Jordan Journal of Educational Sciences Vol. 3, No. 3, pp 317-329

Barriers to Effective Listening to Lectures as Perceived by Undergraduate Students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan

Khalid Al-Qudah *

Received Date: Jan. 15, 2007 Accepted Date: Sept. 24, 2007

***Abstract**: This study aimed to identify barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan. The sample of the study consisted of 188 students (38 males and 150 females). A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data. Mean, standard deviation and ANOVA analysis were used to analyze data. Results showed the four domains of the barriers to effective listening to lectures ordered by rank from the highest to the lowest as follows: (1) the educational environment, (2) the psychological conditions of students; (3) the instructor and (4) the physical conditions of students. Results also indicated there were no significant differences among students' perceptions attributed to gender or the academic level. Results indicted significant difference attributed to the major of the respondents. Consequently, several recommendations were proposed to overcome barriers to effective listening to lectures. (**Keywords**: Listening skills, effective listening, listening to lectures, barriers to listening)..*

معيقات الاستماع الفعال للمحاضرات كما يراها طلبة البكالوريوس في جامعة آل البيت في الأردن

خالد القضاة، كلية العلوم التربوية، جامعة آل البيت.

ملخص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد معيقات الاستماع بفاعلية للمحاضرات كما يراها طلبة البكالوريوس في جامعة آل البيت في الأردن. وقد تكونت عينة الدراسة من 38 طالباً و150 طالبة. وقد طور الباحث استبانة لجمع البيانات تتكون من أربعة مجالات. وقد استخدمت المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية وتحليل التباين لتحليل البيانات. وقد أظهرت النتائج مجالات معيقات الاستماع الأربعة مرتبة من الأعلى إلى الأسفل على النحو الآتي: (1) معيقات تتعلق بالبيئة التعليمية، (2) معيقات تتعلق بالظروف النفسية للطلبة، (3) معيقات تتعلق بالمدرس، (4) ومعيقات تتعلق بالظروف الجسمانية للطلبة. كما أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية من وجهة نظر الطلبة للمعيقات تعزى إلى متغيري الجنس والمستوى الأكاديمي للطلبة. بينما أظهرت النتائج فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية تعزى إلى متغير التخصص. وقد اختتمت الدراسة بمجموعة من التوصيات للتغلب على معيقات الاستماع الجيد. (**الكلمات المفتاحية**: مهارات الاستماع، الاستماع الفعال، الاستماع للمحاضرات، معيقات الاستماع).

Introduction

Listening is the first language skill that children acquire. It provides a basis for all aspects of language, and plays an important role in the processes of learning and communication of every individual (Hyslop and Tone, 1998). A review of literature reveals that there are various definitions of listening in communication and education. Bohlken (1998) quoted a comprehensive definition adopted by the International Listening Association: "Listening is the active process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken/ or nonverbal messages. It involves the ability to retain information, as well as to react emphatically and/ or appreciatively to spoken and/or nonverbal messages".

Thus, listening involves more than simply hearing. Some people may confuse between hearing and listening. Listening and hearing are not the same. Hearing is an involuntary process but listening is a voluntary effort to hear, attend, comprehend and interpret. According to Mehdinezhad and Peltonen (2005) it is vital for educators to teach their students the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is the function or ability to perceive sound, and listening is a skill. They must also make sure that interpretation, evaluation, and response are all parts of listening.

Wolvin and Coakley (cited in Shuie, 2003) defined listening as the process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural stimuli. Shuie (2003) confirms that listening is more than just perception of sound, although perception is the foundation of listening and requires comprehension of meaning. Ober (cited in Moody, 2002) describes hearing as the physical act of receiving and processing sound waves that strike the eardrum where as listening, on the other hand, is an active process that interprets and assigns meaning to those sound waves.

Plattor (1968) defined listening as the act of hearing sound sequences or patterns, purposefully directing attention to these, and actively applying appropriate cognitive skills which result in the listener's obtaining meanings, forming concepts, interpreting data, and predicting outcomes from these patterns.

In fact, listening includes more than one activity. It includes hearing, attending, understanding, evaluating and executing what we hear. Shkolnik (2005) concludes that listening involves a more sophisticated mental process than just hearing. It demands energy and

* Faculty of Education, Al al-Bayt University, Mafraq, Jordan.

discipline. Listening as a method of acquiring information is used for more than reading and writing combined. It is the channel used most for learning. Saricoban (2005) defines listening as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation his grammar and his or her vocabulary, and grasping his or her meaning.

Willis (cited in Saricoban, 2005) lists a series of micro-skills of listening which she calls enabling skills such as: predicting, guessing, identifying relevant points, retaining relevant points, understanding inferred information, and so on.

According to Saricoban (2005) listening and understanding speech involve a number of basic processes, some depending upon linguistic competence, some depending upon previous knowledge that is not necessarily of a purely linguistic nature, and some depending upon psychological variables that affect the mobilization of these competence and knowledge in the particular task situation.

Listening is a skill that improves with practice, but common obstacles to effective listening can impede our progress. Lee and Hatesohl (2006) confirmed that even though listening is the communication skill we use most frequently, it is also the skill in which we've had the least training. They state that a typical study points out that many of us spend 70 to 80 percent of our waking hours in some form of communication of that time, we spend about 9 percent writing, 16 percent reading, 30 percent in listening. They confirm that most of us are poor and ineffective listeners. According to Linder (2005) having a television on during a conversation would be a distraction and a barrier to effective listening, but our own attitudes and personality traits may impede listening such obstacles whether internal, require solutions to improve listening skills.

Hunsaker (cited in Mehdinezhad and Peltonen, 2005) emphasized that schools must address critical listening skills in the curriculum. Mehdinezhad and Peltonen (2005) confirmed that educators need to be active listeners themselves as they communicate with their students, by becoming listening coaches. Webber (2003) concludes that effective listening is not easy and not many people are good at listening for many reasons among which are: many people do not want to listen; the communication process itself is difficult because it is a two-way process. It implies five challenges: 1- The challenge to choose the appropriate words necessary to express the intended meaning, 2- The listener may not properly understand the intended meaning, 3- The listener may not accurately reflect his/her intended feedback, 4- The listener may not correctly interpret the feedback of the listener, and 5- The internal environment (worry, tiredness, etc.) and the external environment (noise, other people, visual or audio distractions). Webber (2003) concludes that many of us have learned to be passive learners. Firstly, at school, everything but listening is taught. Very few schools deliberately teach listening skills. Secondly, formal education is usually a one way process. To be effective, communication must be a two-way process in which both parties, teachers and students, are fully engaged. Too often, students are not engaged at school and higher levels of education.

Conaway (cited in Shuie, 2003) stated that numerous studies showd that among students who fail (in college), deficient listening skills were a stronger factor than reading skills or academic aptitude.

Statement of the Problem

To the researcher's best knowledge, no research has ever been conducted on barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University as well as other Universities in Jordan. The researcher has noticed from his experience as an instructor at the university that students lack proper listening skills. The majority of the students do not listen effectively to lectures. Swanson (cited in Molina; Steurer; Twardy and Toung, 1997) emphasized that listening lacks a significant place in educational research. Much of the reality of communication and learning in the classroom occurs without listening. As a result, attention to listening in the classroom, in research or in practice, is strictly a matter of chance.

Jalongo (cited in Molina, et al. 1997) emphasized that higher-level listening skills rarely find their way into curriculum guide or classroom. Schools do not take time to teach listening skills. This is evidenced by the lack of instructional materials dealing with listening skills. There is also a lack of appropriate teacher training in the area.

A study by Swanson (cited in Hylsop and Tone, 1988) suggested that teachers are not apt to get much training on teaching listening. His survey of 15 textbooks used in teacher education programs revealed that out of a total of 3704 pages of text, only 82 pages mentioned listening.

According to Anderson and Armbruster (1986), researchers have estimated that college students spend at least ten hours per week attending lectures and emphasized that no communication skill has been more neglected in the education system than listening behavior. Most individuals are continually taught the skills of reading, writing and speaking throughout the educational process. Rarely are individuals taught how to listen effectively. Coakley and Wolvin (1997) also emphasized that even though most individuals spend the majority of their day listening, it is the communication activity that receives the least instruction in schools. Wacker and Hawkins (1995) also concluded that listening training is not required at most Universities. Similarly, Janusik, (2000) and Janusik and Wolvin (2000) concluded that students who are required to take a basic communication course spend less than 7% of class and text time on listening.

Conaway (1982) reviewed numerous studies which showed that among students who failed in college

deficient listening skills were a stronger factor than reading skills or academic aptitude. Jalongo (cited in Matheson; Moon; and Winiecki, 2000) confirmed that educators around the world have experienced concern over students' poor listening skills and have suggested that children's listening skills are steadily deteriorating.

A review of the previous studies and a search of the electronic resources at Yarmouk University library in Jordan showed that no study was conducted at the university level in Jordan and the Arab countries, but showed that very few studies were conducted only at the school level. Al-Bary (2007) examined the level of listening comprehension for the seventh grade pupils in Jordan. Al-Basheer (2005) analyzed the weight given to listening in Arabic language textbooks for grades five to seven in Jordan. Al- Tal and Obeidat (1997) investigated the impact of loud reading, silent reading and listening comprehension among the ninth grade pupils in Jordan. The researcher felt that attention to listening to lectures at universities in Jordan and the Arab countries in research has been neglected and felt this topic is worthy of research in higher education institutions.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to identify the barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan. The findings are hoped to be useful to university administrators, university instructors, curriculum designers and researchers.

This study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1- What are the barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by the undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan?
2- Are there significant statistical differences among the respondents' perceptions of the barriers to effective listening to lectures which can be attributed to gender, the academic level (first, second and third years), and the major (class teacher, English class teacher and child education)?

Significance of the Study: The significance of the study stems from the topic it deals with which aims to identity the barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan. Discussing such barriers to effective listening to lectures may help university instructors and curriculum designers and educational decision makers overcome such barriers in order to improve students' listening skills. It is hoped that it may help university instructors improve their teaching methods. It may help curriculum designers and educational decision makers integrate listening skills in curriculum and instructional materials.

Review of Related Literature.

Al-Bary (2007) examined the level of listening comprehension of the seventh grade pupils in Arabic language in Jordan. The population consisted of 2131 pupils in the public schools in the Directorate of Education of North West Badia in Mafraq, Jordan. The sample consisted of 400 pupils and were divided into two groups according to gender. The findings indicated no significant statistical difference attributed to gender, type of text, the number of interactions, or the influence of interaction between gender and type of text, or interaction between gender and the speed of presentations or the interaction among gender, type of text and speed of presentation. The study recommended further research to be conducted to identify the reasons of weakness of students in listening.

Lee and Hatesoh (2006) identified several barriers to effective listening. For example, listening training is unavailable, people think faster, and people speak at the rate of 125 words per minute, meanwhile they have the mental capacity to understand at the rate of 400 words per minute which means people use 25% of their mental capacity. We still have 75% to do something else with. So our minds will wander. This means that the listener should make a real effort to listen carefully and to concentrate more of his or her capacity on the listening act.

Lee and Hatesho (2006) also confirmed that even though listening is the communication skill we use most frequently, it is also the skill in which we've had the least training. We have more formal training in other major communication skills. They also confirmed that it is not difficult to find workshops and conferences that provide opportunities to improve our writing and speaking skills. But it is difficult to find similar training programs to sharpen listening skills.

Griffin, McGahee and Slate (2005) addressed the problem of classroom listening skills and the barriers that interfere with effective listening. The sample of the study consisted of 193 students in the Introduction of Educational Computing Classes at Valdosta State University in Georgia. They perceived themselves as very effective listeners. Six barriers were identified (from highest to lowest) as findings indicated that stduents becoming impatient while listening to the instructor; daydreaming or becoming preoccupied with something else when listening to the instructor; becoming distracted by outside noises; conversations or environmental concerns; thinking of another topic because of what the instructor has said; lacking interest in most instructional materials; and pretending to be listening when in actuality they are not listening.

Schilling (2005) concluded that a mind constantly buzzing with plans, dreams, schemes and anxieties is difficult to clear. She also concluded that techndogy has erected new barriers to listening. Face- to- face meetings and telephone conversations are gradually being replaced by email and electronic meeting rooms. Besides, television continues to capture countless hours that might otherwise be available for conversation, dialogue and listening. She also mentioned other barriers to listening which include: worry, fear, anger, depression, individual bias and prejudice, semantics and

language differences, noise and verbal "clutter', preoccupation and shrinking attention spans.

Shkolnik (2005) concluded that thinking faster than listening was one of the causes of poor listening. The spare time could tempt us to think about other things and interrupt listening; listening for the details but missing the main points; jumping to conclusions; and focusing on delivery and personal appearance of the lecturer rather than listening to the message.

Wright and Stacks, conducted an email survey of the Page Society membership made prior to the Annual Conference elicited responses that indicated 75 percent of the members thought they were good listeners. Together, Wright and Stacks weighed the responses they received from their survey and compared them to existing scholarly benchmarks and other theoretical background about listening. What they found is that the majority of Page members appear to have only an average understanding about the principles of listening. The Page member survey found differences in how people listen based upon gender, and these findings are confirmed in other research. Men rarely listen for very long without interrupting. Women see listening as an opportunity to connect with the other person and they interrupt less. The conclusions that Wright and Stacks drew from their study is that while listening is important, most people do not listen very well, and do not emphasize listening as much as they call attention to other communications tasks such as writing and speaking (Arthur W. Page Society, 2005).

Al- Basheer (2005) conducted a study aimed at investigating the weight ratio of the listening skill by analyzing all teaching objectives included in the curriculum of Arabic language for the second circle of the basic education in Jordan. Content analysis technique was used as a tool in collecting and analyzing data. The results showed that only little weight was given to the listening skill, for grades five to seven in comparison with other language skills.

Salopek (1999) concludes that people create many obstacles to effective listening. Not all obstacles are the fault of lazy, unethical or ineffective listeners. Because listening is a process, natural barriers present themselves at varions stages of the listening process: attention, working memory, short-term memory and long-term recall. He presents an example, a survey conducted by a corporate training and development firm which noted that 80% of corporate executives taking part in the survey rated listening as the most important skill in the work force. Unfortunately, nearly 30 percent of those same executives said that listening was the most lacking communication skill among their employees.

Bohlken (1998) studied factors that influence effective listening; 250 college students and 30 college instructors were surveyed. The findings indicated that students' preoccupation or day- dreaming influence their listening to a classroom lecture most. Students' listening is also influenced by the time of the day, where they sit, their physical condition and their purpose for listening. The instructors indicated the students' interest in the subject and their attitude toward the instructor and course are most important.

Korobkova (1998) expects that listeners may often have problems if they try to understand every word using their knowledge of the structures of the language. They tend to get confused and will probably be less successful than listeners who seek the meaning without confusing too much on the language. She also emphasizes that when listening to our native language, we usually seem to do so at speed and without effort. This is because our attention is focused on the meaning the speaker is trying to convey, rather than on the language and other sounds he or she is producing.

According to Dozer (1997) using colloquial language and reduced forms by the speaker and disinterest in a topic are some of the barriers to effective listening.

Al-Tal and Obeidat (1997) investigated the impact of loud reading, silent reading and listening of the comprehension of selected texts among the ninth class students. The population of the study consisted of ninth male students in Beni Kananah Directorate of Education in Jordan. The sample consisted of 66 students chosen randomly. The sample was divided in a clusteral way into three groups. The first group read the material silently; the second group read the material orally; and the third group was taught the material by listening. The results of the study showed that there were significant differences among the three groups at ($\propto \leq 0.05$) in the general comprehension due to the way of exposing the texts in favor of the silent reading and listening groups. The analysis indicated that the listening group was superior to the loud reading group in the evaluative comprehension. The results also showed comprehension superiority of the listening group over the loud reading group.

Anderson and Lynch (1988) (cited in Korobkova, 1998) suggest that listeners can have problems understanding spoken language for many reasons. For example, background noise or tiredness can make understanding more difficult. Unfamiliar accents or unusual voices can also make listening difficult even in a person's first language. Another important cause of difficulty can be the subject matter of what people listen to. For example, it is likely that most non-scientists would not really be able to understand a talk about science at an academic conference.

One of the findings of an e-mail survey conducted by Wright and Stacks (cited in Artur W., 2005) was that taking lots of notes was considered a bad listening technique because writing down exactly what the speaker is saying means you are not listening and as a result you will not get the entire message. It is recommend that the listener take effective notes meanwhile focusing attention to listening.

According to Lundseen (cited in Molina, et al., 1997) sustained effective listening is difficult and

exhausting. This fatigue factor is a physical result of the acceleration of brain waves, heartbeat and temperature that occur during active listening. This appears to be a problem if students are focused to listen too long or too often.

Molina; Steurer; Twardy and Young (1997) designed a program for enhancing student's ability to focus on instructional processes and oral directions. The targeted population consisted of 4th,5th-, and 8th- grade students from three different metropolitan schools in Southwest Cook County, Illinois. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that influx of visual print media affects the development of poor listening habits and reduces the opportunities for productive listening experiences. Lack of instructional materials for teaching listening skills as well as lack of teacher training regarding listening strategies were cited as causes for the problem. Results indicated that teaching listening lessons had a positive effect on overall student success in the classroom.

Watt (1993) investigated whether listening effectiveness could be improved by completing a college listening class. Volunteer subjects (14 males and 14 females enrolled in a 3-hour-16-week college listening course for undergraduate or graduate students at a medium sized Midwestern University) were given pre-and post-tests. Results indicated that participation in a listening course improved listening behavior, gender did not affect overall ability to listen effectively, and more education had a positive effect on listening skill.

Ginsberg (1992) examined listening comprehension for 82 university students who participated in an American Council of Teachers of Russian Language Program. Questionnaire data reveal that specific listening activities are not common in college Russian courses, and that students have little confidence in their ability to comprehend what they hear in a variety of situations, in addition, there are few relationships between the activities that do exist and either students' perceived listening exist and either students' perceived listening competence or results on an objective listening test.

Conaway (1982) conducted a study in which an entire freshman class of over 400 students was given a listening test at the beginning of their first semester. After their first year of studies, 49% of students scoring low on the listening test were on academic probation, while only 4.42% of those scoring high were on academic probation. Conversely, 68.5% of those scoring high were considered Honours students after the first year, while only 4.17% of those scoring low attained the same success.

Barker, Edwards, Garnes, Gladney, and Holley (1980) indicated that of the four communication activities (reading, writing, speaking and listening) listening is used the most on daily basis, reading 17%, writing 14%, speaking 16% and listening is used 53%.

Werner (1975) investigated the communication activities of high school and college students, homemakers and employees in a variety of other occupations. She found out that college students spent 53% of their time listening, 17% reading, 14% writing, and 16% speaking. Students spent 21% face- to- face listening and 32% listening to mass media. According to this study, students spent over half their time listening either to the mass media or to other people.

What distinguishes this study from the previous studies is that it is conducted in a different cultural setting. It also aims at identifying barriers to effective listening to lectures related to the physical and psychological conditions of the students, as well as identifying barriers related to the instructor and the educational environment.

Population and Sample

The population of the study: The population of the study consisted of all first- second - and third year-students of the College of Education at Al al-Bayt University in three majors as shown below in Table (1).

Table 1: The population of the study distributed according to gender, major and academic level

		Number	Percent
Major	Child Education	392	20.8
	Class Teacher	1098	58.4
	English Class Teacher	391	20.8
	Total	1881	100.0
Year	1 st	689	36.6
	2 nd	693	36.9
	3 rd	499	26.5
	Total	1881	100.0
Gender	Male	399	21.2
	Female	1482	78.8
	Total	1881	100.0

The sample of the study: The sample of the study consisted of 188 students in three majors at the College of Education at Al al-Bayt University. The sample was chosen randomly. Distribution of the sample according to gender, major and year is shown in Table (2).

Table 2: The sample of the study distributed according to gender, major and academic level

		Number	Percent
Major	Child Education	39	20.7
	Class Teacher	109	58.0
	English Class Teacher	40	21.3
	Total	188	100.0
Academic level	1 st	71	37.8
	2 nd	69	36.7
	3 rd	48	25.5
	Total	188	100.0
Gender	Male	38	20.2
	Female	150	79.8
	Total	188	100.0

Instrument

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to identify barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part asks respondents to provide personal data. The second part focuses on the barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by the students. This part addresses four domains of barriers:

1- Barriers related to the physical conditions of the students which consisted of ten items.
2- Barriers related to the psychological conditions of the students which consisted of 17 items.
3- Barriers related to the educational environment which consisted of eight items.
4- Barriers related to the instructor which consisted of 18 items.

Validity: The researcher submitted the questionnaire to the judges for review. Based on their feedback, some items were added, dropped or reworded, where necessary. They recommended that the questionnaire had to be translated into Arabic to enable respondents to fully understand each item since they were foreigners to the English language.Ten faculty members at Al al-Bayt University were requested to validate the questionnaire in the light of the following questions:

1- Do the items measure what they are designed to measure?
2- Are the items clear and definite?
3- Do the items cover all the domains of the study?

Reliability: Cronbach alpha of the total score was found to be 0.92. Alpha coefficients of every single domain were found to be 0.73, 0.84, 0.73 and 0.91 respectively. In general, reliability coefficients were quite satisfactory.

Procedures

The researcher translated the questionnaire into Arabic to enable respondents fill out the forms. The judges validated the modified questionnaire as well as the translated version before the researcher administered it personally to the respondents to help them fill out the forms and to answer any questions raised by them.

The data were collected in May, 2006. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used. The T-test and ANOVA were also used to answer the questions of the study.

Variables of the Study: The purpose of the study was to identify the barriers to effective listening to lectures at Al al-Bayt University. The independent variables were major, gender and the academic level of the students (first, 2nd and 3rd year levels). The dependent variable is the total score calculated for the whole instrument.

Data Analysis

In answering the first question which aims at identifying the barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by students, the mean and standard deviation of each item of the questionnaire were calculated. The barriers were rank ordered according to means. The four domains of the questionnaire were also rank ordered according to means.

In answering the second question which aims to reveal if there is a significant statistical difference between the students' perceptions of the barriers attributed to gender, the t-test was used. To reveal if there is a significant statistical difference among the students' perceptions of the barriers attributed to the academic level (first, second and third years) the one way ANOVA was used. To reveal whether there is a significant statistical difference between the respondents' perceptions of the barriers to effective listening attributed to the specialization, one way ANOVA was also used.

Results and Discussion

Results of the first question which says:

"What are the barriers to effective listening to lectures as perceived by the undergraduate students at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan? Table 3 shows the barriers to effective listening to lectures rank-ordered according to means.

Table 3: The four domains of the barriers as perceived by respondents ordered by rank according to means and standard deviations

Rank	Domain number	Domain	Mean	Std Deviation
1	3	Barriers Related to the Educational Enviroment.	3.42	0.70
2	2	Barriers Related to the Pshychological Conditions of the Students.	2.85	0.63
3	4	Barriers Related to the Instructor.	2.79	0.75
4	1	Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students.	2.76	0.57
		Overall Domains	2.90	0.52

Table 4: Barriers to effective listening as perceived by respondents ordered by rank according to means from highest to lowest.

Rank	Item number	Item	Mean	Std Deviation
Barriers Related to the Educational Environment				
1	6	Noise outside the classroom.	4.03	1.049
2	4	Overcrowded classroom.	3.84	1.074
3	1	High temperature of the classroom.	3.76	1.135
4	3	Bad ventilation of the classroom.	3.49	1.195
5	7	Lack of sound absorbing materials such as carpeting.	3.48	1.482
6	5	Noise inside the classroom.	3.42	1.074
7	2	Very low temperature of the classroom.	3.21	1.205
8	8	Lack of Arrangement of seats in the classroom.	2.14	1.309
Barriers Related to the Psychological Conditions of the Students				
9	1	Uninteresting lectures.	3.79	0.946
10	13	Difficulty of the instructional materials.	3.69	0.926
11	15	Lack of tolerance.	3.22	1.272
12	4	Low motivation in lectures.	3.15	1.162
13	3	Anxiety and Stress.	3.10	1.143
14	6	Worries about home and family.	3.04	1.236
15	7	Worries about finance.	3.00	1.575
16	14	Difficulty of following instructions.	2.99	1.082
17	5	Short attention span.	2.90	1.090
18	16	Pretending listening when not.	2.78	1.185
19	11	Poor short-term memory.	2.77	1.113
20	12	Poor long-term memory.	2.76	1.086
21	8	Day dreaming.	2.62	1.368
22	10	Low confidence in instructors.	2.43	1.206
23	9	Emotional Affair.	2.40	1.269
24	2	Low self-confidence.	2.23	1.140
25	17	Tendency to seek and enter arguments.	1.65	1.036
Barriers Related to the Instructor				
26	4	Talks most of the lecture time.	3.73	1.086
27	5	Can't listen to criticism and complaints.	3.35	1.251
28	6	Listens to brilliant students more than to dull students.	3.12	1.456
29	12	Does not engage students in active dialogues.	3.10	1.173
30	18	Inappropriate rate of speech	3.03	1.094
31	3	Does not allow students to express themselves freely.	2.87	1.252
32	2	Does not train students how to listen with respect and interest.	2.84	1.150
33	9	Does not do his/her best to understand students.	2.76	1.072
34	10	Impatient with the students' suggestions and questions.	2.75	1.088
35	1	Does not listen to students with a sense of respect and trust.	2.72	1.166
36	11	Does not use discussion method.	2.72	1.196
37	15	Misuses body language.	2.70	1.136
38	8	Interrupts students and does not let them finish what they want to say.	2.59	1.196
39	14	Does not encourage students to raise questions, suggestions and to propose solutions.	2.59	1.173
40	7	While listening to students, the instructor does several other things.	2.50	1.140
41	17	My instructor is not a good listener.	2.44	1.075
42	13	Uses sarcasm or jokes when responding to low achievers.	2.24	1.321
43	16	Poor posture of the instructor.	2.15	1.110
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students				
44	5	Tiredness.	3.78	1.045
45	9	Easily distracted by noise.	3.55	1.134
46	1	Insufficient sleep.	3.33	1.118
47	7	Severe headache.	3.11	1.128
48	4	Hunger during lectures.	3.06	1.140
49	8	Not keeping eye contact with the instructors.	2.82	1.074
50	3	Illness.	2.67	.935
51	2	Bathroom needs during lectures.	1.83	.810
52	10	Difficulty in hearing.	1.77	1.127
53	6	Ear infection.	1.65	.945

Table 3 indicates that the barriers related to the domain of the educational environment ranked first among all the domains with a mean of 3.42 and standard deviation of 0.70. Table 4 shows that the barrier, "noise outside the classroom" with a mean of 4.03 and standard deviation of 1.049 ranked first and the barrier, "overcrowded classroom" with a mean of 3.84 and standard deviation of 1.074 ranked second at the top of the barriers on this domain.

The researcher attributes this result to the students' bad habit of gathering in front of their lecture halls right before each lecture begins waiting for their instructors to attend. Such gatherings in the corridors produce noise outside the lecture halls. This is observed more clearly when some instructors come late and few of them may be absent from lectures without informing their students in advance. As for the barrier "overcrowded classroom" which ranked second on this domain, the researcher attributes it to the large numbers of students in the college of education classrooms which usually accommodate around 100 students in each lecture hall since they are large classrooms.

This result is consistent with the results of the study conducted by Griffin, et al. (2005) which indicates that the barrier of becoming distracted by outside noises, conversations or environmental concerns was one of the worst barriers that interfere with listening to lectures.

The barrier "lack of arrangement of seats in the classroom" with a mean of 2.14 and a standard deviation of 1.309 which occupied the lowest rank on this domain may be attributed to the fact that all seats are fixed, arranged and numbered in all university lecture halls.

It is worth mentioning that the barrier "high temperature of the classroom" with a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.135 is more difficult as a barrier to effective listening than the barrier "very low temperature" with a mean of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 1.205 on this domain. The researcher attributes this finding to the fact that the university is located in a desert area where high temperature is more dominant and more harmful to students. Besides, there is no air conditioning in summer.

Table 3 indicates that the domain of the barriers related to the psychological conditions of the students ranked second among the four domains of the study with a mean of 2.85 and a standard deviation of 0.63. The barrier "uninteresting lectures" with a mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.946 ranked first among the barriers on this domain. The barrier "difficulty of instructional materials" with a mean of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 0.926 ranked second among the barriers on this domain. This result is consistent with the result revealed by Bohlken (1998) who found out that the students' interest in the subject is one of the most important factors that influence effective listening to lectures. It is also consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Griffin, et al. (2005) which revealed that lacking interest in most instructors' subjects is one of the most difficult barriers that interfere with effective listening.

The barrier "tendency to seek and enter arguments" with a mean of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 1.036 occupied the lowest rank on this domain. This finding may be attributed to the fact that university students usually have no tendency to seek and enter arguments with instructors because they think such behavior may anger their instructors who determine their final results of the courses they teach. Besides, respect shown by students to their professors plays a major role in avoiding arguments with them.

The domain of the barriers related to the instructor ranked third among the four domains of the study with a mean of 2.79 and a standard deviation of 0.75. The barrier "the instructor talks most of the time" with a mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.086 ranked first on this domain. The item "The instructor can't listen to criticism and complaints" with a mean of 3.03 ranked second. The barrier "poor posture of the instructor" with a mean of 2.15 and a standard deviation of 1.045 occupied the lowest rank on this domain. This result is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Griffin, et al. 2005) who indicated that Valdosta State University students did not perceive the instructor's dress to be a problem. This result is inconsistent with the findings of the study conducted by Shkolnik (2005) who indicated that focusing on the personal appearance of the lecturer is one of the causes of poor listening.

The domain of the barriers related to the physical conditions of the students occupied the lowest rank among all the domains of the study with a mean of 2.76 and a standard deviation of 0.52. The barrier "tiredness" with a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.045 ranked first on this domain. The barrier "easily distracted by noise" with a mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.134 ranked second on this domain. The barrier "ear infection" with a mean of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 0.945 occupied the lowest rank on this domain.

The researcher attributes the finding of the barrier “tiredness” which ranked first on this domain to the fact that Al al-Bayt University students suffer from physical tiredness because they walk for more than a mile between two lecture hall buildings where they have classes. Walking for a long distance is very tiring especially in summer when it is very hot. The researcher thinks that the barrier" ear infection" ranked lowest on this domain because the university students are young people and they usually do not suffer much from ear infection and because they take care of their ears. The findings of the barriers "tiredness and” “easily distracted by noise" are consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Anderson and Lynch (cited in Korobkova, 1998), and the findings of the study conducted by Lundsteen (cited in Molina, et al. 1997).

To answer the second question which says: Are there significant statistical differences among the respondents' perceptions of the barriers to effective listening to lectures which can be attributed to gender, the academic level (first, second and third years), and the major (class teacher, English class teacher and child education)? " Table 5 shows that there is no significant statistical difference among the respondents' perceptions of the barriers to effective listening to lectures attributed to gender. This finding is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Wat (1993) which indicated that gender did not affect overall ability to listen effectively. Table 5 also shows that the mean of the perceptions of the male students is 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.477 whereas the mean of the female students is 2.87 with a standard deviation of 0.525. This means that male students perceive more barriers to effective listening to lectures than female students. This finding is consistent with what Wright and Stacks (cited in Arthur W. Page, 2005) who found that men rarely listen for very long without interrupting, but women interrupt less. The researcher attributes this to what he usually notices about students. Female students are more hard working and usually pay more attention to lectures. They usually get higher grades and better results than male students.

Table 5 : t-test results of the differences between mean scores of male and female respondents

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students	Male	38	2.82	0.480	0.744	186	0.458
	Female	150	2.74	0.590			
Barriers Related to the Psychological Conditions of the Students	Male	38	3.13	0.628	3.033	186	0.003
	Female	150	2.79	0.613			
Barriers Related to the Educational Environment	Male	38	3.53	0.637	1.033	186	0.303
	Female	150	3.39	0.720			
Barriers Related to the Instructor	Male	38	2.78	0.731	0.066	186	0.948
	Female	150	2.79	0.753			
All items	Male	38	3.01	0.477	1.498	186	0.136
	Female	150	2.87	0.525			

Studying the effect of gender on each of the four domains of the study, the researcher finds that gender has a statistical significant statistical difference on the domain of the barriers related to the psychological conditions of the students ($\propto \leq 0.003$) as Table 5 shows in favor of male students. This means that male students perceive barriers to effective listening to lectures related to the psychological conditions more than female students do. The researcher attributes this result to the fact that male students are socially and financially more worried about their future jobs and future marriages and families than female students, men are usually responsible, for providing marriage and family expenditure. Besides, the country of Jordan suffers from high unemployment rate among university graduates.

The one way analysis of variance given in Tables 6 and 7 indicate that there is no significant statistical difference among the students' perceptions of all the barriers as a whole to effective listening to lectures attributed to the academic level (first, second, and third years), but the independent variable, the academic level, has a significant statistical difference on the domain of the barriers related to the physical conditions of the students at $\propto \leq 0.005$. The 2nd year level students perceive more barriers to effective listening than the other academic levels (first and third year students).

Table 6: Respondents' perceptions of domains of barriers to effective listening to lectures according to the academic level

Domains of Barriers	Academic Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students	1 st	71	2.62	0.546
	2 nd	69	2.92	0.615
	3 rd	48	2.72	0.478
	Total	188	2.76	0.570
Barriers Related to the Psychological Conditions of the Students	1 st	71	2.84	0.638
	2 nd	69	2.89	0.661
	3 rd	48	2.83	0.580
	Total	188	2.85	0.630
Barriers Related to the Educational Environment	1 st	71	3.28	0.562
	2 nd	69	3.48	0.863
	3 rd	48	3.55	0.609
	Total	188	3.42	0.704
Barriers Related to the Instructor	1 st	71	2.73	0.667
	2 nd	69	2.90	0.861
	3 rd	48	2.71	0.672
	Total	188	2.79	0.747
All items	1 st	71	0.16	0.487
	2 nd	69	0.05	0.599
	3 rd	48	0.11	0.416
	Total	188	2.90	0.518

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA on students' pereptions of domains of barriers to effective listening to lectures according to academic level

Domain	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students	Between Groups	3.328	2	1.664	5.369	0.005
	Within Groups	57.333	185	0.310		
	Total	60.661	187			
Barriers Related to the Psychological Conditions of the Students	Between Groups	.126	2	0.063	0.157	0.855
	Within Groups	74.036	185	0.400		
	Total	74.162	187			
Barriers Related to the Educational Environment	Between Groups	2.501	2	1.250	2.563	0.080
	Within Groups	90.244	185	0.488		
	Total	92.745	187			
Barriers Related to the Instructor	Between Groups	1.425	2	0.713	1.281	0.280
	Within Groups	102.874	185	0.556		
	Total	104.299	187			
All items	Between Groups	.968	2	0.484	1.821	0.165
	Within Groups	49.164	185	0.266		
	Total	50.132	187			

Table 8 indicates the students' perceptions of the domains of the barriers to effective listening attributed to the major according to means and standard deviations.

Table 8: Respondents' perceptions of barriers to effective listening attributed to the major

Domains of Barriers	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students	Child education	39	2.67	0.584
	Class teacher	109	2.83	0.577
	English class teacher	40	2.63	0.513
	Total	188	2.76	0.570
Barriers Related to the Psychological Conditions of the Students	Child education	39	2.61	0.662
	Class teacher	109	2.94	0.628
	English class teacher	40	2.86	0.549
	Total	188	2.85	0.630
Barriers Related to the Educational Environment	Child education	39	3.36	0.812
	Class teacher	109	3.52	0.668
	English class teacher	40	3.22	0.655
	Total	188	3.42	0.704
Barriers Related to the Instructor	Child education	39	2.43	0.800
	Class teacher	109	2.86	0.747
	English class teacher	40	2.94	0.580
	Total	188	2.79	0.747
All items	Child education	39	2.67	0.582
	Class teacher	109	2.98	0.509
	English class teacher	40	2.90	0.408
	Total	188	2.90	0.518

Table 9 indicates there is a significant statistical difference among the students' perceptions of all the barriers attributed to the major at ($\propto \leq 0.006$) as well as the barriers related to the psychological conditions, educational environment and barriers related to the instructor. Significant statistical differences indicated are also attributed to the domain of the barriers related to the psychological conditions of the students at ($\propto \leq 0.017$), the domain of the barriers related to the educational environment at ($\propto \leq 0.059$), and the domain of the barriers related to the instructor at ($\propto \leq 0.003$).

Table 9: Significance of respondents' perceptions of barriers to effective listening to lectures attributed to the major

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students	Between Groups	1.493	2	0.747	2.335	0.100
	Within Groups	59.168	185	0.320		
	Total	60.661	187			
Barriers Related to the Psychological Conditions of the Students	Between Groups	3.213	2	1.606	4.189	0.017
	Within Groups	70.949	185	0.384		
	Total	74.162	187			
Barriers Related to the Educational Environment	Between Groups	2.795	2	1.398	2.874	0.059
	Within Groups	89.950	185	0.486		
	Total	92.745	187			
Barriers Related to the Instructor	Between Groups	6.541	2	3.270	6.189	0.003
	Within Groups	97.758	185	0.528		
	Total	104.299	187			
All items	Between Groups	2.721	2	1.361	5.309	0.006
	Within Groups	47.410	185	0.526		
	Total	50.132	187			

The Tukey comparison shown in Table (10) which indicates that there is a significant statistical difference among the students' perceptions of the barriers attributed to class, teacher, majors and child education at ($\propto \leq 0.004$), when compared with the other English class teacher major.

Table 10: Significance of respondents' perceptions of barriers attributed to the major as shown by Tukey comparison

Domains of Barriers (Dependent Variables)	Major	(J) MAJOR	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Barriers Related to the Physical Conditions of the Students	Child education	Class teacher	-.33*	.012-
		English class teacher	-.26	0.126
	Class teacher	Child education	0.33*	.012-
		English class teacher	0.08	0.770
	English class teacher	Child education	.26	0.162
		Class teacher	-.08	0.770
Barriers Related to the Instructor	Child education	Class teacher	-.43*	0.005-
		English class teacher	-.51*	0.006-
	Class teacher	Child education	0.43*	0.005-
		English class teacher	-.08	0.816
	English class teacher	Child education	0.51*	0.006-
		Class teacher	0.08	0.816
All items	Child education	Class teacher	-.31*	0.004
		English class teacher	-.23	0.115
	Class teacher	Child education	0.31*	0.004
		English class teacher	0.08	0.671
	English class teacher	Child education	0.23	0.115
		Class teacher	-.08	0.671

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the researcher concluded this research paper with some recommendations:

1- Since the domain of the educational environment ranked first among all the domains of the barriers to effective listening to lectures, the university administration is responsible for creating a proper educational environment. The timetable of each semester should be arranged and organized so as to solve the problem of the students' gatherings in the corridors, which usually produce noise outside the classroom. Overcrowded classrooms barrier should be overcome by decreasing the number of the students in each classroom to comply with accreditation criteria. It is recommended to provide classroom with airconditioning to overcome the problem of high temperature and to provide good ventilation.

2- Using sound absorbing materials such as carpeting, drapes and cork bulletins help students in corridors and may result in decreasing the degree of noise in the corridors, outside the classrooms when they walk along corridors.

3- The university administration is responsible for holding workshops, seminars and some courses to train the instructors on the appropriate methods of teaching and using instructional technology to make their lectures more interesting and to train them how to teach listening skills to students.

4- The university administration is recommended to include a course on listening skills in each student's study plan as a university requirement.

5- Instructors are recommended to talk less and give more apportunity to students' interaction and discussion to make lectures more interesting.

References

Al-Bary (2007). *The Level of Listening Comprehension of the Seventh Grade Pupils in Arabic Language in the Schools of North West Badia*. Unpublished thesis. Al al-Bayt University, Mafraq, Jordan.

Al-Basheer, Akram. (2005). *The Listening Skill in the Curriculum of Arabic Language for the Second Circle of the Basic Education in Jordan*. The Educational Journal, issue, 77, vol.20.

Alonso, Laura. (1996). *Improving Deficient Listening Skills in the Language Arts Program at the Middle* Grades. Eric # ED 398611.

Al-Tal, Shadia and Obediat, yousef, (1997). *The Impact of Loud Reading, Silent Reading and Listening on the Comprehension of the Basic Ninth Class Students*. Damascus University Journal, issue 1, vol.13.

Anderson, T.H. and Armbruster, B.B. (1986). *The Value of Taking Notes* (Reading Education Report No. 374). Champaign: University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign, Center for the Study of Reading.

Arthur W. Page Society (2005): *How do we listen*? New York. Available at :http: //www. awpagesociety. com/members/ journals/ jorurnal_fall0004.asp http://www.awpagesociety.com/members/journals/journal-fall0004.asp.

Barker, L., Edwards, R., Gaines, C., Gladney, K. and Holley, F. (1980). "An Investigation of Proportional Time Spent in Various Communication Activities by College Students": *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 26 (1), 77- 85.

Bohlken, B. (1998). *Standards and Activities for Listening Competences at Secondary Level*, proposed International Listening Association Sandards and Activities, Eric # ED 438 586.

Coakley, C. and Wolvin, A. (1997). Listening in the Educational Enviornment. In M. Purdy CD. Borisoff (Eds.) *Listening in everyday life: A personal and professional approach* (2nd ed.) (pp. 179- 212) Lanham, MD. University Press of America.

Conaway, M.S. (1982). Listening: Listening Tool and Retention Agent. In A.S. Algier & K. W. Algier, (Eds.), *Improving Reading and Study Skills*, (pp. 51- 63). San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

Gilbert, M.B. (1998). Listening in School: I Know You Can Hear Me but are You Listening? *Journal of the International Listening Association*, 2, 121- 132.

Ginsberg, R. (1992). *Listening Comprehension Before and After Study Abroad*. ED358718 http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?-nfpb=true&eric-viewstute=1,...

Griffin, Mary Alice, Mc Gahee, Donnie, and Slate, John (2005). Effective Listening Skills. Available at: http://www.bcte.ecu.edu/acbmite/p1998griffin/htm. Retrieved, August, 13, 2006.

Hyslop, Nancy and Tone, Bruce (1988). *Listening: Are We Teaching it and if so, How?* Erich Digest Number 3. Eric # ED 295132.

Janusik, L. A. (2002). Teaching, Listening. What Do We Know? What Should We Know? *International Journal of Listening*, 16, 5- 39.

Janusik, L. A. & Wolvin, A.D. (2002). Listening Treatment in the Basic Communication Course Text. In D. Sellnow, (Ed.), *Basic Communication Course Annual*. Boston: American Press.

Korobkova, Elina. (1998). University of Manchester, School of Education. Available at: http://tsu.tmb.ru/mittroodprjocets/tambor/korobko/korobko.htm Retrieved, March, 29, 2006.

Lee, Dick and Hatesohl, Delmar. (2006). Listening: *Our Most Used Communication Skill.* http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/comm/cm0150.htm.Retrieved, May, 15, 2006.

Linder, Frank. (2005). Listening Well: A Key to Successful Hypnosis. http://www,nfnlp.com/listeningwell-linder.htm Retrieved, November, 29, 2005.

Matheson, Susan; Moon, Melissa; and Winiecki, Amy. (2000). *Improving Student Ability to Follow Directions through the Use of Listening Skills Instructions*. Retrieved, June, 20, 2005.

Mehdinezhad, Vali and Peltonen, Juhani. (2005). The Needful Knowledge, Skills and Abilities for Educators: Part#2. Communication Skills University of Turku, Turku, Finland. http://www.mehdinezhad.com/communication%20skills.htm, Retrieved, Arpril, 3, 2006.

Molina, Victoria; Steurer, Carol; Twardy, Anita and Young, Lee. (1997). *"Improving Students Listening Skills through the Use of Teaching Strategies*? (Unpublished Dissertation, Saint Xavier University).

Moody, Janette, (2002): *Teaching Effective Listening Skills to Information Systems Majors*. The Citadel, Charleston, SC USA.

Plattor, Emma (1968). Listening: An Instructional Imperative. http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWPortal/Home.portal?-nfph=true&Retrived,October,16,2005

Salopek, J. (1999). Is Any one Listening? Listening Skills in the Corporate Setting. *Training and Development*, 53, 58- 59.

Saricban, A. (2005). The Teaching of Listening. http://itesli org/Articles/Saricoban-Listening.html Retrieved, September, 15, 2005.

Schilling, D. (2005). Be an Effective Listener. (http://www.womenmedia.com/seminar-listening/html).

Shkolnik, Mana. (2005). *Project A Literature Review. Critical Thinking and Critical Listening Editor*: Allan Kinney (ENL 1813 T).

Shuie, Connie. (2003). *English Foreign Language Acquisition Among College Students*-Listening Skills http://www.hkitefl.org/2003-Shuie-EFL.html Retrieved, March, 29, 2006.

Titsworth, B.S. and Kiewra, K. (1998). By the Numbers: *The Effect of Organizational Lecture Cues on Notetaking and Achievement*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Convention, San Diego, CA.

Wacker, K.G., and Hawkins, K. (1995). Curricula Comparison for Classes in Listening*, International Journal of Listening*, 9, 14- 28.

Watt, Willis M. (1993). *Theoretical and Practical Approaches to Teaching Listening: Using the Waston-Barker Listening Test to Validate levels of Learning in the Classroom*. Eric ED366026.

Webber, Malcolm. (2003). *Barriers to Listening*#1. http://www.leadrshippletters.com/letters60. php Retrieved, May, 17, 2006.

Werner, E.K. (1995). *A Study of Communication Time.* Unpubished Master's Thesis. University of Maryland.