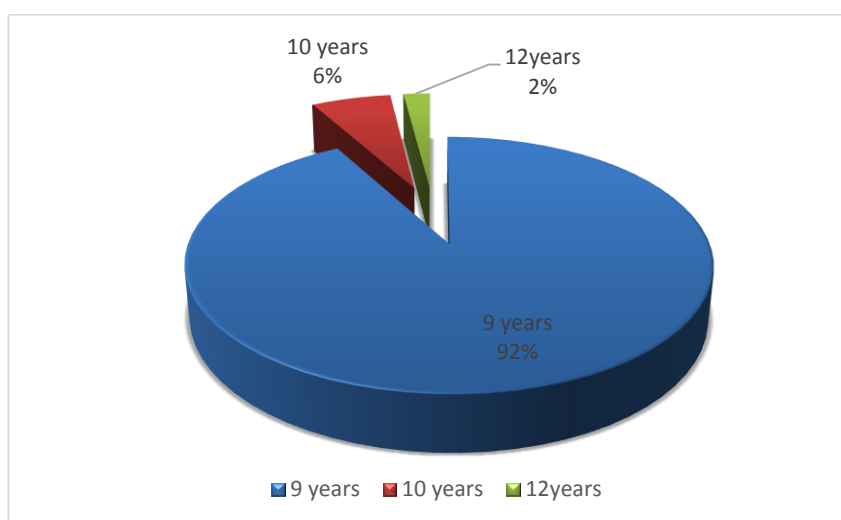
Graph 2: Students' age distribution

Referring to table 4, students ages are represented into five categories ,that range from '20' to '24' years old ; '13' students (26%) whose age is «20 », '24' students (48%)whose age is « 23 », '10' students (20%) whose age is « 22 » years old.One student is « 23 » and the two '2' of them have « 24 » of the « 50 » students. What is noticeable is that the age of most Second year students is between « 20 » and « 22 ».

Question 3: How long have you been studying English?

Responses	9	10	12	Total
N° of Participants	46	3	1	50
Percentage	92%	6%	2%	100%

Table 6: Students' number of years in studying English



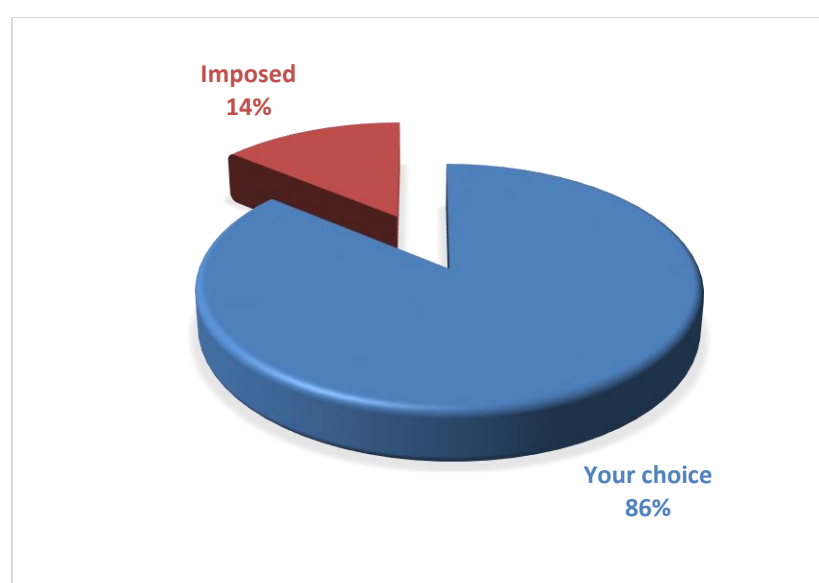
Graph 3: Students' number of years in studying English

Table '5' shows that (92%) of the sample of Second year students (02 groups = 50 students) have been studying English for 09 years (04 years at the middle school, 03 years in the secondary school plus two years at the university) and this is the normal case of studying English in Algeria. Because 6% have been studying English for 10 years and 02% for 12 years means that those participants have been studying English for many years and this depends on their situation. Students, therefore; are expected to be familiar with the listening tasks inside the classroom and be accustomed with the different use of the English language by their teachers.

Question 4: Is the choice of English?

Responses	Yourchoice	Imposed	Total
Participants	43	7	50
Percentage	86%	14%	100%

Table 7: Students' choice of English Language



Graph 4: Students' choice of English Language

Table 6 reveals that the majority of the sample is studying English because it is their personal choice, that is to say; 43 students (86%) who chose English freely are expected to understand English well in the next year because of their willingness, ambition and curiosity. However the rest 7 (14%) are obliged to study English which is imposed on them whether by their parents or the administration.

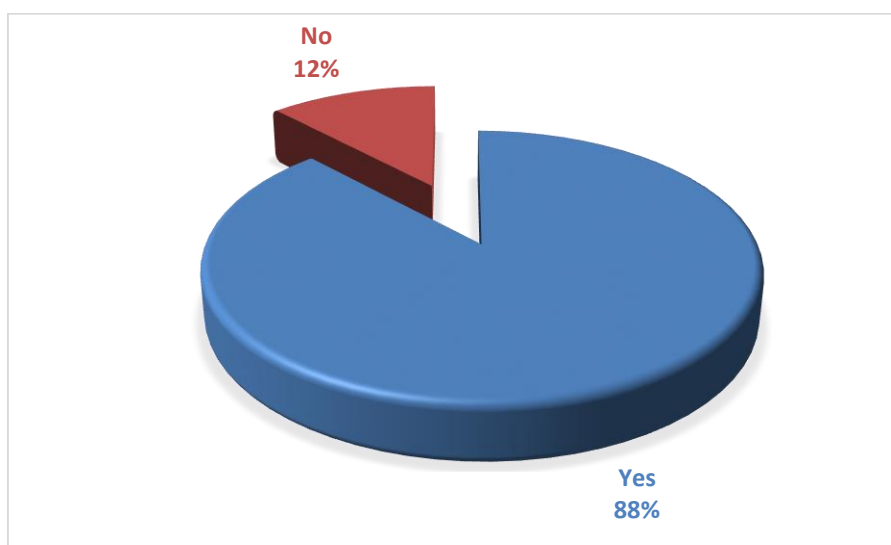
Section Two: Students' listening comprehension:

This section aims at exploring the different obstructions that students face in listening skill. Also, it aims at investigating listening strategies that are used by EFL teachers.

Question one: Do you enjoy listening comprehension course?

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	44	6	50
Percentage	88%	12%	100%

Table 8: Students' attitudes towards listening comprehension course.



Graph 5: Students' attitudes towards listening comprehension

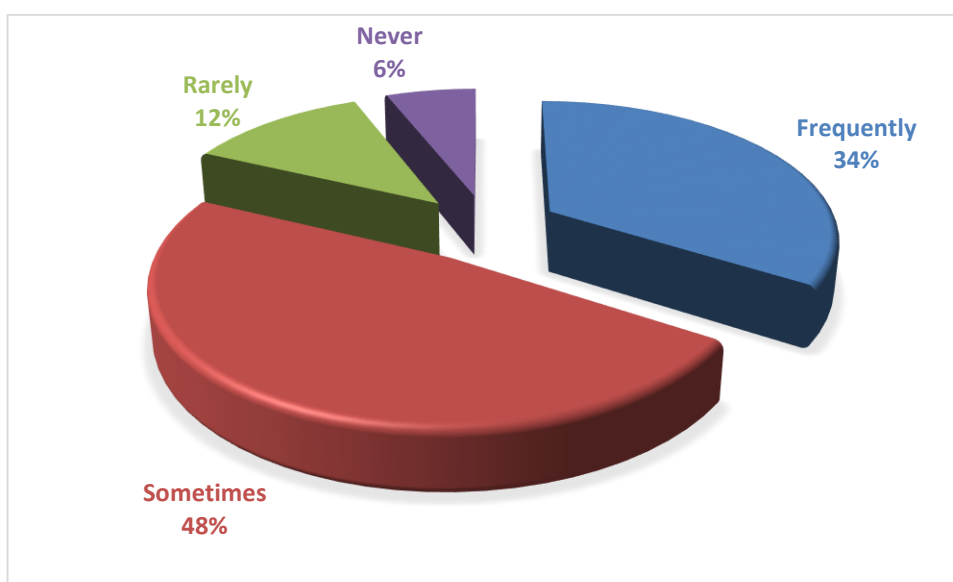
Table 07 shows that nearly the whole sample (50) like listening comprehension courses in which 44 of them (88%) claim they like listening, for them, it maybe because they practice listening outside the classroom, listening to English through songs and watching foreign movies which enhance their listening comprehension inside the classroom. In addition, for those who do not like listening English comprehension courses are a few ; 6

students (12%) presented their negative attitudes towards listening which may be due to having no time to practice listening outside which makes it difficult to be good listeners. Other reasons are because they may have other hobbies and interests of much importance to them than English. This may lead to another obstruction which is making students unfamiliar with the English Language; hence forth, it may impede their listening comprehension.

Question Two: How often does your teacher encourage you to listen to English language?

Responses	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	17	24	6	3	50
Percentage	34%	48%	12%	6%	100%

Table 9: Teachers’ encouragement frequency of students to listen to English.



Graph 06: Teachers’ encouragement frequency of students to listen to English.

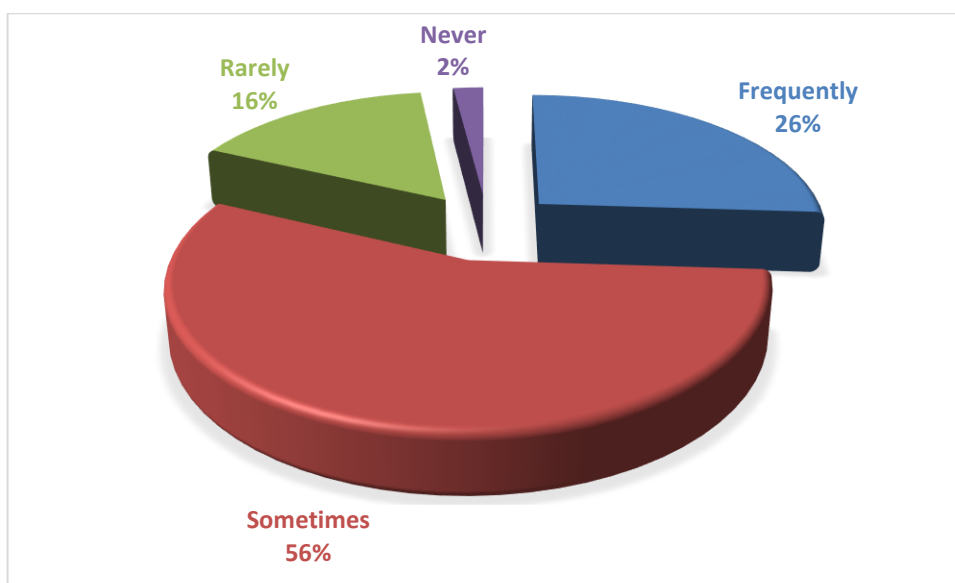
Table 8 determines that from 50 participants, 17 (34%) claimed that their teachers frequently encourage them to listen to the English language. 24 (48%) pointed that their

teachers sometimes advise them to listen ; those two results are the highest percentages because their teachers are aware of the importance of having extra listening tasks « extensive listening ». Also, those teachers believe that pushing learners to do extra tasks via motivating them is more beneficial than the content of the tasks. Furthermore, the percentage of the students who claimed that their teachers rarely advise them is 06 (12%) and never encourage them is 03 (9%). It is because their teachers may feel that it is not their responsibility to do so and they may feel that students should do more personal efforts to improve their listening comprehension.

Question Three: How often do you listen to English without being asked?

Responses	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	13	28	8	1	50
Percentages	26%	56%	16%	2%	100%

Table 10: Students' self-motivation to listening



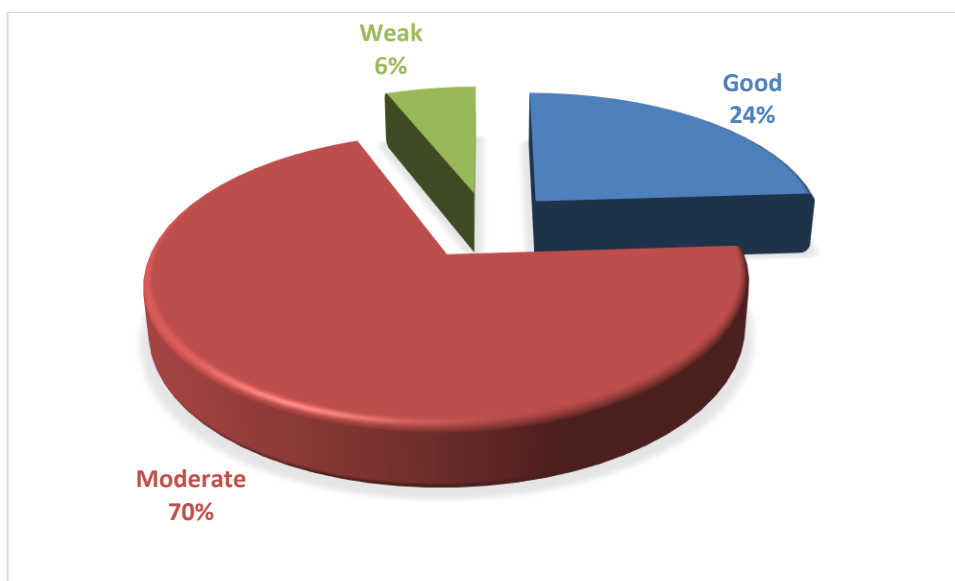
Graph 07: Students' self-motivation to listening

Table 9 reveals that 56% of students sometimes do listen to English without being asked. 20% of the sample frequently listen without being asked. The students may listen to English for the sake of pleasure and entertainment. They are curious to learn foreign languages that may help them in the future in other domains. The other percentages are 16% in which 08 students rarely listen without being asked, one student 01% never does, these consequences are the results of some problems that impede the students' comprehension like the problem in distinguishing the accents used, and the unfamiliarity with English vocabularies and some biological problems as well.

Question 04: Your level in listening comprehension:

Responses	Good	Moderate	Weak	Total
Participants	12	35	3	50
Percentage	24%	70%	6%	100%

Table 11: Students' level in listening comprehension



Graph 8: Students' level in listening comprehension

According to the above table, 70% of the total sample claimed that they have a moderate level in listening comprehension. While 24% of the population replied to be good in listening comprehension. As for the rest 3 (06%) they reported to have a weak level in listening comprehension. We can notice that nearly more than half of the sample have some difficulties in listening comprehension, this might be due to the difficulties in extracting the right interpretation of what is said, or problems in understanding what is meant because of the way of delivering the language or the difficult content of the passage. Besides, the level of proficiency is low as a result of the lack of practice when dealing with oral questions that require critical thinking. This latter is a strategy that helps students relate their previous knowledge to the teacher's intended meaning.

Question 05: If moderate or weak is it due to:

- A. Refusing to accept new idea.
- B. Listening for details and neglect new ideas.
- C. Being easily distracted.
- D. Allowing excessive emotional involvement.
- E. Judging delivery not content.
- F. The absence of listening materials inside the classroom.
- G. All of them.

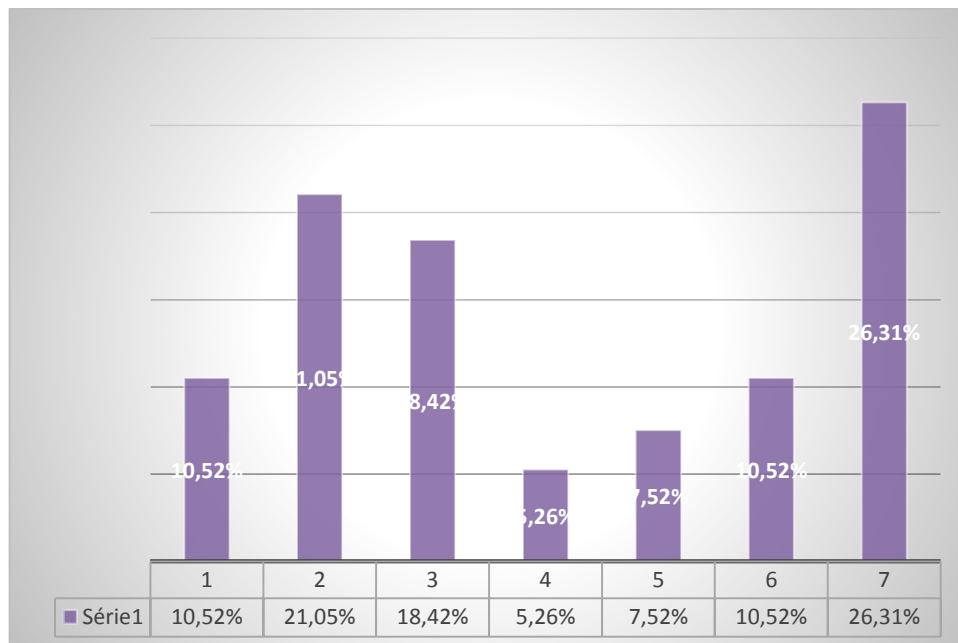
Through asking this followed up question, we aim at getting deeper in the subject matter and discover the variety of obstructions that impede the students listening comprehension.

This item is answered only by 38 participants who claimed a moderate or weak level in listening.

The following table sums up their reasons of having such poor level in listening comprehension.

If weak or moderates is it due to :	Responses	Participants	Percentage
	A. Refusing to accept new idea.	04	10.52%
	B. Listening for details and neglicity new ideas.	08	21.05%
	C. Beingeasilydistracted.	07	18.42%
	D. Allowing excessive emotionalinvolvement.	02	05.26%
	E. Judgingdelivery not content.	03	07.52%
	F. The absence of listening materials inside the classroom.	04	10.52%
	G. All of them.	10	26.31%

Table 12: Students' reasons of having weak or moderate level in listening Comprehension.



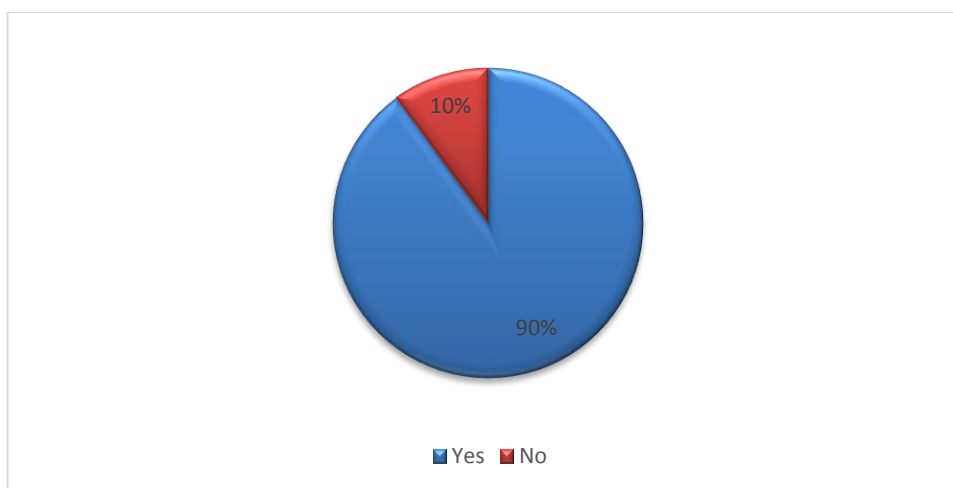
Graph 9: Students' reasons of having weak or moderate level in listening comprehension

The answers we got from the question 5 help us to come up with some interpretations. 10.52% of the sample have weak or a moderate level in listening comprehension because they refuse to accept new ideas, this category of listeners believes in their thoughts and whatever the speaker says, they are unable to agree and allow themselves obtain new ideas, consequently they direct their attention to do another thing just to not listen. 21.05% of the whole number explained that they have weak or moderate level because they listen carefully but for details and they neglect central ideas; while they try to concentrate on every word being said, they spontaneously lose the care, that is to say trying to have everything makes us lose everything. Besides, 18.42% of them claimed that they are easily distracted, they lose their concentrations while listening which decrease their level of understanding; concentration needs calm surrounding, no noise and disturbance. Others not more than 05.26% pointed that they misunderstand the passages because they interact emotionally with the speaker which creates confusions in understanding what is exactly meant. 07.52% referred their weak and moderate level in listening comprehension to judging the delivery not the content, that is to say they focus on the way the speaker produces the utterances, and neglect the core of the speech. Furthermore, 10.52% mentioned that the absence of listening materials inside the classroom affects their understanding. In fact, the huge number of students and the setting of the learners (Amphities) require such materials, especially, if the speaker has a low voice. Finally, 26.31% answered that all those factors overlap and cause their loss of concentration and misunderstanding.

Question 06: As you listen, do you relate what you already know to what the listening passage is about?

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	45	5	50
Percentage	90%	10%	100%

Table 13: Students' use of listening process (relating what they know to the passage content).



Graph 10: Students' use of listening process (relating what they know to the passage content).

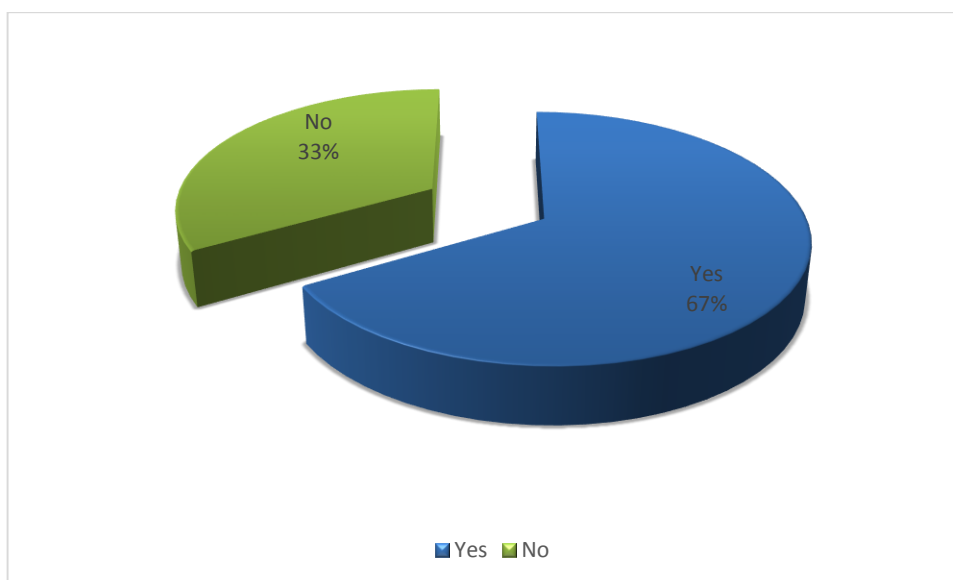
The aim of this question is to check the students' abilities and the way they try to understand while listening. Depending on their answers, 90% of participants try to link their previous knowledge with what is being said in order to confirm their understanding. Only 10% of them do not follow such procedure.

Out of 50 participants, 5 of them answered negatively. For answering the next question (number 07), the results will be taken from those who answered with « yes » and they are 45 participants (90%).

Question 07: If yes, do your predicted comprehension (guesses) always get confirmed ?

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	45	5	50
Percentage	66.66%	33.33%	100

Table 14: Confirmation of students' predictions



Graph 11: Confirmation of student's predictions

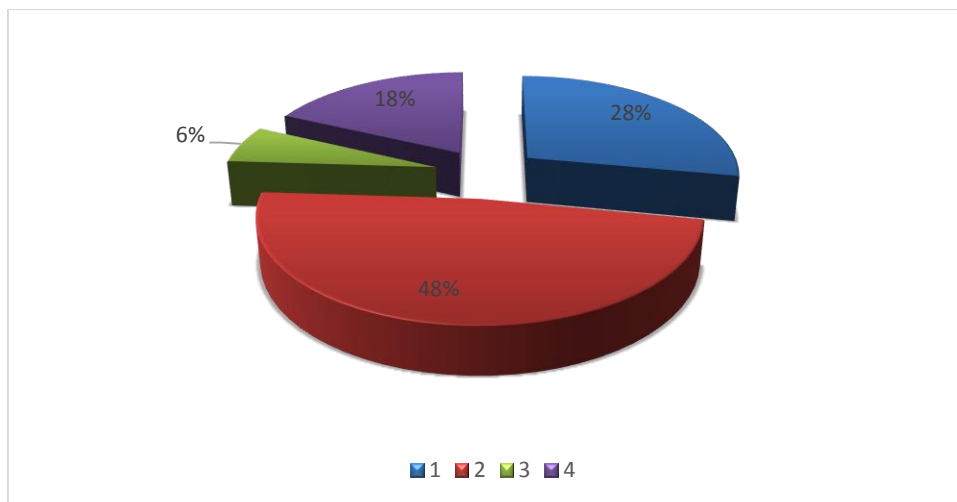
Table 13 indicates that 66.66% of the students' predictions always get confirmed and 33.33% of the same sample their predictions do not always get confirmed. It seems that this category do not know how to connect its previous knowledge with what the teachers are explaining, it shows the absence of critical listening that helps students for better understanding.

Question 08: The psychological factors which can affect your listening comprehension are:

- A. Lack of confidence in the ability to understand the speech.
- B. Loosing concentration whenlistening.
- C. Exhaustion that is the act of listening is mentally a tiresome activity.
- D. Feeling anxious because you are supposed to participate and answer the oral questions.

Responses	Participants	Percentage
Lack of confidence in the ability to understand the speech.	14	28%
Loosing concentration whenlistening.	24	48%
Exhaustion that is the act of listening is mentally a tiresome activity.	03	06%
Feeling anxious because you are supposed to participate and answer the oral questions.	09	18%

Table 15: Students’ psychological factors that affect their comprehension



Graph 12: Students’ psychological factors that affect their comprehension

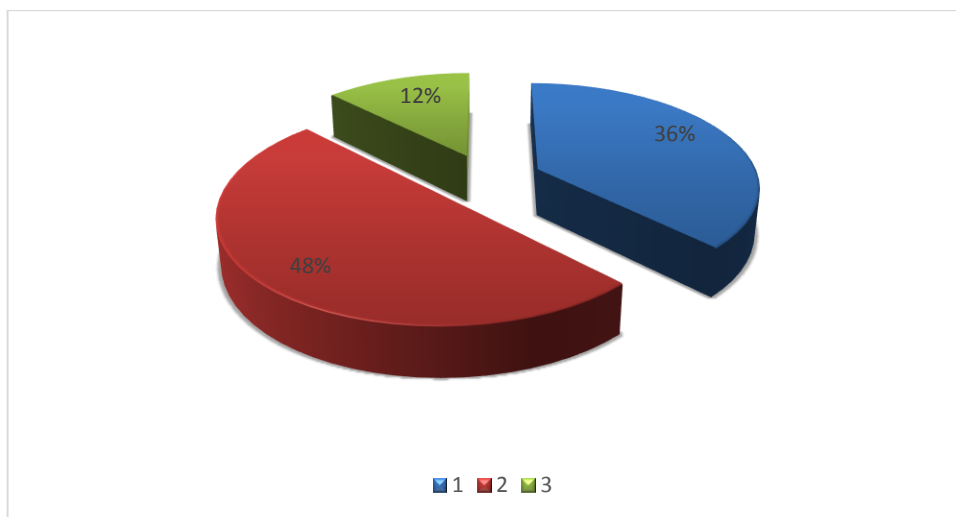
According to the result shown in the above table, we can assert that psychological factors can also interfere in the listening process. On the whole, 48% of the participants reported the loss of concentration when listening, reasons behind that were clarified in question '5' (see table 11). Also, 28% of the respondents are affected by psychological factors such as « lack of confidence ». This might be caused by their weak level in English or the absence of responsibility to prepare and try to empower their knowledge. In addition, comprehension difficulties seem to be caused by feeling anxious because the students are supposed to participate and answer the oral questions (18%). Such problem might be caused by the lack of confidence, bad preparation and losing the follow of ideas as soon as the teacher calls on one of the students to answer. Finally, 06% of the total sample (N°= 50) claimed that exhaustion is one of the psychological factors that might affect their understanding, feeling tiresome may affect badly students concentration during listening because they will be unable to focus on teachers exact meaning.

Question 09: As you listen, you are unable to understand and answer the questions due to:

- A. Lack of proficiency.
- B. Low of motivation.
- C. Receiving wrong interpretations because of some Biological problems.

Responses	Participants	Percentage
Lack of proficiency.	18	36%
Low of motivation.	24	48%
Receiving wrong interpretations because of some Biological problems.	06	12%

Table 16: Students' justification of the difficulty to answer the questions.



Graph 13: Students' justification of the difficulty to answer the questions.

This question aims to support the psychological factors that affects students listening comprehension by shedding the light on the other factors such as lack of proficiency, low of motivation and some biological problems. In this status, the above table indicates that 48% of the sample demonstrated low of motivation as an obstacle of understanding the speech. The category built negative attitudes and has no interest to improve the listening comprehension. Also, 36% of them referred to lack of proficiency. It is because student might not work to develop the sense of acquiring further knowledge outside the classroom; they depend only on what is given by the teacher. The rest of the sample 12% face difficulties in understanding because of some natural biological problems. However, 4% answered negatively; as what is expected, this category has non of those problems.

Question 10: How do you evaluate your listening proficiency when compared to your classmates?

A/ Excellent B/ Good C/ Average D/ Poor

Responses	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Total
Participants	2	27	20	1	50
Percentage	4%	54%	40%	2%	100

Table 17: Students' self-evaluation of listening proficiency comparing to their classmates



Graph 14: Students' self-evaluation of listening proficiency comparing to their classmates.

Table 17 indicates that 54% of total sample evaluate their listening proficiency as « good », 40% claim to have an average level. Only 04% who consider that they have an « excellent » level and 01 student 2% who claimed to have a « poor » level in listening proficiency. Generally, good level suggests a basic competence that students achieve and their ability to comprehend the delivery of teacher to a certain extent. Average level, on the other hand, indicates that students still have some deficiencies in English language (Mainly in pronunciation).

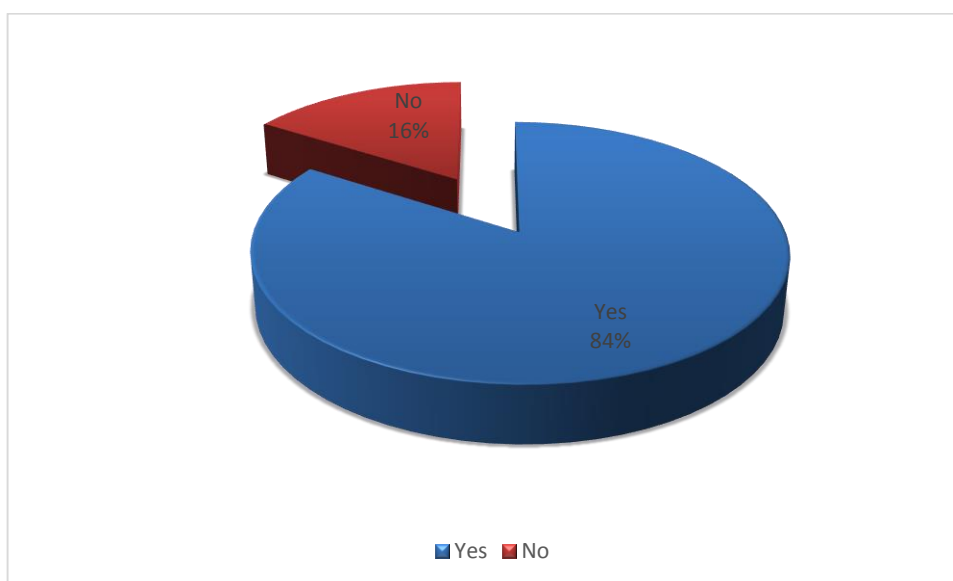
Section three: The use of English varieties.

The aim of this section is to identify the English varieties that are used by EFL teachers. In addition, this section investigates the impact of using such variety of English on Students' listening comprehension.

Question 01: Did you notice that your teachers speak English differently?

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	42	08	50
Percentage	84%	16%	100

Table 18: Pronouncing English differently by EFL Teachers



Graph 15: Pronouncing English differently by EFL teachers

This question is given to 2nd year students of English in order to investigate if they notice that teachers speak English differently. The table 17 asserted that out of (N° =50), 84% of the respondents observed the different in which each teacher produces his/her

speech. While 16% the rest of participants did not. And this might be due to the unfamiliarity with the existence of English varieties.

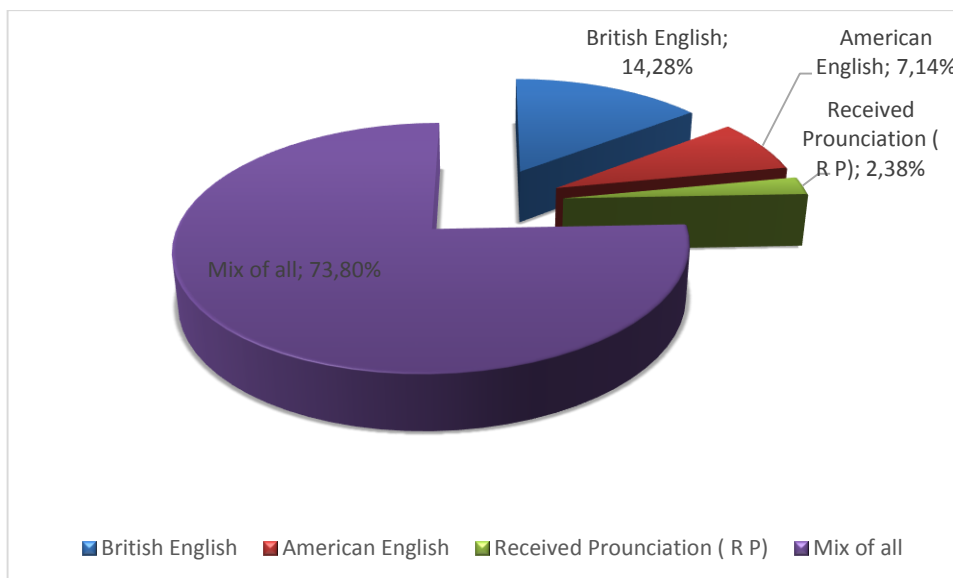
Question 02: If ‘yes’, which variety you think they use in their speech?

- A. British English.
- B. American English
- C. Received pronunciation.
- D. Mix of all.

This question aims to investigate those who answered “yes” in the previous question. They notice the use of English varieties by their teachers.

Responses	Participants	Percentage
British English	06	14.28%
American English	03	07.14%
Received Pronunciation (R P)	01	02.38%
Mix of all	31	73.80%

Table 19: Students’ guesses if the variety used by their teachers.



Graph 16: Students' guesses if the variety used by their teachers

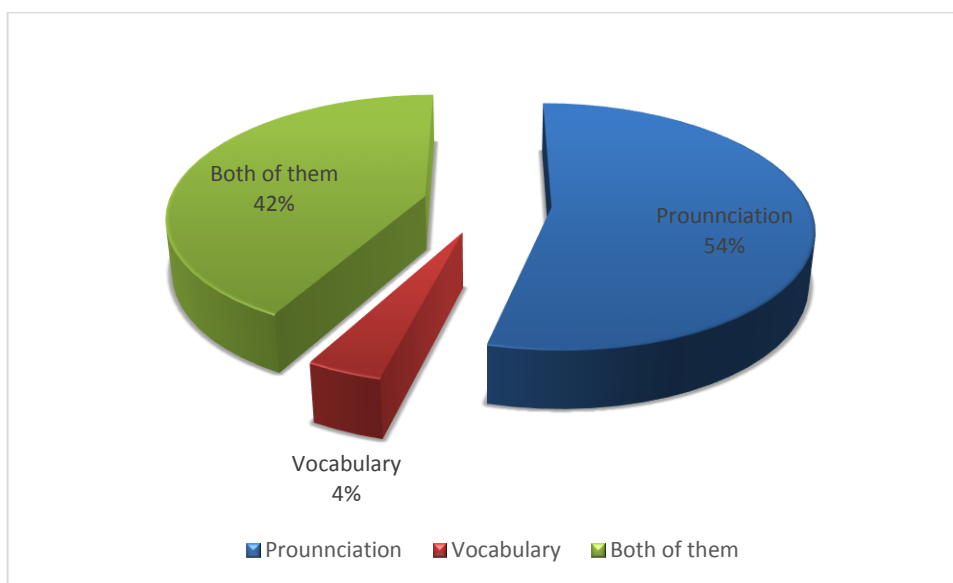
Among the students who answered in this question (N° 42), 73.80% said that their teachers use a variety of English language; they mix between British English, American English and Received Pronunciation. Besides, 14.28% of them reported that the English used by their teachers is British English. While 07.14%, think that American English is the most used in their classes. However, 02.38% of the respondents claimed the use of the Received Pronunciation by their teachers. As expected, those categories might use a link between each variety and its linguistic features through extra listening. Only 01 of the respondents (02%) reported that the English used by their teachers is neither British, American nor Received Pronunciation. The participant referred the English used by the teachers to Algerian English, he might think that as we are foreign learners and teachers, it is impossible to be native speakers of English because the influence of our dialects and accents.

Question 03: As you listen, are the teachers talk differences appeared in their:

- A. Pronunciation.
- B. Vocabulary.
- C. Both of them.

Respnses	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Both of them	Total
Participants	27	2	21	50
Percentage	54%	4%	42%	100%

Table 20: Levels of teachers' talk differences



Graph 17: Levels of teachers' talk differences

According to the table 19, out of 50, 27 of the participants addressed that their teachers talk with British English, 04% of them think that the English used by their teachers inside the classroom is American English. The rest of the respondents noticed that both of American English and British English are used interchangeably. These results push us to expect that the respondents are able to distinguish between the varieties of English because foreign teachers cannot talk with one accents owing to its linguistics interference.

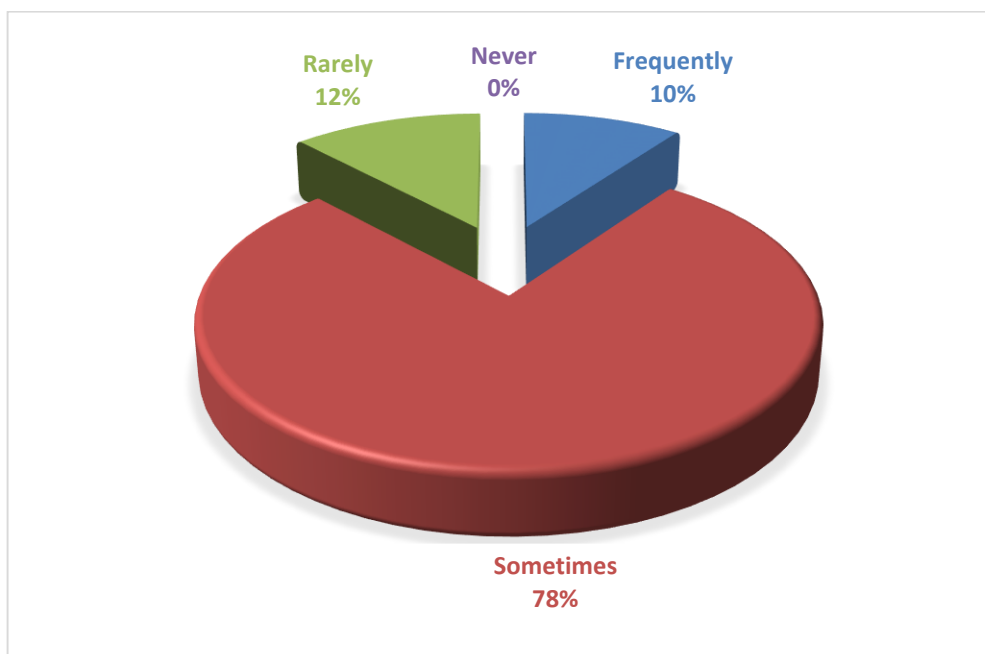
Question 04: How often does the use of English varieties affect your listening comprehension?

- A. Frequently.
- B. Sometimes.
- C. Rarely.
- D. Never.

This question is submitted to know if the uses of English varieties impede the students listening comprehension.

Responses	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	05	39	06	00	50
Percentage	10%	78%	12%	00%	100%

Table 21: The effects of using English varieties on students listening comprehension.



Graph 18: The effects of using English varieties on students listening comprehension.

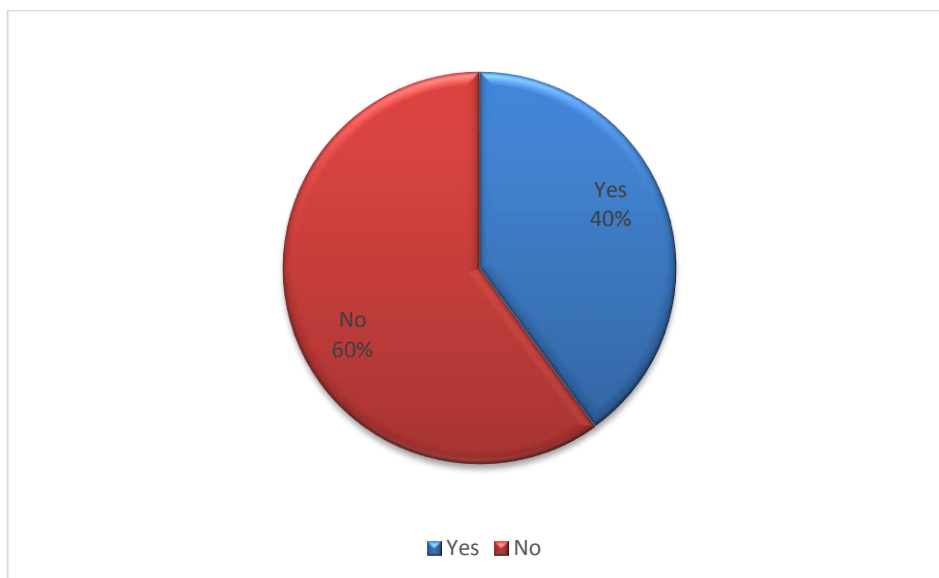
What could be interpreted from the above table is that the majority of students (78%) face sometimes difficulties' in listening comprehension and this is due to the use of English varieties by their teachers. Mixing British English, American English and Received Pronunciation creates gaps in students' comprehension. The same thing can be said about 10% of them who are frequently affected by this interference. Also 12% of the students rarely face this difficulty. Having 00% of the respondents who claimed "never" may explain that the existence of using English varieties by the teachers really impede their listening comprehension.

Question 05: Does your teacher show you how to differentiate between English varieties?

This question aims to investigate the role of EFL teachers in helping their students to distinguish between the English varieties in order to solve the problem of listening comprehension.

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	20	30	50
Percentage	40%	60%	100

Table 22: Teachers' contribution in distinguishing English varieties.



Graph 19: Teachers' contribution in distinguishing English varieties.

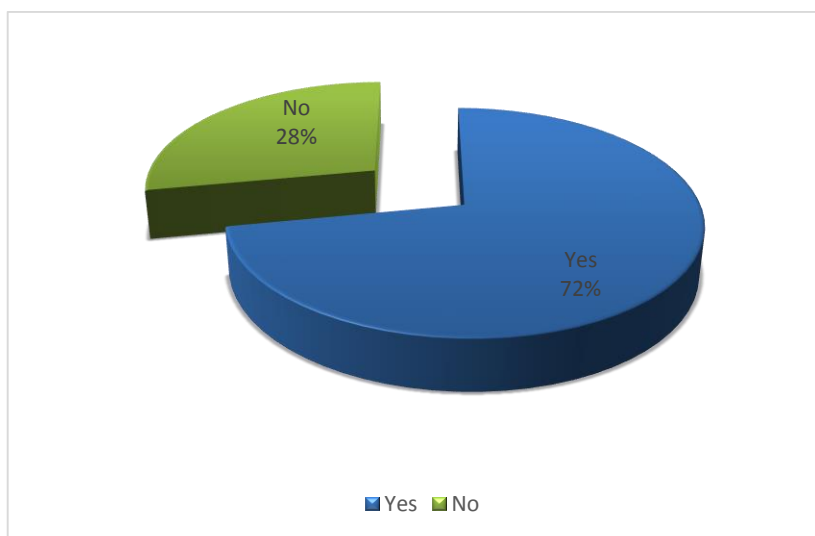
According to table 21, 60% of the students responded that their teachers do not show them the differences occurring in their speech and they do not help them to distinguish between English varieties. As what we can interpret, those teachers are not aware of the importance of explaining which variety is used and to what extent it is essential in solving students listening comprehension. However, 40% of the students appreciated their teachers' efforts in helping them to distinguish between English varieties. This category explained that their teachers helped them by giving examples and using data show, teachers of oral expression sometimes bring a video player to show them different pronunciation. Also, teachers of phonetics take a chance to give them different transcriptions of English words that existe in each variety.

Question 06:As you listen, are you aware of the existence of cultural differences in your teachers' language?

This question aims to investigate if the cultural differences are also a part of the obstructions in listening comprehension.

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	36	14	50
Percentage	72%	28%	100

Table 23: The existence of cultural differences in teachers' talk.



Graph 20: The existence of cultural differences in teachers' talk.

From the above table, we can notice that 72% of the whole sample ($N^{\circ} = 50$) observed the existence and the influence of culture on their teachers' talk. The respondents who notice the existence of this feature may have a background knowledge about the English culture. However 28% of the respondents reply with no answer maybe because they know nothing about their culture.

Question 07: Would you like to add any comment or suggestions?

This question for further suggestions is an opportunity for students to make any comment or suggestions they would like about the topic in general. These comments are the

responses of only 3 (06%) participants and others have none, and they are summarized as follows:

- a)** Some of English teachers are considered to be lazy, and this affects their motivation. Also, some teachers have a difficult, boring pronunciations which in turn impede their understanding of the course.
- b)** It is an interesting, beneficial and useful topic.

5. Results and Analysis of Questionnaires of Teachers.

Section One: Background Information

The purpose of stating this section is to gather teachers' personal information in order to explore their experiences in teaching English language to foreign learners.

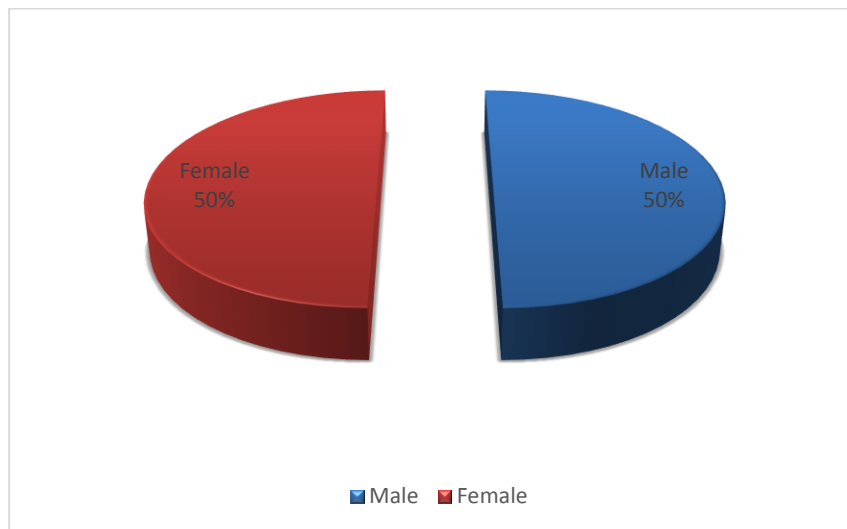
Question 01:

1) Gender :A/ Male

B/ Female

Response	Male	Female	Total
Participants	04	04	08
Percentage	50%	50%	100%

Table 24 :Teachers' Gender Distribution



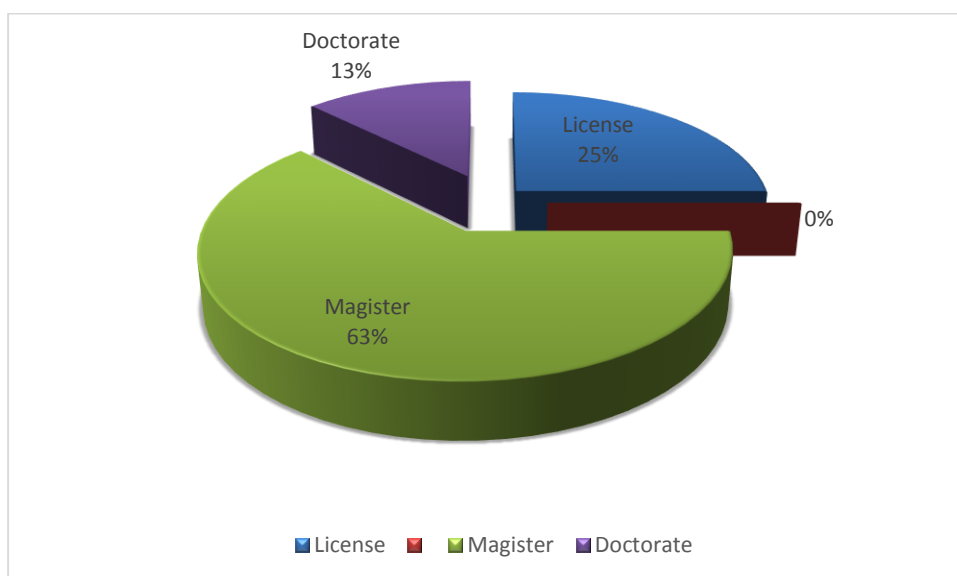
Graph 21: Teachers' Gender Distribution

Out of '08', «04 » teachers are males and other 04 are females. This balance is obtained from a random distribution of the questionnaire to teachers of English at Mohammed Kheider University. The teachers are from different study level.

2) Degree :

Response	License	Magister	Doctorat	Total
Participants	02	05	01	08
Percentage	25%	62.50%	12.50%	100%

Table 25 : Teachers' Qualifications and Diplômas



Graph 22: Teachers' Qualifications and Diplomas

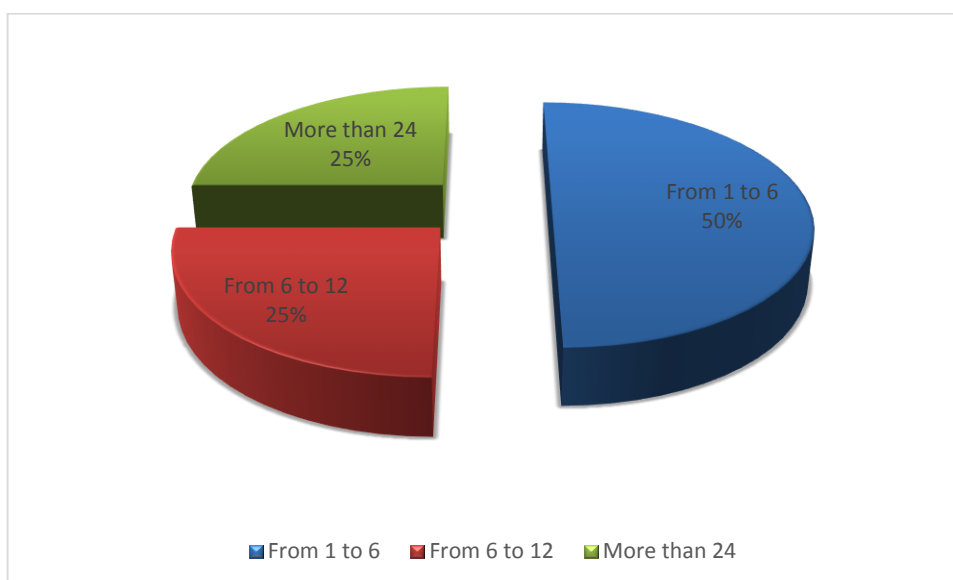
The teachers who kindly accepted to fill in our questionnaire hold different degrees; 62% of them have magister, 25% have a license degree and 12.50% hold a doctorate degree. This diversity in teachers' educational background will provide us with different opinions and attitudes towards the issues under investigation.

3) How long have you been teaching English at university?

By asking this question, we wished to investigate our teachers' experience in terms of the number of years they have been teaching at the university level.

Response	From 1 to 6	From 6 to 12	More than 24	Total
Participants	4	2	2	8
Percentage	50%	25%	25%	100%

Table 26 :Teachers'teachingExperience



Graph 23:Teachers' teaching Experience

Among teachers questioned, 04 teachers take the range of teaching English from one year to six, their experience seems to be short compared to those who have been teaching for more than 06 years (two teachers). The two teachers have been teaching English for more than 24 years. One of the two teachers reported that he has been teaching English for 33 years (considering all the levels),andhe is teaching English at university for 26 years.

Henceforth, their teaching experiences will contribute in reaching the aim behind the present research.

Section two: Students Listening Comprehension:

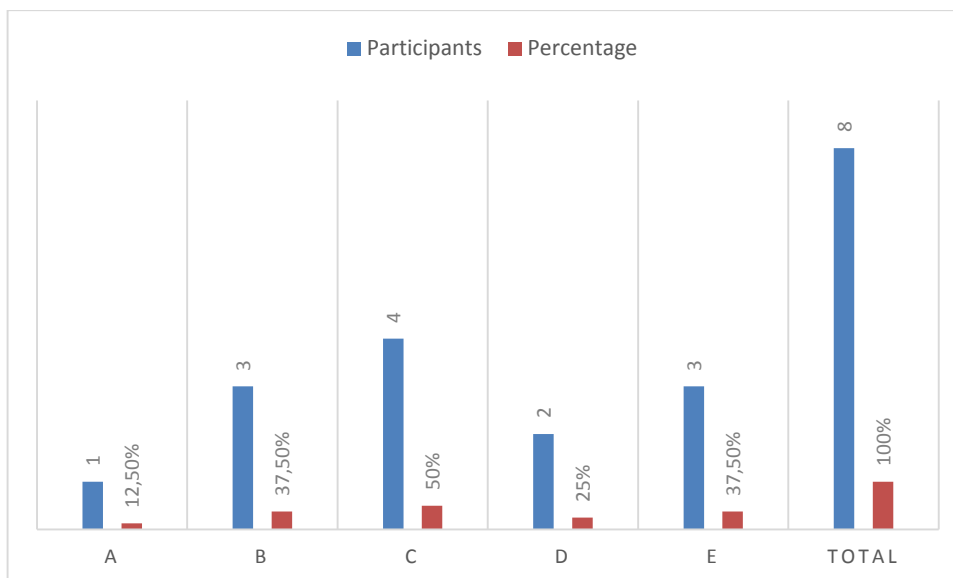
This section aims at identifying the obstructions that EFL teachers notice in their students' listening comprehension. Also, it aims at investigating which listening strategies they are using.

Question One: What language skills do your students suffer from?

- A. Reading.
- B. Speaking.
- C. Writting.
- D. Listening.
- E. All of them.

Response	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Participants	1	3	4	2	3	8
Percentage	12,50%	37,50%	50%	25%	37,50%	100%

Table 27: Teachers' opinion concerning which language skill their students suffer from



Graph 24: Teachers' opinion concerning which language skill their students suffer from

The results gained from the above table concerns eight (08) teachers of English. 03 of them consider all skills as difficult for students. 05 of the questioned teachers ticked more than one response. Accordingly, reading skills is chosen by 12.50%, speaking skill got 37.50%, writing is the answer of 50% of the respondents, while 25% of them choose listening. Among the teachers' comments, one of them reported that all language skills are interrelated and teaching English language skills is called the learning process. Furthermore, that teacher claimed that the overlap between these skills starts first from the listening skill; if the students cannot listen well they cannot speak and those who have weak speaking performance tend to have weak reading abilities which in turn affects their writing performance. The teacher continued to mention that the learning process which consists of the four skills is called « divided and conquer » ; that is to say, the four skills reading, speaking, writing and listening are like a chain, and in order to facilitate the learning process, those skills are divided and treated as single « conquer ».

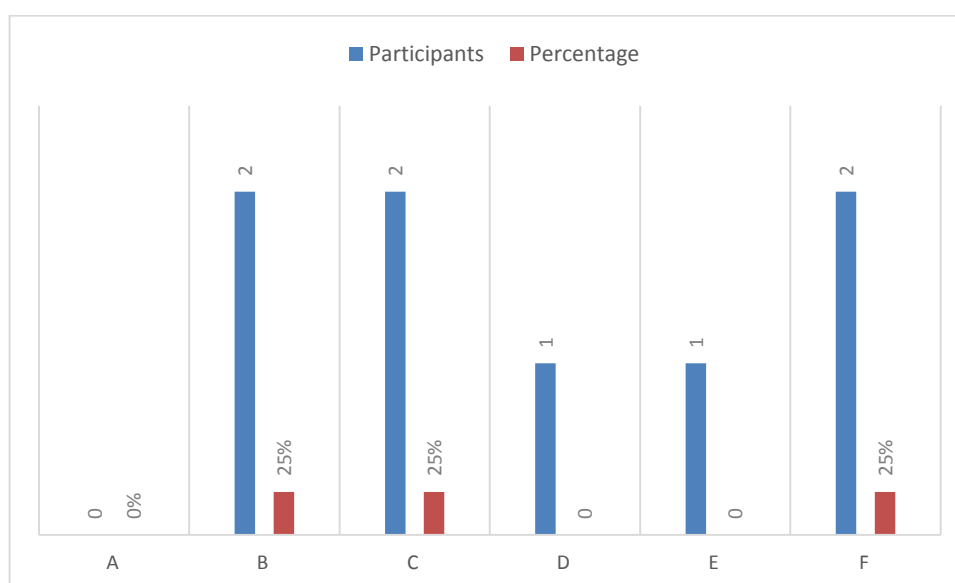
Question two:

Generally, during the course, what are the difficulties they might encounter during listening operation?

- a) Understanding the main ideas.
- b) Finding specific information and details.
- c) Inability to pick the main ideas of a recorded passage from the first listening.
- d) Understanding the speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.
- e) Understanding the meaning of words that are not clearly pronounced.
- f) Facing difficulties' when speaking with different accents (British English, American English or Received Pronunciation).

Response	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Participants	0	02	02	01	01	2	08
Percentage	00%	25%	25%	12.50%	12.50%	25%	100%

Table 28: Teachers' points of view on listening comprehension difficulties



Graph 25: Teachers' points of view on listening comprehension difficulties

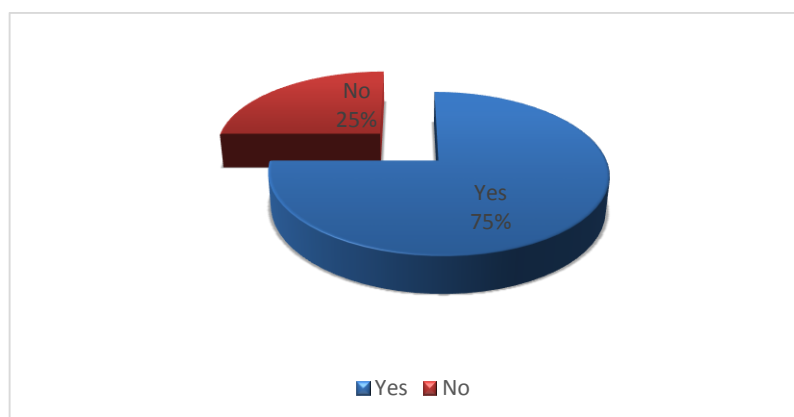
Table 27 indicates that all teachers noticed different difficulties in students' listening comprehension. 25% of them referred to the difficulty to find specific information and details, other 25% reported that their students are unable to pick the main ideas of a record passage from the first listening. In addition, 25% of the teachers claimed that the use of English varieties affects their students' listening comprehension. However, 12.5% stated that the speech that is full of hesitation and pauses has a negative impact on their students. Also, other 12.5% reported that students' difficulty to understand some words refer to bad pronunciation.

Question three: Do you follow certain strategies to deal with those difficulties?

Through this question, we try to make specific teachers use of listening strategies that foster their comprehension.

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	6	2	8
Percentage	75%	25%	100%

Table 29: Teachers' use of listening strategies



Graph 26: Teachers' use of listening strategies

The above table shows that 75% from the participants answered with ‘yes’ and they argued that they try to facilitate their pronunciation, repeating the passage more than one time by finding ways to make the students exposed more to the target language and following the strategies of before, while and after listening. For those who do not follow any strategy, they think that the teachers do not give any importance to English varieties ‘accents’ because they mix all what they know but they should transmit the correct phonetics and spelling of the academic and scientific study of English as a foreign language.

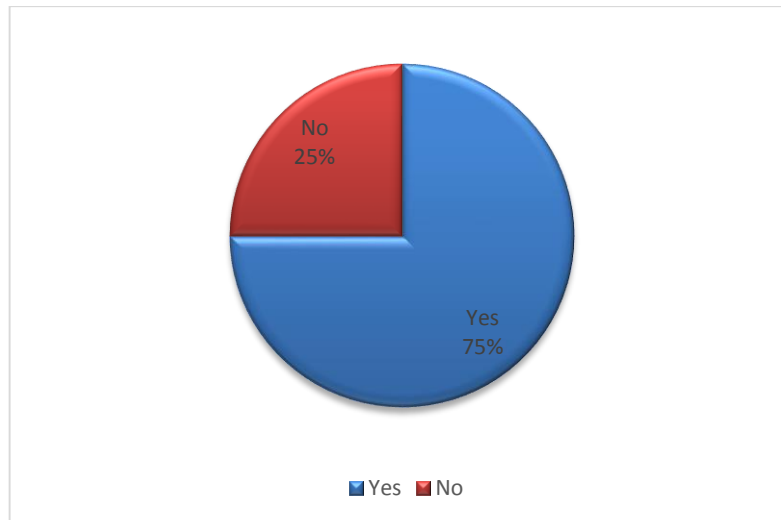
Section three: Introducing English varieties to listening comprehension.

The aim of this section is to investigate teachers’ points of view about using English varieties. In addition, this section aims at showing the impact of using such variety of English on Students’ listening comprehension.

Question One: Do you think that developing students’ ability to differentiate between English varieties contributes in fostering their listening comprehension?

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	6	2	8
Percentage	75%	25%	100%

Table 30: Teachers’ views about making their students aware of the use of English varieties



Graph 27: Teachers' views about making their students aware of the use of English varieties

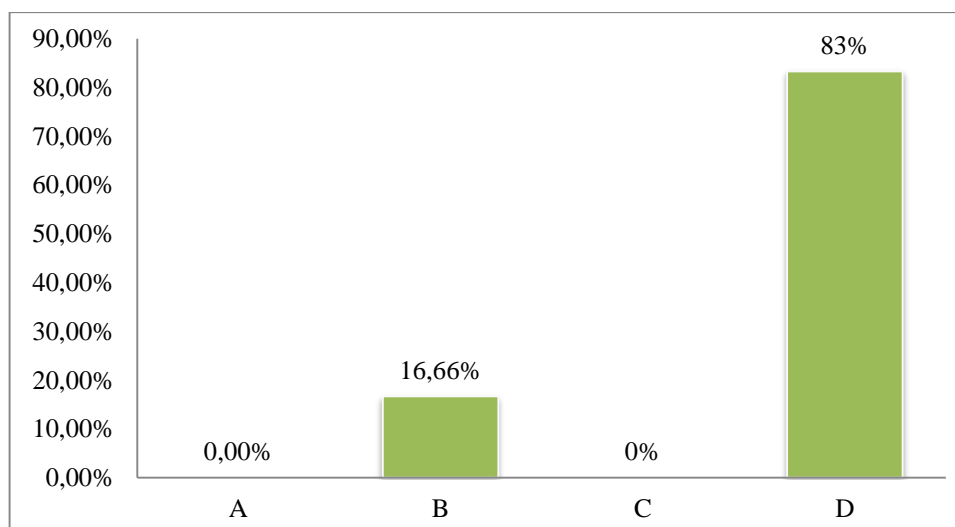
The above table indicates that teachers are really aware of their students' problems especially what concerns listening to different accents of English language. 75 % of the respondents think that overcoming students' listening obstructions can be done by developing their abilities to distinguish and make difference between the English used by their teachers. However, 25% of them said that it is not necessary.

Question Two: If « Yes » does it appear in:

- A. The students' responses and participation.
- B. The students' quick understanding to the oral questions.
- C. The students' delivery that is characterized with specific and preferable variety of English.
- D. All of them.

Response	A	B	C	D	Total
Participants	0	1	0	5	6
Percentage	0,00%	16,66%	0%	83%	100%

Table 31: Teachers estimates about students’ improvement in distinguishing between English varieties.



Graph 28: Teachers estimates about students’ improvement in distinguishing between English varieties.

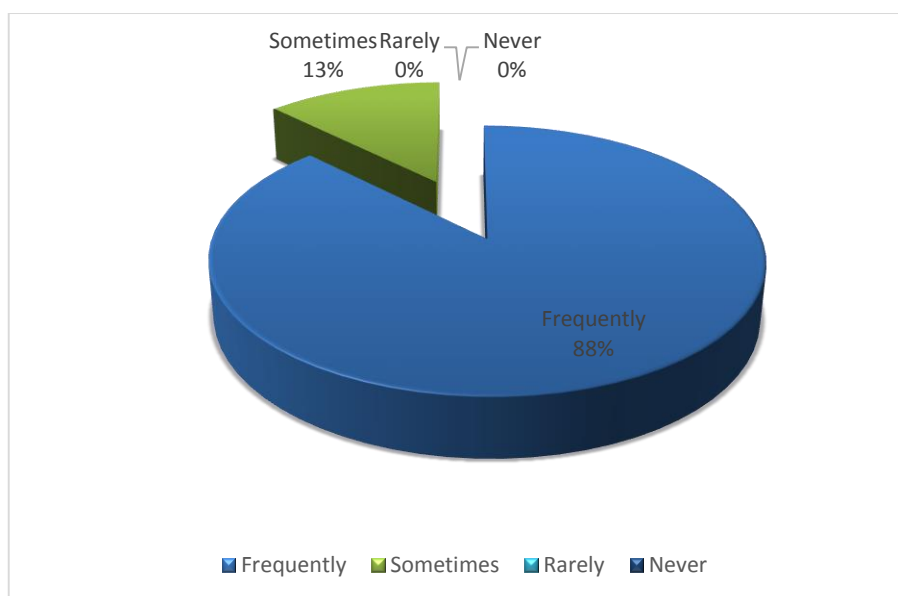
In question one, out of 08 participants, 06 of them answered with ‘yes’ and 02 answered with ‘no’.The 06 participants; Henceforth, 83.33% of the whole (N °= 06) reported that helping students to develop their abilities and enriching their English varieties knowledge will overcome their listening difficulties and this result appeared in all the above suggestions which are; students understanding will appear in their responses and participants inside the classroom, they understand the oral questions quickly and they may speak with one preferable accent. While 16.66%, (one teacher) argued that students’ improvements appear while they speak and give the correct answer.

Question Three: How often do you encourage your students to listen outside the classroom?

This question aims to clarify the teachers’ efforts in fostering their students listening comprehension.

Responses	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Participants	07	01	0	0	08
Percentage	87.50%	12.50%	00%	00%	100%

Table 32: Teachers’ encouragement for an extensive listening



Graph 29: Teachers’ encouragement for an extensive listening

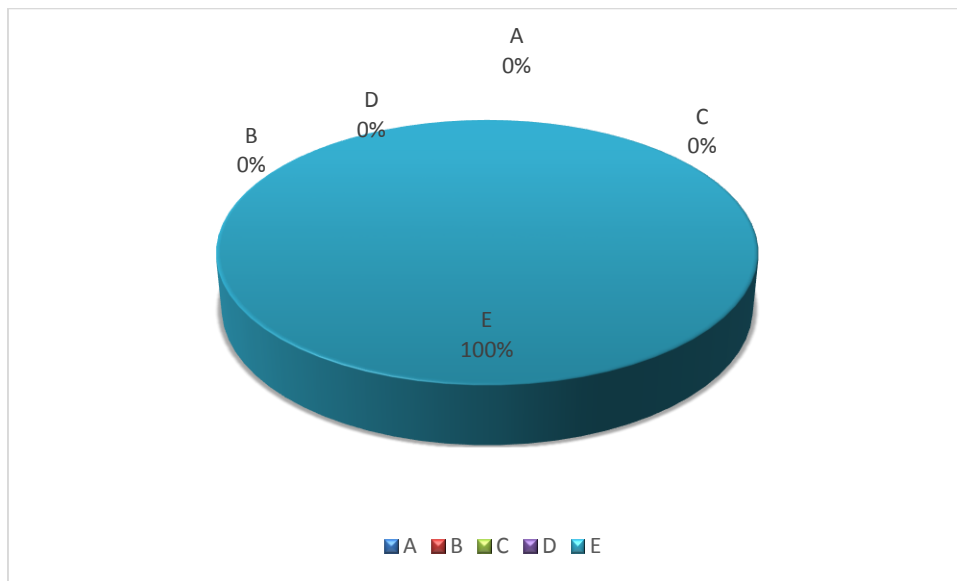
According to table 31, we notice that the teachers answered positively for the importance of developing students listening comprehension through an extensive listening. 87.50% of them frequently encourage their students for further listening, and 12.50% they sometimes do.

Question Four: What are the kinds of listening materials do you usually advise your students to use?

- A. Songs.
- B. Movies.
- C. English news Channel
- D. English online sources.
- E. All of them.

Response	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Participants	00	00	00	00	08	08
Percentage	00%	00%	00%	00%	100%	100%

Table 33: Kind of listening materials that teachers advise their students to use.



Graph 30: Kind of listening materials that teachers advise their students to use

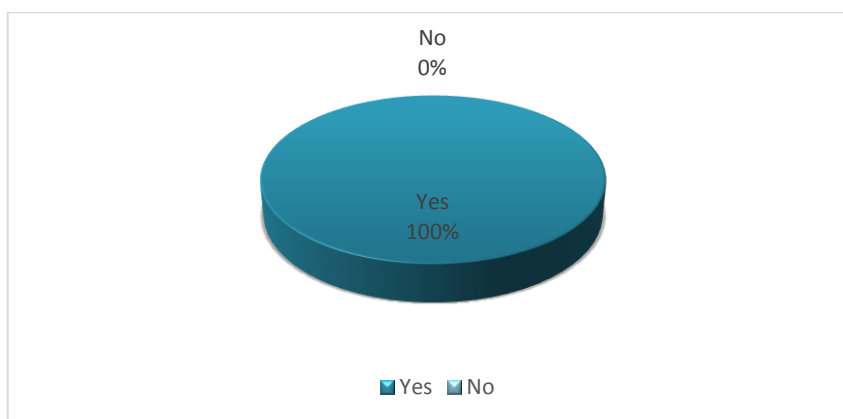
From the table 32, we notice that 100% of teachers proposed that all the suggested materials for listening are suitable to enhance the students' comprehension. Expectedly,

practicing extensive listening can be accompanied with listening to songs, watching movies and English news channels. In addition, preparing lessons from English online courses is helpful too. Using these materials can increase the students' awareness of the differences in the spoken English.

Question Five: Do you think that teaching listening skill through providing special sessions is a good idea?

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	8	0	8
Percentage	100%	0	100%

Table 34: Teachers' views on providing special sessions for teaching listening



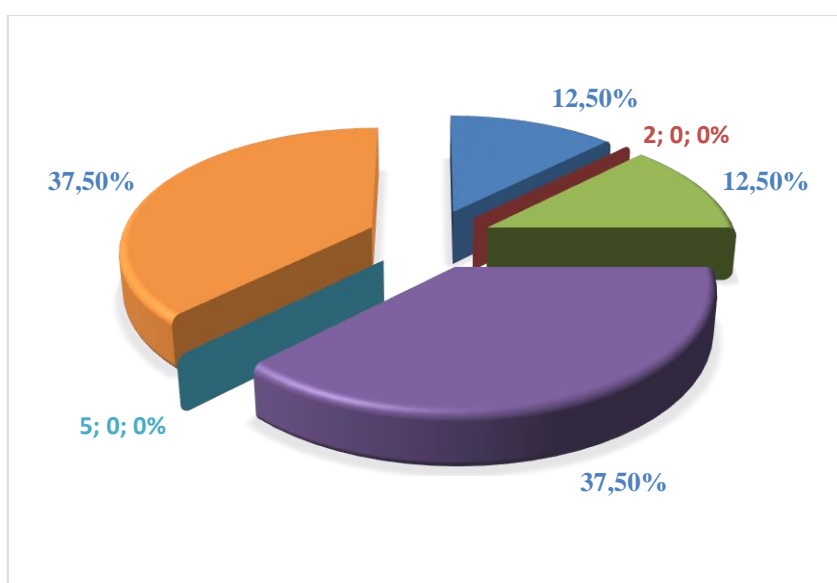
Graph 31: Teachers' views on providing special sessions for teaching listening

The table 33 represents teachers' views of having special sessions for teaching the listening skill. The results show that all the teachers 100% support the idea of developing special listening sessions to solve listening comprehension-related problems.

Question six: In your opinion, what are the techniques that can be used in teaching listening to develop students understanding of English varieties?

Responses		Total	
Participants	Teachers' examples; the use of TV, radio and internet social interaction if possible. Cultural activities such as students club, seminars and meeting.	01	12.50%
	The best way to develop students' awareness of English varieties is by the exposure to the target language.	01	12.50%
	Giving examples of certain varieties provided with records and drills.	03	37.50%
	No answer.	03	37.50%
Total		08	100%

Table 35: Teachers' techniques that may enhance students understanding of English varieties.



Graph 32: Teachers' techniques that may enhance students understanding of English varieties.

This table indicates that the five teachers are really interested in fostering their students' listening comprehension. This clearly appear in their use of certain techniques in order to help them reach better understanding of various used accents. 12.50% of them argued that the best way to solve this problems starts from the teacher, then the learner can use other media tools like radio and internet.

Besides, the social interaction plays another important technique, without neglecting that students should depend on cultural activities in which they attend meetings and seminars. Also, other 12.50% proposed the direct exposure to the target language as the best way to solve the issue of English varieties interference.

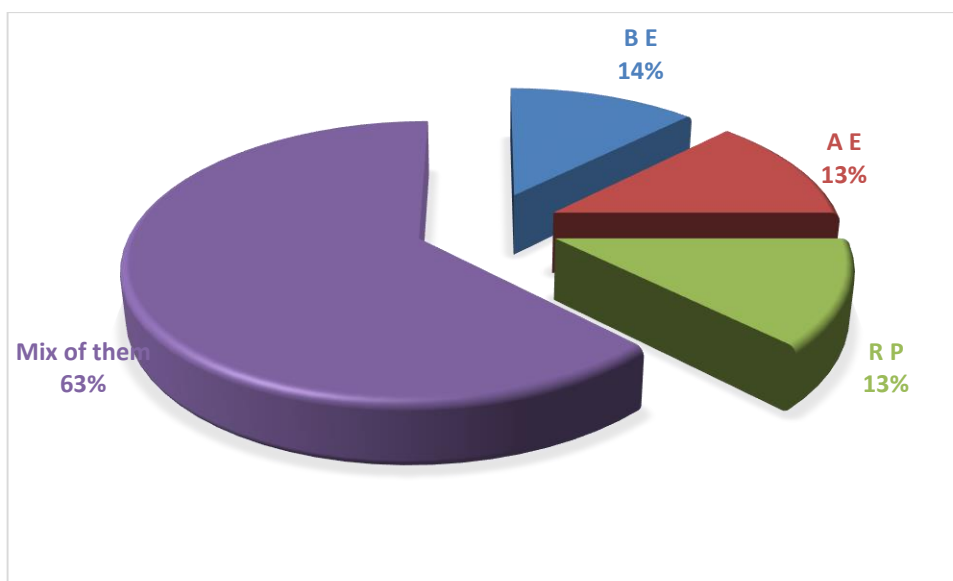
In addition, 37.50% claimed that the teachers should give examples and explain more about the use of English accents depending on, on records accompanied with drills. Unexpectedly, 03 teachers (37.50%) did not answer this question, this may refer to those who think that is not teachers' self-responsibility to improve the students listening comprehension.

Question Seven: What English varieties do you think you are speaking with?

- A. British English.
- B. American English.
- C. Received Pronunciation.
- D. Mix of them

Responses	B E	A E	R P	Mix of them	Total
Participants	01	01	01	05	08
Percentage	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%	62.50%	100%

Table 36: Teachers' use of English accents



Graph 33: Teachers' use of English accents

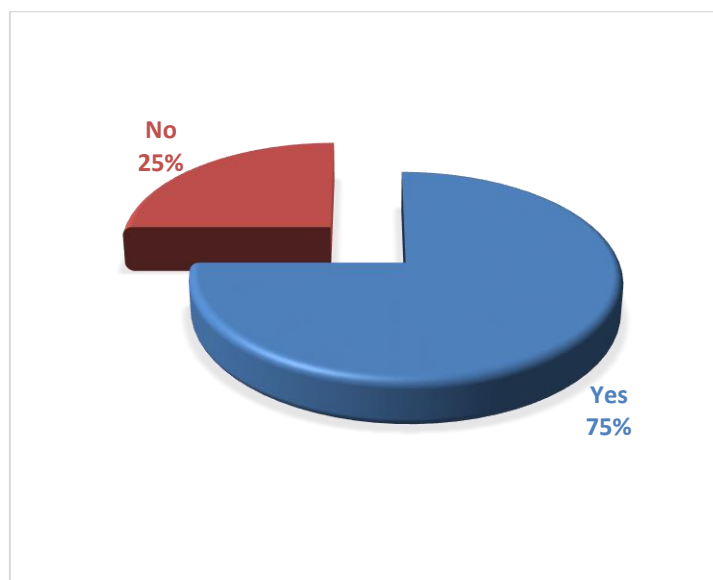
From the results gained in the above table, 12.50% of English teachers (N = 08) think that they speak with British accent. Other 12.50% believe that they use American English and the same percentage to those who think that they are speaking with Received Pronunciation. Those teachers ticked those answer because they may prefer certain variety and they try to speak with. In addition, the rest of the sample 62.50% answered with the use of all the above accents; they may think that they cannot speak with a fixed variety; either British or American. This assumption is simply because they are not native speakers of English. More significantly, the use of English varieties in EFL classes exists.

Question Eight: Do you think that using English varieties affects your students listening comprehension?

The aim of this question is to enhance our search of students listening obstructions especially when speaking with different English accents, as it is shown in the results of the previous question.

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Participants	06	02	8
Percentage	75%	25%	100%

Table 37: Teachers’ opinions on the influence of English varieties on students listening comprehension.



Graph 34: Teachers’ opinions on the influence of English varieties on students listening comprehension.

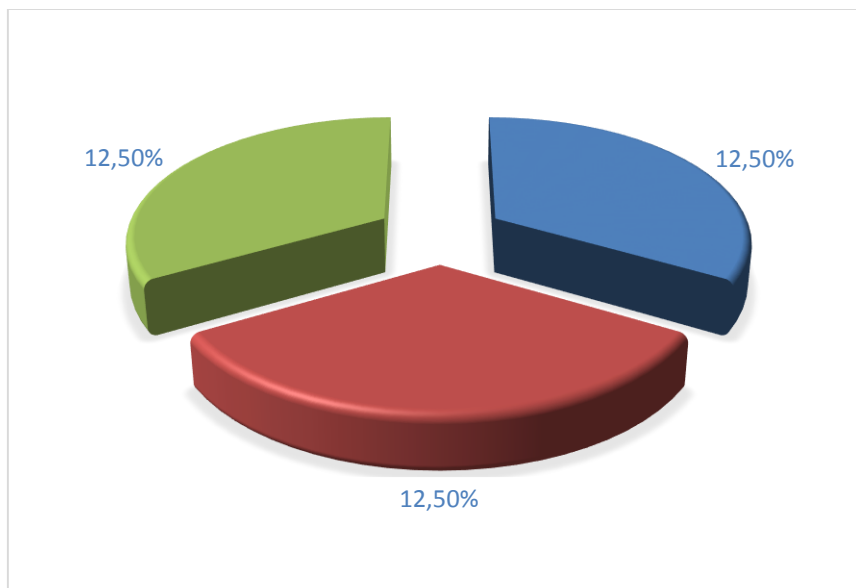
Six teachers (75%) of (N° = 08) answered by “Yes” and 25% selected “No”. This means that the use of different accents of English language inside the classroom affects the students’ listening comprehension. Henceforth, English varieties besides other obstacleis considered one of the difficulties that EFL students suffer from. One of the teachers who answered with ‘ Yes’ commented on this question by adding that English varieties affects the students listening comprehension because of the cultural differences carried within the variety used.

Question Nine: Would you like to add any comments or suggestion?

Out of 08 teachers, just 03 of them provided the following comments.

Teachers comments and suggestion	Percentage
T1: Students should be aware of English varieties but the most importance feature is fluency and not accuracy.	12.50%
T2: English varieties should normally be taught as an additional module in order to make the students aware of the existence of these various accents, because English is simply a language like other language has branches.	12.50%
T3: It is a good subject that touches a significant problem as a novice teacher; I encouraged to advice my students to stick to one accent.	12.50%

Table 38: Teachers’ comments and suggestions.



Graph 35: Teachers’ comments and suggestions

Conclusion

The analysis of students and teachers questionnaires allowed us to draw up the following points; all the students claimed that they face difficulties in all language skills especially listening. Also, they are unfamiliar with English varieties that their teachers use when explaining the course which decrease their listening comprehension.

Furthermore, all the teachers reported that their students have difficulties in studying English as a foreign language, and students find the learning process difficult to be deal with especially what concerns the listening skills. Also, English teachers admitted that they are using certain strategies to deal with such difficulty that concerns specifically the comprehension of the spoken discourse.

Although English teachers realized how much important in to develop students listening abilities, yet they still facing comprehension difficulties, as students themselves argued, this can be resulted from their misunderstanding and their confusion to get the direct and intended meaning.

In addition to that, some other teachers asserted that teaching listening skill as an additional module is the best way to enhance students listening comprehension and it would be very helpful to add more sessions to teach different English accents in order to make foreign learners familiar with the learning tasks.

6. Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications

As it is believed in the previous results of other studies such as Brown and Field, listening is one of the main skills of English language that contributes in an effective communication. The absence of an effective listening leads to misunderstand the received messages and listeners can easily become frustrated or irritated. The aim of conducting this research is to look for the existing relationship between students listening observations and the use of English varieties. As a result, the hypothesis is confirmed with further support that overcoming students listening observations yield better understanding to English varieties. Besides, the analysis of the data collected through the distributed questionnaires to 2nd year LMD students and some of English teachers led to the following implications for practice:

On the one hand, teachers need to take into consideration their crucial roles inside the classroom towards their students. Their role represents in being flexible when teaching in which they should simplify their language by identifying it to the students, whether they are using the British accents or other ones like American English, Received Pronunciation or at least showing the differences. Also, teachers should train their students to put into practice their listening abilities in which they make inferences and predictions to what is coming as an implicit meaning. Furthermore, teachers are in need to create the atmosphere and the environment that motivates students and freshen their memory by applying the idea of scheduling special sessions for an intensive listening.

The results, on the other hand, brought some ideas about involving English varieties as an additional module within the curriculum of teaching English as a foreign language, this implies providing and designing the necessary sources with suitable instructions and

different types of activities that facilitate the process of learning. Consequently, matching listening activities that include native speakers pronunciations will motivate the students listen to English varieties with a comprehensible sense. This in turn will facilitate the teachers' process of teaching. Thus, students can learn to listen effectively to English language in particular if teachers show them how to do so.

The third side addressed in the questionnaire analysis is that it is not the teachers' responsibility alone to foster the students' listening comprehension towards English varieties. Students also share this responsibility in which they are supposed to work for an extensive listening they should spend some time thinking about how develop their listening skills. This latter will affect their personal relationship either positively or negatively. Students need to build a positive self-esteem and be confident when listening because the secret of success in understanding English varieties is not speaking like native speakers; it is listening to native speakers of English.

General Conclusion

Throughout this investigation that is carried in three months period of time, it aims at confirming our hypothesis that if EFL learners overcome their listening problems, they will be able to distinguish and understand English varieties. In other words, our purpose is to explore the difficulties that English learners encounter while listening to English varieties. It aims also to investigate to what extent do English learners consider the use of mixed English accents as an impediment to their understanding.

The analysis of the data gathering tools, questionnaires, provided us with positive reflections towards the issue. They emphasized the necessity of applying listening skill in teaching courses. This study assisted English students to understand some reasons that stand beyond their failure. It attracted their attention to another difficulty that affects their listening comprehension which is the use of English varieties. Furthermore, this can be fulfilled through awaring teachers to use suitable tasks and strategies to enhance the learning operating. As shown results, students face more difficulties in listening comprehension, and those difficulties are related to the use of English varieties that consists of British English, American English and Received Pronunciation. Even though, some students are aware of the existence of more than one accent in their teachers talk, they are unable to understand the passage because of teachers' bad pronunciation. However, English teachers are aware about this issue. As what they claimed, the use of certain strategies such as giving examples and preparing special sessions to identify English varieties is very helpful to overcome students' listening obstructions. This research nearly covered all the questions related to this study. Moreover, the ultimate goal behind this study is to push and encourage the specialists in the field to design specific programs

for teaching English varieties as an additional module. This latter is considered as a further call to enhance Algerian universities curriculum.

The conducted research investigates one of the most important skills of English language which is listening. Listening to English seems to be very difficult for EFL learners because its varieties. Conducting a research about such issue is not easy; an experimental study is more suitable than the descriptive one, questionnaires are not enough to gather honest answers. Also, receiving the answers also it was difficult to receive the answers from both teachers and students in an adequate time. Besides, classroom observation tool is omitted because of time constraints.

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Appendices

Appendice 1

Questionnaire for Students

Diagnosing students' listening obstructions in distinguishing English varieties

A case study of second year LMD Students of English at Mohammed

Kheidar Biskra

Dear Students,

This Questionnaire is prepared as a datacollectiontool for a Master dissertation research. You are kindly requested to answer honestly the questions below in order to fulfill the objectives behind this study. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Please put a ticktool in the appropriate box or give full answers when it is required. You can choose more than one answer to other questions.

Section One: Students' background information

1- Gender : a/ male b/ Female

2- Age :..... years old.

3- How long have you been studying English?

.....
.....

4- Choosing English is:

a/ Your choice b/ imposed

Section Two: Students' listening comprehension

Question One:

Do you enjoy listening comprehension course?

A / Yes b/ No

Question Two :

How often does your teacher encourage you to listen to English language ?

A / Frequently B / Sometimes C / Rarely D / Never

Question Three :

How often do you listen in English without being asked?

A / Frequently B / Sometimes C / Rarely D / Never

Question Four :

Your level in listening comprehension is :

A / Good b/ moderate C / Weak

Question Five :

If moderate or weak, is it due to :

A/ Refusing to accept new ideas

B/ Listening for details and neglecting central ideas

C/ Being easily distracted

D/ Allowing excessive emotional involvement

E/ Judging delivery not content

F/ The absence of listening materials inside the classroom

G/ All of them

Question Six :

As you listen, do you relate what you already know to what the listening passage is about?

A / Yes B / No

Question Seven :

If « yes », do your predicted comprehension (guesses) always get confirmed?

A / Yes B / No

Question Eight :

The psychological factors which can affect your listening comprehension are:

A / Lack of confidence in the ability to understand the speech

B/ Loosing concentration when listening

C/ Exhaustion ; that is the act of listening is mentally a tiresome activity

D/ Feeling anxious because you are supposed to participate and answer the oral questions

Question Nine :

As you listen, you are unable to understand and answer the questions due to:

A/ Lack of proficiency

B/ Low of motivation

C/ Receiving wrong interpretation because of some biological problems

Question Ten:

How do you evaluate your listening proficiency when compared to your classmates?

A/ Excellent

B/ Good

C/ Average

D/ poor

Section Three: the use of English varieties.

Question one :

Did you notice that your teachers speak English differently?

A/ Yes

B/ No

Question Two:

If « yes » , which variety you think they use in their speech?

A/ British English

B/ American English

C/ Received Pronunciation

D/ Mix of all

Question three :

As you listen, are the teachers' talk differences appeared in their:

A/ Pronunciation

B/ Vocabulary

C/ Both of them

Question Four :

How often does the use of English varieties affect your listening comprehension ?

A/ Frequently

B/ Sometimes

C/ Rarely

D/ Never

Question Five :

Deso your teacher show you how to differentiate between English varieties ?

A/ Yes B/ No

If yes, say how:

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

Question Six :

As you listen, are you aware of the existence of cultural differences in your teachers' language ?

A/ Yes B/ No

Question Seven :

Would you like to add any comment or suggestions ?

Thank You
Harbouche Hesna
Master 2 Student Researcher
Date: 14 Avril 2015

Appendice 2

Questionnaire for teachers

Diagnosing students' listening obstructions in distinguishing English varieties

A case study of Second year LMD Students of English at Mohammed

Kheidar -Biskra

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is prepared as a data collection tool for a Master dissertation. Your responses will be very helpful to reach the aim of this study. Your information contained will be dealt with guarantee full anonymity of your contribution.

Thank you in advance for your time and collaboration

Please put a tick in the appropriate box (s) or give full answer (s). You can tick more than one box to some questions.

Section One :

1. **Gender :** A/ Male B/ Female

2. **Degree :** A/ license B/ Magister C/ Doctorate

3. How long have you been teaching English at university ?

.....
.....

Section two : Students' listening comprehension

Question One :

What language skills do your students suffer from?

A/ Reading

B/speaking

C/ Writing

D/ Listening

E/ All of them

Question Two :

Generally, during the course, what are the difficulties they might encounter during listening operation ?

- A/ Understanding the main ideas
- B/ Finding specific information and details
- C/ Inability to pick the main ideas of a recorded passage from the first listening
- D/ Understanding the speech which is full of hesitations and pauses
- E/ Understanding the meaning of words that are not clearly pronounced
- F/ Facing difficulties when speaking with different accents (British English, American English or Received Pronunciation)

Question Three :

Do you follow certain strategy to deal with those difficulties ?

- A/ Yes
- B/ No

Please, explain

.....
.....

Section Three : Introducing English Varieties to listening comprehension

Question One :

Do you think that developing students' ability to differentiate between English Varieties contributes in fostering their listening comprehension?

- A/ Yes
- B/ No

Question Two :

If « yes » say, does it appear in :

- A/ The students' responses and participation
- B/ The students' quick understanding to the oral questions
- C/ The students' delivery that is characterized with specific and preferable variety of English
- D/ All of them

Question Three :

How often do you encourage your students to listen outside the classroom?

- A/ Frequently B/ Sometimes C/ Rarely D/ never

Question Four :

What are the kinds of listening materials do you usually advice your students to use?

- A/ Songs B/Movies C/English news chanals such as BBC and CNN
D/ English online courses E/ All of them

Question Five :

Do you think that teaching listening skills through providing special sessions is a good idea ?

- A/ Yes B/ No

Question Six :

In your opinion, what are the techniques that can be used in teaching listening to develop students' understanding of English varieties?

.....
.....

Question Seven:

What English variety do you think that you are speaking with?

- A/ British English B/ American English
C/ Received Pronunciation D/ Mix of all

Question Eight:

Do you think that using those English varieties affects your students listening comprehension,

- A/ yes B/ No

Question Nine :Would you like to add any comment and suggestions?

.....

Thank you
Harbouche Hesna
Master 2 Student Researcher
Date: 14 Avril 2015

ملخص

البحث الحالي يهدف الى تشخيص مشاكل الاستماع لدى الطلبة، بالإضافة الى أنه يهدف الى تحليل اثار اطلاع الطلبة على التنوع في اللغة الإنجليزية على ادراكهم السمعي. ولقد افترضنا أنه إذا تخلص متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية من مشاكلهم السمعية سيكونون قادرين على تفريق وفهم اللغة الإنجليزية باختلاف أنواعها. لقد اجري بحث وصفي لاختبار طلبة السنة الثانية ل م د بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. ولطبيعة هذا البحث تم توزيع استبيان على ثمانية أساتذة من قسم الإنجليزية وكذا خمسون طالبا من قسم السنة الثانية ل م د. ان النتائج المتحصل عليها قد ساهمت في اكتشاف أهم العوارض التي تعيق الفهم لدى المتعلمين. ولقد أقر الأساتذة أن عدم قدرة الطلبة على الاستماع جيدا تؤثر أيضا على مردودهم الدراسي وانجازاتهم. بالربط مع استعمال اللغة الإنجليزية بأنواعها، أقر الأساتذة والطلبة أن التكلم بلهجات انجليزية متنوعة يعيق الفهم كما هو مطلوب،وقد ذكرت بعض التطبيقات البيداغوجية لتعكس ضرورة تطوير قدرة السمع من خلال التعريف باللغة الإنجليزية وبعض المشاكل المتعلقة بالمتعلم في حد ذاته.