The Use of the Activities for Developing Arabic Listening Skills in Teaching Arabic

Nik Mohd Rahimi

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Corresponding Author Email: nik@ukm.edu.my

Faizah Mustapha

Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Saujana Impian
Email: faizahmus24@gmail.com

Wan Normeza

Faculty of Artificial Intelligent, Univerti Teknologi Malaysia
Email: Normeza.kl@utm.my

Abstract

The activities of Arabic listening skill has been explicitly stated in the textbook. This study was conducted to identify the use of these activities for developing Arabic listening skills in teaching Arabic from two aspects: first, the use of the textbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills and second, the use of listening instructional techniques for developing Arabic listening skills. This research used the survey method using a questionnaire and involved 70 Form Two students. The study's findings showed that the least used of the textbook drills is listening skills drills without combining with other languages skills. Meanwhile from the aspect of the use of listening instructional techniques, the findings showed that the least used of listening instructional technique is the closed book instructions. In conclusion, listening drills should be conducted separately and not combined with other languages skills as well as the closed book instruction technique should be emphasized in the Arabic language teaching.

Keywords: Listening Skills, Arabic, Textbook, Teaching.

Introduction

Listening is one of the main skills in language learning. Listening skills comprised skills for acquiring and understanding the information presented by the presenter through interaction in speech communication (Slovin, 2023). Listening skills also entail the ability to understand a speech or conversation at a normal rate (Nixaly 2020). Therefore, listening skills are the

process of receiving what is said by someone, understanding what is heard and responding to it appropriately.

Listening skills are key to the learning process. This is because these skills help students acquire and process information (Sujatha & Rajasekaran, 2024). Hence, the lack of listening skills can hinder the learning process because students cannot receive and process information. Similarly in learning a second language, listening skills become the door to mastering other language skills. Without listening, mastery of other language skills will be affected.

Similarly, during their language development, children will develop listening skills, before speaking (Hutton et al., 2024) and children with hearing impairment will not be able to speak. Therefore, second language learners should be exposed to listening skills before mastering speaking, reading and writing skills as listening skills are a tool to understand and facilitate the mastery of the target language.

Likewise, students who mastered speaking and reading skills still need to develop listening skills. These skills will help them organize ideas, express opinions and choose material to read. For example, in class, students need to listen to the teacher's explanation before they carry out learning activities. Without listening skills, learning activities do not run well and smoothly.

Listening skills are the most frequently used skills by students in the classroom compared to other language skills. More than 50 per cent of students' learning time is focused on listening skills, which is more or less the same as the life of an individual, It was reported that individuals use more than 50 per cent of their daily waking hours to listen (Michael & Martha 2021). This shows the importance of the listening aspect as a significant medium in the acquisition of information.

In the context of teaching a second language like Arabic, students can master listening skills when they are constantly exposed to various stimuli in listening skills drills such as conversations, interviews, news, songs, dramas and movies repeatedly and continuously. This situation can be linked to the Behaviorist Theory Woolfolk (2019), which asserts that learning is related to changes in learning behaviour. Individual learning behaviour change is based on repeated stimulus and response theory. According to this theory, students will achieve mastery of listening skills when there is stimulation of the skills and continuous listening responses.

From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory Woolfolk (2019), students' cognitive ability to listen to words and sentences in the learning environment becomes the main channel for obtaining information. Therefore, to create a meaningful environment for students, teachers must shape the environment in a systematic and organized manner rather than independently. The meaning of systematic and structured is a series of learning arranged in the curriculum. For example, through the concept of 'scaffolding', teachers show models or examples of listening skills instructional techniques to students through the concept of 'modelling'. Through the concept of 'bridging', the teacher relates the students' existing knowledge to new knowledge, which is a listening skill instructional technique using the words

that have been learned to describe new words or situations. This situation creates a conducive atmosphere that stimulates students' interest in using Arabic in their daily lives.

In the context of Arabic listening skills, the literature highlights show that several studies on Arabic listening skills instructional techniques have been conducted by Arabic language education scholars (Ismail, Rasit, & Supriyatno, 2023). Despite this, some aspects of Arabic listening skills have not been emphasised in schools. The literature review found that more studies are focusing on speaking skills than listening skills. In other words, listening skills are not emphasized enough in teaching compared to speaking skills. This also shows that there is a neglect of listening skills in the teaching of Arabic. In this regard, several studies on listening skills showed that students have low mastery of listening skills because these skills are not emphasized enough in the teaching and learning process at school (Ismail, Makhtar, Chulan, & Ismail, 2023). This is in line with the findings of Alhawary (2023), who stated that teachers put more emphasis on reading and writing skills.

Neglecting listening skills contributes to the issue of mastery in learning Arabic. According to Ismail, Rasit, & Supriyatno (2023), Arabic language learning in Malaysia is still at an unsatisfactory level compared to the teaching and learning of other foreign languages. There is still a significant issue of students' low mastery of the Arabic language as raised by teachers and researchers of Arabic language learning. Among the factors contributing to students' low mastery of Arabic language skills is the lack of Arabic listening skills mastery (Nik et al. 2021). This shows that a low mastery of listening skills has an impact on Arabic language learning in general.

Although the literature review found studies on Arabic listening skills, there are still limited studies on students' experience in using Arabic listening skills instructional techniques, specifically in textbooks. Students' low mastery of Arabic listening skills is attributed to their lack of exposure to Arabic listening skills instructional techniques as teachers place more emphasis on speaking, reading and writing skills. This statement is supported by Nik et al (2021), who revealed that the teaching of listening skills becomes less interesting and effective due to the neglect of proper listening skills instructional techniques. This is because many students are less focused during the listening skills instructional, causing them to fail to master listening skills. This happens because of the lack of emphasis by the teaching staff on listening skills instructional techniques in Arabic language learning. Therefore, teachers play the main role of modelling appropriate listening skills and using suitable instructional techniques to contribute to the improvement of students' listening skills.

On the other hand, there is a misconception among Arabic language teachers about the need for listening skills. Listening skills instructional techniques are not practiced because teachers believe Arabic listening skills can be mastered indirectly through reading skills. In this regard, reading and writing skills are deemed more important for students to master because the main Arabic language assessment only revolves around those two skills. Therefore, the need for teachers to teach listening skills has become less important in the current stream of Arabic education which is more exam-oriented.

Neglect of listening skills does not only occur in the teaching of Arabic. It even happens in learning other second languages such as English. Amir, Saeed & Kang's (2022) study on

English textbooks in Pakistan found that while the textbooks were drafted in the form of language skills, the techniques of listening skills instructional were not explicitly stated. At the same time, listening skills are deemed as secondary skills compared to reading and writing skills. Ismail, Rasit, & Supriyatno (2023), also stated that textbooks also contribute to problems in the mastery of Arabic among students. Therefore, the emphasis on listening skills in the drafting of textbooks has a significant impact on the teaching of these skills in the classroom.

Thus, to avoid the neglect of Arabic listening skills in teaching, the component of listening skills instructional should be explicitly mentioned in the Arabic textbook as it was not explicitly mentioned previously. Explicitly mentioning this component in the textbook will impact the implementation of listening skill instructional in the classroom as textbooks are the main source of teaching Arabic language teachers. Meanwhile, past studies revealed students' low mastery of listening skills is linked to teachers' use of chalk and talk and other paper-based instructional techniques. In this regard, teachers generally rely on textbooks where listening skills instructional techniques are not explicitly mentioned.

Therefore, it is hoped that future textbooks can explicitly mention the listening skills instructional component to avoid the neglect of listening skills in teaching. Arabic. Such neglect hinders students' mastery of other Arabic language skills, including speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this study can give a real picture of the implementation of teaching Arabic listening skills after the component of listening skills is explicitly mentioned in the textbook. These studies have set two research questions, to determine what are the listening skill instructional techniques applied in the teaching of Arabic?, and what are listening skills instructional techniques applied in Arabic language teaching?

Research Methodology
This study employed the quantitative survey research design. Data were obtained from a questionnaire about the use of the activities in developing Arabic listening skills. This study involved a preliminary survey with a sample is 70 students Form Two students taking the Arabic Language subject in two daily secondary schools. These students were selected through simple random sampling.

This questionnaire contains three parts. Part A includes the demographic information of the study respondents. The questionnaire items in Part B, on the other hand, are on the use of texbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills found in the Form Two Arabic textbook. There are four forms of listening skills drills, namely listening skills drills without combining with other skills, listening skills drills combined with speaking, listening skills drills combined with reading, and listening skills drills combined with writing. Part C focuses on the construct of the listening instructional techniques.

Research Findings
The findings of the level of use of textbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills are shown in Table 1. The textbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills are divided into four forms of use, namely listening skills drills conducted separately without combining with other

skills, listening skills drills combined with speaking skills, listening skills drills combined with reading skills and listening skills drills combined with writing skills.

Table 1
Level of Listening Skills Drills (n=70)

Type of Listening Skills Drills	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1. listening skills without combining of other skills.	2.73	1.06	Moderate
2. Listening combined with speaking skills	3.03	0.93	Moderate
3. Listening combined with reading skills	2.84	1.13	Moderate
4. Listening combined with writing skills	3.31	1.10	Moderate
Total	2.98	1.06	Moderate

Based on the table above, overall, the use of texbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills is at a moderate level with mean=2.98, sp=1.06. The listening cpmbined with writing skills instructional techniques component is the highest level of use with a mean=3.31. The use of texbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills conducted separately without combining with other language skills is the lowest compared to other drills. Therefore, the findings study showed that the most frequently used drills in the textbook are listening drills combined with writing skills. In comparison, the least used is the texbook drills conducted separately without combining with other skills.

The findings on the level of the listening instructional techniques are shown in Table 2. The findings show that the overall use of the listening instructional techniques is at a moderate level with a mean value of 3.01. A total of seven items represent the use of the listening instructional techniques. The items cover the main techniques of listening instructional techniques.

Table 2
The Level of Listening Instructional Techniques

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
C1. I heard Arabic words, phrases and sentences through QR codes or audio/audiovisual tools.	2.39	.98	Moderate
C2. I was not allowed to look at the book when the teacher started teaching the new Arabic language.	2.21	.74	Low
C3. I was heard reading Arabic words, phrases and sentences several times.	3.67	1.11	High
C4. My teacher instructed to 'close the book' (اغلقوا الكتاب) when teaching Arabic listening skills.	3.16	1.07	Moderate
C5. My teacher gave instructions to 'listen carefully' (استمعوا جيدة) before the reading was heard.	3.41	1.29	Moderate
C6. I was not allowed to look at the book when asking the teacher to read.	2.59	1.21	Moderate
C7. My teacher asked the students to answer orally without referring to the book.	3.66	1.09	Moderate
Total	3.01	1.07	Moderate

Table 2 shows that item C3, which is related to repetition techniques in teaching listening skills, recorded the highest mean with mean=3.67. This finding shows that repetition is often used in teaching Arabic listening skills. Meanwhile, item C2, which is related to teachers' practice of teaching without using textbooks or students not being allowed to refer to the textbook recorded the lowest mean of 2.21. This illustrates that teachers do not often begin teaching listening skills with conducting separately listening skills drills. There are five items at a moderate level, namely items C1, C4, C5, C6 and C7, item C1 is related to the technique of using audio equipment, item C4 is related to the technique of giving the instruction "close the book", item C5 is related to the technique of giving the instruction "listen carefully", item C6 is related to the closed book instruction when the teacher instructs the students to read and item C7 is related with the technique of answering questions without referring to a book. All of these items show a moderate level of use.

Discussion

In an effort to improve students' mastery of Arabic language skills, listening skills are considered the key skills that allow students to master speaking, reading and writing skills. Therefore, the emphasis on listening skills in the teaching and learning of Arabic is expected to improve students' Arabic speaking ability. The findings of this study show that the use of the textbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills is at a moderate level, indicating that the textbook has not optimally stated the listening skills drills. Consequently, listening skills drills are not used regularly in Arabic teaching sessions which indirectly, affects students' mastery of listening skills. This finding is in line with Izzudin et al. (2017) which shows a moderate level in the implementation of Arabic listening skills in Primary Schools.

Mahfuzah (2013), found that secondary school students showed moderate achievements in listening skills tests and similarly, college and university students reported a moderate level of mastery in listening skills (Ku et al. 2014). This means that the teaching and learning of Arabic listening skills has not yet achieved the desired goal in the Arabic Language Curriculum, which is mastering Arabic listening skills. This will, to some extent, affect the mastery of other language skills, namely speaking skills, reading skills and Arabic writing skills, because scholars agree that listening skills are the basis for mastering other language skills. Therefore, the implementation of listening skills in the teaching and learning of Arabic needs to be emphasized by taking into account the use of the correct listening instructional techniques.

The overall results on the listening instructional techniques show that it is in general, at a moderate level. This finding is in line with Sujatha & Rajasekaran's (2024) study which states that teachers pay less attention to listening skills. Amir, Saeed & Kang (2022) also revealed that listening skills are the skills with the lowest mastery among students. Therefore, he suggested that teachers increase the use of the listening instructional techniques. Alhawary (2023), also emphasized the need to apply the listening instructional techniques in teaching and learning Arabic as these techniques can provide a good foundation for students to apply affective listening in learning. Thus, Arabic teachers should be exposed to the listening instructional techniques intensively to increase their awareness and encourage them to apply these techniques in teaching.

This study also found that the use of texbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills conducted separately is the lowest frequency of use. This shows a lack of emphasis on the listening instructional techniques that maximizes the use of students' auditory senses (Ku et al, 2014). In this regard, the use of texbook drills for developing Arabic listening skills conducted separately without combining them with other skills is at a low level.

Likewise, a study found that as many as 84.8% of teachers allow students to refer to books when reading Arabic texts (Nik et al. 2021). In this case, when students are allowed to look at books while the teacher reads the text, listening skills are combined with reading skills because students read the text while listening. This will affect students' mastery of listening skills because students should be trained to listen without looking at the textbook.

Conclusion
Based on the research conducted, the use of the activities for developing Arabic listening skills in Arabic classrooms is at a moderate level. In this regard, the mastery of good listening skills becomes a necessity for training students as independent users in social discourse. Therefore, the exposure of the listening instructional techniques to teachers is seen as a starting point for improving students' mastery of listening skills. Good infrastructure, including relevant textbook content, is also necessary to create a conducive environment for learning listening skills.

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