

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**University of Ammar Thelidji, Laghouat Faculty of**  
**Letters and Languages Department of English**



**Manipulating the Acoustic Cues to Enhance Listening Comprehension  
through Literary Texts**  
**The case of third year EFL Students at Ammar Thelidji University,  
Laghouat.**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master in Literature and Civilization**

**Presented by:**  
**Rania MOULAI & Lina Fatima BOUDAUD**

**Board of examiners:**

- Ms. Sara Ahlam Bedrina, University of Laghouat, Chairman
- Mr. Nadir Mhamd, University of Laghouat, Supervisor
- Mrs. Houda Boumediene, University of Laghouat, Examiner

**Academic year: 2019/2020**

# *Dedication*

To my grandparents.

To my parents and siblings.

To all those who supported and motivated me.

To my closest friends with whom I shared this journey.

Rania MOULAI.

First of all, I want to thank my parents for all their sacrifices, love, support and tenderness.

To my dear sister Nouha and my aunt Hamida for the constant encouragement and moral support.

To my fiancé Mohamed, thank you for giving me the strength to fight for my dreams.

To my binomial Rania Moulai for helping and sharing with me the privilege to complete this thesis.

Lina Fatima BOUDAUD.

# *Acknowledgments*

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor Mr. Nadir MHAMEDDI for his support, patience, motivation and immense knowledge. A word of thanks goes to the members of the jury for sparing time to correct this humble work. Special thanks to those who helped in sharing the questionnaire and all the participants. Finally, we would like to thank all those who supported us in any respect during the completion of the work.

## **Abstract**

The present work brings forward the importance of literature and effective listening comprehension in language learning. It aims at investigating the role of literary works in enhancing third year (LMD) EFL students' listening comprehension. This concerned research explains the significance of listening and speech rate in EFL classes and their role as a means of evaluation and development of English language. Besides, it illustrates few different techniques of language teaching and shows the benefits of this topic which are the manipulation of speech speed and the use of audio literary works. This work adopts a mixed method in the format of the students' questionnaire. It seeks to understand the usefulness of these activities to promote students' understanding and to acknowledge the role of the teacher in EFL classrooms through the participants' perspective. The findings, by and large, reveal that the use of audio literary works with an appropriate speech rate is crucial for an immense comprehension. All in all, this research suggests certain techniques to improve language acquisition.

## ملخص

يبرز العمل الحالي أهمية الأدب وفهم الاستماع الفعال في تعلم اللغة. ويهدف إلى التحقيق في دور الأعمال الأدبية في تعزيز الفهم السمعي لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية ثالثة. يشرح هذا البحث المقدم أهمية الاستماع ومعدل الكلام في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ودورها كوسيلة لتقييم وتطوير اللغة الإنجليزية. إلى جانب ذلك، فإنه يوضح بعض التقنيات المختلفة لتدريس اللغة ويوضح فوائد هذا البحث، والتي تتمثل في التلاعب بسرعة الكلام واستخدام الأعمال الأدبية الصوتية. يستخدم أسلوب البحث النوعي في استبيان الطالب. ويسعى إلى فهم فائدة هذه الأنشطة لتعزيز فهم الطلاب والاعتراف بدور المعلم في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، من خلال منظور المشاركين. علاوة على ذلك، فإنه يستخدم أسلوب الكمية. كنتيجة، لخص الاستبيان أن استخدام المصنفات الأدبية السمعية وسرعته هما المصدر الرئيسي للتخوف. بشكل عام، هذا البحث يقترح تقنيات معينة لتحسين اكتساب اللغة.

## Résumé

L'objectif de cette recherche, met en avant l'importance de l'efficacité de la littérature et de la compréhension orale dans l'apprentissage des langues. Il vise à étudier le rôle des œuvres littéraires dans l'amélioration de la compréhension orale des étudiants d'anglais de troisième année universitaire. Cette recherche, explique l'importance de l'écoute et du taux de la parole dans les classes EFL et ses rôles en tant que moyen d'évaluation et de développement de la langue anglaise. En outre, elle illustre quelques techniques différentes d'enseignement ; qui sont la manipulation de la vitesse de la parole et l'utilisation des œuvres littéraire audio dans l'enseignement des langues et montre les avantages de ce sujet. La méthode de recherche utilisée est qualitative en forme d'un questionnaire de l'étudiant. Il cherche à comprendre l'utilité de ces activités pour perfectionner la compréhension des étudiants et à reconnaître le rôle de l'enseignant dans les classes EFL, à travers le point de vue des participants. De plus, il utilise une méthode quantitative. Le questionnaire a abouti à ce que l'emploi des œuvres audio littéraire et la rapidité de cette dernière constituent la principale source d'appréhension. Pour conclure cette recherche suggère certaines techniques pour améliorer l'acquisition de la langue.

## **List of Abbreviations**

EFL: English as a foreign language.

L1: First language.

L2: Second language.

L3: Third year LMD students.

NNS: Non-native speakers.

NS: Native speakers.

Sps: Syllables per second.

SRS: Speech rates.

Wpm: Word per minute

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	i
Acknowledgments .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
List of Abbreviations .....	vi
List of Tables .....	vii
Table of Contents .....	viii
<b>General Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
The Statement of the Problem .....	2
Objectives of the Study .....	2
Research Questions .....	3
Hypotheses.....	3
Review of Literature.....	3
Methodology of Research.....	4
The structure of the Work.....	4
Rationale.....	4
Motivation .....	4
<b>Chapter One: an Overview of Listening Comprehension and Speech Rate .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Introduction.....	7
1.1. Listening Comprehension Definition .....	7
1.2. Listening Comprehension Stages.....	8
1.3. Listening Comprehension Strategies.....	8
1.3.1. Top-down Strategies .....	9
1.3.2. Bottom-up Strategies .....	10
1.4. Listening Comprehension Sub-skills.....	11
1.4.1. Prediction .....	11
1.4.2. Main idea.....	11

1.4.3. Recognizing the Main Character .....	12
1.4.4. Summarizing .....	12
1.5. Factors that Affect Listening Comprehension .....	13
1.6. Speech Rate Definition .....	14
1.7. The Importance of Speech Rate .....	15
1.8. Evidence against Speech Rate .....	16
1.9. Conflicting Findings on Slowed Speech Rate.....	16
1.10. Conclusion .....	18

## **Chapter Two: Literary Texts and Short Stories Overview**

Introduction.....	20
2.1. Literary Texts Definition .....	20
2.2. Short Stories definition.....	20
2.3. Literary Texts and Language Learning.....	21
2.4. Literary Texts, Listening and Speaking .....	22
2.5. English Teaching and Literature .....	22
2.6. Teaching English through Short Stories .....	24
2.7. Motivating Students' Speaking through Short Stories .....	25
2.8. Characteristics of Choosing Adequate Literary Texts in EFL Classes.....	26
2.9. The Characteristics of a Good Story.....	26
2.10. Audio-stories Definition .....	27
2.11. The Advantages of Using Audio-stories.....	27
2.12. Conclusion .....	28

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Analysis**

Introduction.....	31
3.1. Research Local .....	31
3.1.1. Sampling .....	31
3.1.2. Participants.....	31
3.2. Research Methodology .....	31

3.2.1. Case Study .....	32
3.2.2. Descriptive Research Design .....	32
3.2.3. Explorative Research Design .....	32
3.2.4. Interpretive Research Design .....	32
3.2.5. Quantitative Research.....	32
3.3. Techniques of Collecting Data.....	33
3.3.1. Questionnaire .....	33
3.3.2. Observation .....	33
3.4. Data Analysis .....	33
3.5. Limitations .....	33
3.6. Thesis Structure.....	34
3.7. The Questionnaire Sample .....	34
3.7.1. The Description of the Questionnaire.....	34
3.8. Analysis of the Questionnaire .....	35
3.9. Interpretations .....	41
3.10. Conclusion .....	41
<b>General Conclusion .....</b>	<b>44</b>
References.....	47
Appendix 01 .....	52

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Distribution of Participants by Age. ....	35
Table 3.2: Distribution of Participants by Gender. ....	35
Table 3.3: Scale of the Participants' Language Level. ....	36
Table 3.4: Scale of Participants' Listening Comprehension Level. ....	36
Table 3.5: The Use of Audio Materials to Aid Teaching.....	36
Table 3.6: The Participant's Use of Audio Materials to Promote Listening. ....	37
Table 3.7: The Practicality of Audio Versions of Literary Works. ....	37
Table 3.8: The Usefulness of Audio Versions of Literary Works in Understanding.....	38
Table 3.9: The Availability of Audio Versions of Literary Works.....	38
Table 3.10: Manipulating the Quality of the Audio Materials. ....	39
Table 3.11: The Importance of the Speed of Audio Materials for a Better Comprehension. ....	39
Table 3.12: Natural Speech Rate Is Optimal for Understanding. ....	40
Table 3.13: Faster Rate is Optimal for Understanding. ....	40
Table 3.14: Slower Speech Rate is Optimal for Understanding. ....	41

# **General Introduction**

In the last few decades, some researchers, professors, and teachers after several researches and a lot of information gathered, carried out experiments on literature and listening comprehension in their academic practices to motivate students to learn a new language. In fact, the effectiveness of listening comprehension skill is essential in developing students' linguistic competence in addition to the impact of reading literary texts. However, in the bulk of literature, listening is not given importance in academic lectures and is affected by many factors limiting EFL learners' listening comprehension.

The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using audio literary texts in enhancing listening comprehension by manipulating acoustic cues. Through this study, the researchers try to identify the different effects of the three speech rate types (normal, faster, and slower) on EFL learners' listening comprehension. Moreover, the current work highlights the importance of speech rate in listening comprehension where some oral materials with particular acoustic features are suggested to be used as an input. To achieve this, the study requires theoretical and practical implications. The ultimate goal is to adopt listening activities and tasks in order to help scholars, fellow teachers, and future researchers to develop a productive teaching atmosphere

### **The Problematic:**

Because of the fact that the English language is the third language in Algeria, most learners are not exposed to the language at an early age. That is to say, students listen only to the teachers in class. For this reason, most of EFL students do not verily master the listening skill, so they perform poorly. In this vein, language scholars attempted to find new ways to facilitate and motivate EFL learners through literature and to eventually enhance their listening comprehension. The present study strives to discuss how speech rate affects learners' listening comprehension in addition to identifying the reasons of lecture incomprehensibility.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. Discussing how speech rate affects learners' listening comprehension.
2. Adopting listening activities and tasks in order to help scholars, fellow teachers, and future researchers to develop a productive teaching atmosphere.
3. Identifying the reasons of lectures incomprehensibility.

## **Research Questions:**

The problematic of the study can be stated in the following questions:

1. What is the effect of using audio-literary texts on third-year students' listening comprehension?
1. Does the speech rate of the audio-literary materials enhance learners' listening comprehension?
1. To what extent is the speech rate a primary cause of the incomprehensibility of academic lectures?

## **Hypotheses:**

1. Using audio-literary texts may be an effective teaching tool in increasing students' listening comprehension since they may promote their motivation and develop their listening skill. In addition, the audio version of literature can provide students with genuine language and pronunciation with the tongue of native speakers.
2. The speech rate of the audio-literary materials may enhance learners' listening comprehension.
3. Speech rate may be to a considerable extent the main factor affecting academic lecture comprehension.

## **Review of Literature:**

Extensive research is conducted on this topic. For example in "Faster, normal and slower?: The effects of speech rates on high-intermediate ESL learners' listening comprehension", Fushun Le (2006) explains the effects of the different speech rates on learners' listening comprehension and which speed is most beneficial for an effective listening. In the same vein, "The effect of speech rate on listening comprehension of EFL learners" by Hayati (2010) presents that each speech rate could improve EFL learners listening comprehension. However, he found that the normal speech rate could improve EFL learners' listening comprehension more than slow speech rate. In addition, Rodrigues (2014) compiled a dissertation entitled "Using literary texts for teaching English: Benefits, limitations and application" describing the importance of the use of literary works in teaching language skills.

Although such previous studies succeeded in identifying the different speech rates and their impact on comprehension as well as establishing the importance of literary texts in language learning, they failed to determine the nature of the relationship between literary texts, speech rate, and listening comprehension. Therefore, this paper attempts to provide further definitions on these variables, and aims at clarifying their influence on each other in order to eliminate all ambiguities surrounding the topic.

### **Methodology of Research:**

The present study uses a purely qualitative descriptive approach,. Qualitative data will be gathered and examined to describe and analyze the topic variables.

### **The Structure of the Work:**

The present study will contain three chapters in addition to a general introduction and general conclusion. The first chapter defines listening comprehension and identifies its main stages, strategies and sub-skills; in addition, it tackles the factors that influence it. It also defines speech rate and shows its importance in second language teaching. The second chapter, however, provides a broad understanding of literary texts and the use of short stories in language learning, especially the advantages of audio-stories in promoting the learning process. Finally, the third chapter provides a methodological framework for this study. It lists the used approaches, methods and techniques as well as describing the provided questionnaire and analyses the data collected.

### **Rationale:**

The importance of this research lies in its significance in promoting effective Algerian EFL classrooms as well as promoting listening comprehension in an Algerian University which would help fellow learners to improve their competencies .This research aims at addressing both teachers and learners in order to ameliorate the teaching environment.

### **Motivation:**

The reasons behind the choice of this particular topic are the following:

- 1) The topic is perceived to be relevant to our MA option which is “Literature, Civilization and Language Teaching”.

- 2) The topic has been of great value to our esteem since it objectively portrays the overall performance of Algerian EFL students
- 3) Referring to the traditional ways of teaching and the lack of importance teachers used to give to listening comprehension teaching. Today, as researchers we tend to adopt modern approaches and methods to teach and improve listening comprehension.
- 4) Our genuine interest in the issue of promoting a better education for the Algerian learners has pushed us to tackle this particular issue and improve listening comprehension in the English language acquisition arena in our current time.

# **Chapter One: An Overview of Listening Comprehension and Speech Rate**

## **Introduction**

Learning a foreign language opens the door to new experiences; one of the major problems in EFL listeners is about speech rate that seems to have exerted influential effect on their listening comprehension. Speech rate is based on the capacity of listening and understanding. It has been identified as an important factor affecting the comprehension of learners. This chapter provides a framework of the effect of speech rate on listening comprehension.

### **1.1. Listening Comprehension Definition**

Scholars have suggested numerous definitions concerning listening comprehension in language learning. Saricoban (1999), for instance, defines listening comprehension as the capacity to recognize and discern what others are saying. It implicates the understanding of the speaker's articulation or accent, grammar and vocabulary, and discerning the meaning conveyed. Likewise, Chastain (1971) stated that listening comprehension is the ability to understand the speech of native speakers at a normal rate in listening situations. Moreover, according to Morley (1991), it is defined as human processing which mediates between sound and the structure of meaning; it means when listeners receive sounds from their surroundings, they try to understand the meaning out of the sounds they hear.

Listening comprehension is one of the necessary component skills in reading and writing development that aims to gradually acquire the learners' listening skills. It trains the listener to become more self-confident, and gradually more autonomous. Byrnes (1984) also defines it as a complex skill (as cited in Khadeja Abd Al-Rahman Abo Skhela, 2010), in which she mentions that people have to use all types of knowledge to interpret the meaning. In a similar view, Dirven and Oakeshott-Taylor (1984) claim that these complex skills cannot be discerned by simply looking at the structure of the language, but non-linguistic cues or knowledge of the world have to be taken into consideration in the comprehension process.

Even though definitions vary, listening comprehension is predominantly an activity in which the listener uses multiple processes in order to understand information. Additionally, listening comprehension is considered as a three-stage process.

## **1.2. Listening Comprehension Stages**

“The nature of listening comprehension means that the learner should be encouraged to be engaged in an active process of listening for Meanings, using not only the linguistic cues But also his non-linguistic knowledge. He should also be made aware that not every clue is equally important to the message.” (Littlewoods, 1995, p.67).

Through this quotation, listening comprehension is defined as an effective process that makes the listener understand and use linguistic and non-linguistic background. It is important to understand the listening comprehension process in order to understand a spoken language. According to Underwood (1989), there are three distinct stages for that.

In the first stage, the sounds go into a sensory store to be categorized into significant components based on the listener’s knowledge of the language. Usually, foreign language learners struggle in understanding what is said in the target language leading to the misunderstanding of the incoming information. In the second stage, knowledge is processed by short term memory; it depends on the speed of processing. If it is too fast, foreign language learners might encounter difficulty in comprehending and certain words might be forgotten. Finally in the third stage, after establishing the meaning from the statement, the listener transmits the information to the long term memory for later use. In this final stage, the meaning is stored in reduced forms by the listener. Generally, when someone recalls something from the long term memory, they remember the meaning of what they heard instead of the exact meaning of the word. Goh (1998) states that about two-thirds of the students cannot remember certain words they have just heard, but, on another hand, they can understand the meaning of what they heard.

Morley also suggests two main types to the listening comprehension process: top-down and bottom-up which is going to be tackle din the section below.

## **1.3. Listening Comprehension Strategies**

The term strategy is defined as a technique or training activity that contributes to the understanding and recall of listening input. Listening comprehension strategies are classified into two main categories. First, top-down strategy, according to (Numan, 1998), focuses on the macro-features

of the text such as the speaker's purpose and the topic of the message. Moreover, it is based on the learners' knowledge of the topic, including the context, the situation, type of text and language. It is stated that top-down strategies are divided into; listening for the main idea, predicting, bringing out inferences, and summarizing. Second, bottom-up strategies are based on the text elements such as the sounds, words, structure and the rules that combine these words to conceive meaning. In other words, this strategy focuses on the individual elements of spoken language such as phonemes, individual utterances, and grammatical elements. Besides, the bottom-up technique is categorized into three main branches, listening for specific details, recognizing cognates, and recognizing word order patterns. The Bottom-up and Top-down strategies are to clarify the listening comprehension process.

### **1.3.1. Top-down Strategies**

The top-down strategy is the efforts and work of the student to understand the meaning of the whole text; it simply means that the aim of this strategy is to select topics and tasks that are relevant to the needs and interests of the learners. It focuses on the background knowledge that the reader uses to understand a written text, and it starts from general to specific.

According Richards (1987), top-down strategies involve prediction and inference based on facts, propositions, and expectations. As mentioned above, it focuses on the background knowledge as there are different types of knowledge. For instance, it is possible to understand a word meaning before decoding its sound because the knowledge at this juncture is acquired from real- life situations that is why learners have expectations in mind about what they hear. To put it simply, top-down processing calls up a prior knowledge and world expectations that come from an internal source.

Background knowledge may have various forms; it may relate to the topic discussed. It also may be situational or contextual that can be inferred in accordance with the message intended, or it may simply be saved in long- term memory in the form of "schemata" and "scripts" (Richard, 1990). Rumelhart ( 1980, p. 34) defines the term schemata

"As a data structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory. Besides, the background information in the listener's mind is of two kinds: content schemata and formal schemata and both of them facilitate the listener's comprehension of the text and are closely related to the top-down strategy in listening comprehension".

In short, top-down processing uses multiple types of knowledge; for example, grammar knowledge might be used to help recognize a word, an idea, or the theme of the conversation. The context also helps interpret the meaning. Similarly, Buck (2001), Anderson and Lynch (1988) state that meaning does not reside exclusively within the words, but rather exists on the listener's subconscious.

### **1.3.2. Bottom-up Strategies**

Bottom-up processing focuses on developing the basic skill of matching sounds with the letters, syllables, and written words; it starts from specific to general. Its main focus is the individual components; that is to say, students learn language piece by piece.

According to Morley (1991), bottom-up processing depends heavily on the incoming language data as an external source. The understanding of incoming language is achieved through converting the chief elements of text (sounds, words, lexical meaning, and grammatical relationships) in order to make a rational interpretation based on the received message. Thus, the meaning is based on the incoming language data. Buck (2001) mentions that the processing takes place in a definite order, starting from the lowest level of details, moving up to the highest one. In other words, the incoming data are first decoded into phonemes then into identifiable words. Then, after identifying the words, grammar comes into view to be processed before reaching the meaning intended, i.e., to literally understand the basic linguistic meaning. At last, "the listener interprets the literal meaning in terms of the communicative situation to understand what the speaker means" (Buck, 2001, p.2). In sum, the bottom-up technique's central focus is on the basic elements of uttered speech.

In the same vein, Carrel (1988) indicates that listeners build meaning from the smallest patterns of letters, sounds and words to larger units. Hence, the meaning of the message is based on the incoming language data combined with linguistic knowledge of different types including phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics, and discourse structure. This is the reason some scholars (Carrell, 1988 and Brown, 2001) described this model as text and syntactical translation. Accordingly, bottom-up processing or text-based strategy refers to the use of incoming data as a source of information to fathom the meaning of the uttered message.

## **1.4. Listening Comprehension Sub-skills**

Many scholars worked on the sub-skills of listening comprehension for the sake of listening effectiveness. For this reason, researchers recommend literary texts to make listening sub-skills more effective and to enhance listening comprehension sub-skills. Most teachers use the existing activities in the text-books without using any interesting way that makes the mastery of listening comprehension interesting and indifferent. In fact, there are four listening comprehension sub-skills.

### **1.4.1. Prediction**

The act of predicting is an illustration of vision; one may define prediction as the art of foreseeing some events from specific information and it is something foretold or anticipated like a vision. Penny Ur (1998) state that if the listener can guess, then it will be largely more possible to understand it well. He found that prediction is a difficult skill for many reasons; the intonation and the stress patterns make the difference of expectation.

The first step is to make good predictions to become a successful reader and listener. That is, when reading from an online literary text with few pictures or a story without any word, the learner will think and make a vision of what will happen in the story only based on the title or the pictures that appear. The second process is to read the story with words and compare it with the predictions to verify if they were close to the story or not.

### **1.4.2. Main Idea**

The main idea is identified as the key concept that identifies the topics of any piece of written and spoken texts; it comes right after understanding the subject matter. It means telling the main topic of any task and to understand the general idea.

The main idea is supported by the main wh-questions: how, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many. According to Roell (2009), recognizing the relationship between all these will enhance the learner's comprehension.

In short, the main idea of a literary text is the main point that the author tries to emphasize including all the details. The most important part of a literary text is the lesson learned or the moral which is what the author's main idea is about.

### **1.4.3. Recognizing the Main Character**

In every literary text, there are either major or minor characters. The main character(s) is/are chosen by the author meticulously to suit the role. As a matter of fact, the main element in a literary text is choosing the characters and each character is crucial to fathom the other elements of the text.

Barzaq (2009, p.22) noted that the most important element in literary texts is the characters because they make materials concrete and memorable by humanizing the story. If the learners can remember the characters, they will be able to remember everything related to that story. Also, when the teacher gives the learner some background knowledge about the researcher who developed particular theories, it may evoke the learner by humanizing the research process.

### **1.4.4. Summarizing**

Summarizing is reducing a text expressed through reported speech into essential points or key ideas. Kissner (2006, p.4-5) defines summary as the "general idea in a brief form. Summarizing is recapitulating briefly the main idea. The reader might come up with a conclusion just based on the summarized main ideas. Summaries do not require text evidence or references back to the original text. Besides, summaries represent an important writing genre and essential language skill. In fact, teaching summarizing strategies helps learners become effective learners. However, there are some issues still up for debate that most scholars agree on.

First, a summary is shorter than the original text; for instance, a twenty-page article could be summarized in one page, three pages, or even in a single paragraph. It depends on the purpose of the text and the audience needs. Second, a summary should contain all the main ideas of the text, but most of the learners encounter difficulties stating the main ideas of a text. Third, a summary should respect the structure and the chronological order of the original text such as fictional texts because they are written in a chronological order. In non-fiction texts however, authors use a variety of structures of events and ideas. Nevertheless, if a text is written in compare and contrast order, the summary should follow the suit. Fourth, the summary should contain only the important details to support the main point of the text.

## **1.5. Factors that Affect Listening Comprehension**

Listening comprehension plays an important role in communication. Researchers have identified several factors that tend to influence listening comprehension of English. The factors have been discussed by many scholars in the fields of L1 and L2 learning (see, for example, Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Boyle, 1984; Rost, 1990; Samuels, 1984; Watson & Smeltzer, 1984; Wolvin & Coakely, 1996). A large body of research have been conducted to determine the factors that affect listening comprehension in L2. Five factors have been identified according to Rubin (1994): text, task, interlocutor, listener, and process besides other factors which affect listening comprehension.

Michael Rost in “Introducing listening” (1994, p.142) stated a list of components skills for listening as follow:

- Discrimination between sounds.
- Recognizing words
- Identifying stressed words and grouping of words
- Identifying function (such as apologizing in a conversation)
- Connecting linguistic cues to paralinguistic cues (intonation and stress) and non-linguistic cues (gesture and relevant objects in the situation in order to construct the meaning.
- Using background knowledge and context to predict and then confirm meaning.
- Recalling important words, topics, and ideas.
- Giving appropriate feedback to the speaker.
- Reformulation of what the speaker has said.

Furthermore, Rubin, (1995, p.151-165) stated that listening is an active process of selecting and interpreting information from auditory and visual clues.

## 1.6. Speech Rate Definition

Derwing and Munro (1999) defined SR as a combination of articulation rate and pause time usually expressed in syllables per second, and it is considered as one of the main temporal variables for pedagogy. Similarly, Griffiths (1996) claimed that SR is measured by total number of syllables and/or total time, and it is reported in syllables per second [sps]. He also mentioned the words per minute measurement [wpm] and considered it inexact to be used in literature. The measurement of “speech rate varies considerably among speech categories (i.e., radio broadcast, lectures, interviews, conversations)” (Rubin, 1994, p. 200).

In contrast, Griffiths (1990) asserted that wpm is readily understood; it appears reasonable to continue to use it alongside other measures when reporting L2 research. In addition, it is important and necessary to report both wpm and sps because two extracts may have the same wpm rate but may differ in the sps rate and vice versa. Wpm and sps are popular among both L1 and L2 researchers; genres, contexts and other factors vary in SRs. In this respect, Robb, Maclagan and Chen (2004) affirm that adult SR speakers are roughly 3.67 sps in American English (converted from 220 syllables per minute), 3.95 sps in Australian English, 4.38 sps in British English and 4.67 sps in New Zealand English. Though spontaneous output language tasks in American English are 3.67 sps, the read task rate is 4.33 sps. Besides, the rate for unconstrained speech assignments in American English is 3.67 sps whereas the rate for perusing assignments is 4.33 sps.

For numerous one-hour addresses, in any case, in Bain, Basson and Wald's (2003) investigation, the SRs have shifted between 100 and 200 wpm. In the event that SR can change in a single dialect to this degree; it can be imagined how much it can change in several dialects. As Rubin (1994, p.200) summarized, "... different languages have different 'normal' rates and the rates defined in studies using English cannot be applied exactly to studies of other languages ... normal rates vary among text types and that the range of what is considered normal may vary from language to language" . With this in mind, it is not astonishing to discover that 160, 153 and 155 wpm were set as the normal/average/medium SRs in Rader (1991), 170 wpm and 200 wpm in Blau (1990), 150 wpm and 188 wpm in Griffiths (1990a; 1992), 150 wpm in Robinson, Sterling, Skinner and Robinson (1997) and 194 wpm in Zhao (1997).

### **1.7. The Importance of Speech Rate in L2 Teaching:**

Recent research recommend that SR should receive serious attention and should be integrated into teacher training. EFL teachers should be attentive of which SR is of direct relevance to English language methodology and L2 research. As Griffiths (1991) stated, “ in both L2 and NS-NNS content classrooms, speed of delivery... is something teachers have to make decisions on during every lesson of their lives” (p.347). However, it is indicated that “SR to NNS is lower than that normally employed in NS-NS interaction... and ... that it becomes increasingly slow in discourse with NNS of lower proficiency levels” (Griffiths & Beretta, 1991, p.6).

Speech rate can inform not only teachers'talk but also listening comprehension materials improvement. SR materials are influenced by using the speed-play feature available in plug-ins like Windows Media Player 10 or VLC Media Player. Most teachers and learners do and will have to teach and learn in traditional classrooms relying on audio-taped materials. Besides, the current versions of the software offer three SRs (slow, normal, and fast) and it is important to know which SR to use with which group of learners.

### **1.8. Evidence against Fast SRs:**

Despite the obvious disparity between the usual SRs used, there is huge evidence against a facilitative effect for fast SRs, also in understanding the NS. Robinson, Sterling, Skinner, and Robinson (1997) note that "research has consistently shown that listening comprehension suffers as speaking rate increases" (p.260). "The disadvantages found at fast rates are [also] convincingly documented in compressed speech studies where speech recorded at normal rates (in the region of 150-175 [wpm]) is accelerated through the use of speech compressors (which electronically remove portions of sound and pauses but which do not result in distortion until extremely high rates are attempted)" (Griffiths, 1991, p. 348). Moreover, fast speeds can be beneficial as it aids in persuading listeners in radio or TV advertisements; it is also time and space saving especially for slow readers and the blind (Beatty, Behnke, & Froelich, 1980; Robinson, Sterling, Skinner, & Robinson, 1997).

### **1.9. Conflicting Findings on Slowed SRs:**

In comparison, both early and more recent studies commonly record the possibility that a slower SR promotes listening comprehension. According to Griffiths '(1991) analysis of selected research, Hatch (1979; 1983) describes slow SR as one of the main aspects of non-native talk likely to improve learners' comprehension, explaining that "slowing of rate means clearer articulation, fewer reduced vowels, less consonant cluster simplification, more fully released final stops, and stronger voicing of voiced consonants in final position ... [as well as] longer pauses between major constituents" (1983, p.159). Dudley-Evans and Johns (1981) describe slow speed as closely associated with lecture comprehension.

Besides, Henzl (1979) found a general propensity to to make SP even slower for NNSs and foreign language learners (beginners). Hakansson (1986) inferred from her research that teachers modified their speaking rates to the proficiency level of the students. Chaudron (1988) approves this point claiming that L2 teachers' speech alterations for example in phonology and SR, likely helps to enhance students' understanding. Robinson, Sterling, Skinner, and Robinson (1997) remarked that, after finding that both higher awareness and higher perceived importance of the knowledge were obtained by NS undergraduates at the slower rate, "the answer to the question, 'How fast should I speak?' is a resounding".

## Chapter One: An Overview of Listening Comprehension and Speech Rate.

However, some other studies are contradicting this positive effect of slower SRs. Smith's (1980) study of the impact of "Slowed Speech" on French listening comprehension showed that slow French hampers the development of listening skill. In this vein, Derwing's (1990) research into the relationship between rate change and NS-NNS communicative performance in recounting a film found that NSs who did not modify their SR interacted with NNSs more effectively than speakers who dramatically increased pause time. Blau (1990) did not notice a noteworthy change in the listening comprehension of Polish or Puerto Rican learners when reducing the SR (from 170 wpm to 145 wpm) although the decrease in the SR helped in another way students with the lowest level of proficiency. Interestingly, the observations of Griffiths (1990) on the impact of SR on NNS listening comprehension only partly backed the argument that a slow SR promotes listening understanding.

**1.9.1. Conclusion:**

To sum up, this chapter highlights a very distinctive technique to improve listening comprehension compared to the teacher-centred technique that influences the learner to be more attentive in language acquisition. The manipulation of the acoustic cues and the use of audio materials in literature classes are an active method where students are actively involved.

# **Chapter Two: Literary Texts and Short Stories Overview**

### **Introduction:**

Chapter two provides a comprehensive overview on literary texts and language learning. This chapter is a theoretical framework about teaching English through literary texts. It also describes the characteristics of a good story to facilitate the language learning process in addition to the practical and effective use of audio materials of literary works that motivates language learning.

### **2.1. Literary Texts Definition:**

A literary text is mainly an aesthetic written piece such as books or poems. Its purpose is telling stories or entertaining as in fictional and non-fictional novels. Moreover, it may contain political messages or beliefs. One of its functions is language learning.

### **2.2. Short Story Definition:**

A short story is a brief fictional work usually written in narrative prose. A traditional description of a short story is that one should be able to read it in one sitting. It is difficult to understand this pattern nowadays as the intended duration of "One sitting" can now be briefer than it was in the Poe era. Other meanings put the short story's overall word count at somewhere between 1,000 and 9,000 lines. For instance the "A Single Man" by Harris King is around 4,000 lines. The expression short story, most widely used in contemporary use, refers to a fictional work no longer than 20,000 words and no fewer than 1,000 words or 5 to 20 pages. Stories with less than 1,000 words are often called "short stories" or "flash fiction". The Science Fiction, as a starting point for the science fiction genre writer and Fantasy writers of America describes the Nebula Awards short story limit for the Science Fiction entry criteria as having a word count of less than 7,500.

To say a certain description of a short story is unlikely is fair. No clear theory can accommodate the complex nature of a genre where the only consistent aspect tends to be attaining a narrative intent in a comparatively brief space. -- description highlights some

elements, and cannot include everything. However, we can highlight those meanings to get some information about the context:

“A fictional prose tale of no specified length, but too short to be published as a volume on its own, as novellas sometimes and novels unusually are. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel’s sustained exploration of social background”. Chris Baldick: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*.

“A short story is a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analysing the component elements, the types, and the narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well.” M. H. Abrams, Geoffrey Galt Harpham: *A Handbook of Literary Terms*.

A prose narrative “requiring from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal.” Edgar Allan Poe: *Review of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Twice Told Tales*.

### **2.3. Literary Texts and Language Learning:**

The purpose of literary texts is to develop the language learning process and to improve the learner’s linguistic competence through listening and reading literary texts. Hence, researchers and scholars after several researches and a lot of information gathered they looked for new ways to motivate students to learn a new language, some worked literary texts in their academic practices. The use of literary texts allows students developing their communicative skills. It is important that teachers must be involved in the improvement of English learning. Elliot (1990) says that through literature, students can internalize the language at a high level, which is relevant in language. In the same vein, Koutsompu (2015) stated that “the purpose of using literature in a language classroom is to make the class interactive and it can be stated that an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competences of the learners and keep a lasting impact on their mind”(p.75).

Literature is beneficial for language learning and teaching due in terms of language usage. It shows it shows the learners’ new experiences that push them into reading and learning. Custodio et al. (1998), explain that “literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore” (p.20).

In teaching a language teachers play an important role. Firstly, the teacher has to specify the objectives of language teaching, by providing different tasks related to the needs of the learners. Secondly, the establishment of the adequate techniques of language teaching methods then when choosing the literary work to be used; age, gender, personal background should be taken into account.

Literature is a powerful tool to be used in EFL classrooms and it is considered as an appropriate material for encouraging students' learning and language improvement, and a potent resource, that's why, in teaching language courses skills should never be developed separately but in an integrated techniques. Learning English as a second language requires a specific environment and tools such as listening and reading.

### **2.4. Literary Texts and Listening, Speaking:**

The role of listening and speaking in language improvement is so important, it encourage the development of language skills. these two activities are considered authentic models of language use. Moreover, listening exercises help students to develop their oral comprehension which is essential to communication. However, EFL learners lack of the necessary skills to learn through lectures given in English and have troubles in understanding a foreign language.

Listening effectiveness is essential for students' academic success. Scholars in the fields believe that «student's listening skills development ways are through extensive training» (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, Oxford 1996; Swan, 2011). One of the largest area of language learning strategies, is the listening strategy training. It includes both: the learning of strategies and its use. Abundant researches have been conducted, according to Chamot (2005), proposing strategy instruction helps promote the effective use of strategy and language use, and that an essentially positive co-relation exists between strategy and L2 proficiency (Oxford et al. , 2014).

### **2.5. English Teaching and Literature:**

Literature encourages people to acquire a language effectively. English teaching actually possess a very intimate relationship to literary works. (Mino Alemi, 2011) It offer students a fascinating and exciting universe filled with unique encounters, stories,

## Chapter Two: Literary Texts and Short Stories Overview.

---

environments, characters, magic, information and basic themes that inspire them to learn. It is also a way to understand more about the society in which we live, keeping in mind that authors build accounts of the lives of the people. Custodio et al. (1998) explain that “literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore” (p. 20). Furthermore, literature becomes a perfect teaching instrument, because we not only teach a language but also people’s customs and traditions.

For this study literature was selected because it offers reliable language models to improve language skills. This helps students to be in touch with natural language through short stories, which is important for them in terms of awareness, community and language learning. Elliot (1990) says students will internalize the language at a high level through literature which is important for language learning. Koutsompou (2015) argues: “The purpose of using literature in a language classroom is to make the class interactive and it can be stated that an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competences of the learners and keep a lasting impact on their mind” (p. 75). Indeed, one of the benefits of teaching through literature is the shift in class dynamics which contributes to a favourable teaching climate. But typically students have a positive outlook about a variety of events.

In addition, Riwes (2010) challenges the tradition by using a textbook as the groundwork for teaching a foreign language. He proposes literature implementation, because it is a rich source of "authentic content" from which students have direct communication with native speakers. He also insists that, in a cultural sense, literature is an aesthetic expression of the spoken language. Therefore literature is a full content that can lead to the growth of the method of teaching and studying a foreign language as an approach.

Literature has been used for teaching foreign languages over the years because of its advantages in terms of material and language use. The best way to learn vocabulary, sounds, and even information was considered. Therefore, Collie and Slater (2005 ) point out certain particular advantages of working in the classroom with literature, such as: it is authentic content that illustrates the cultures of people, offers information from every corner of the world, and promotes language enrichment and motivates the participation of students in this area.

Lastly, literacy is a real source to be used as an effective instrument in the foreign language classroom, and is considered a fitting medium to promote the learning and language development of students.

## **2.6. Teaching English through Short Stories:**

Short stories are ideal for teaching a foreign language; however, teachers must select appropriate materials according to the language skills of their students. Otherwise it would be a very difficult challenge for them to learn. Hişmanoğlu (2005) states, in this regard: : “When selecting the literary texts to be used in language classes, the language teacher should take into account needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students” (p. 57).

In reality, teachers need to get to know and understand their students in order to lead lessons in a practical way that will help to ensure instructional learning is effective.

In line with previous claims, the use of short stories in English classrooms is a way of seeking approaches that inspire students to learn the language because stories offer many benefits for teaching; the vocabulary used in these stories is widelycomprehensible to students and encourages their reading participation. Likewise, Koham and Pourkalthor (2013) listed the of advantages learning English through short stories: “they make the students’ reading task easier, they help students to be more creative, they raise cultural awareness, they reduce students’ anxiety and help them feel more relaxed, they manage universal language and they involve fiction” (p. 3) (qtd.in). These ideas actively direct the work of teachers with practical practices that contribute significantly to the learning of the students.

Furthermore, Pardede (2010) found in his research that it is important to use short stories as content for personal amusement and also to help students gain greater mastery in language skill development. As a result, teachers will incorporate exercises addressing student intentions as a method of enhancing their language learning. When students are absorbed in a narrative, language is used as a normal mechanism by which the roles of terms in the sentences can be defined. Sakthivel, Phil, and Kavidha (2010) “[b]y reading a piece of literature learners can understand the diverse use of words, phrases, phrasal verbs, multiple meanings, idioms, among others” (p. 230). These points show how teachers should use short stories because they promote engaging language learning that is both practical for students and fascinating.

## 2.7. Motivating Students' Speaking through Short Stories:

Second-language learning requires a particular environment. We study English as a foreign language and people's interest in another language relies on their own personal objectives. This research uses listening and reading as a way of motivating students to speak when the aim is for students to learn how to communicate in a language learning process. According to Pardede (2010): "Short stories can also be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role- playing, re-enactment, and discussion are more effective learning" (p. 22) (qd.in). This suggestion highlights the value of learning language skills in the classroom in order to improve the self-confidence of the students by using language to form relationships.

Specifically, Uhl (2004) suggests that speaking is the most valuable ability to learn and is significant for measuring the success of the students in terms of achievements. She also identifies three knowledge areas that are important for language learning:

- Mechanics including syntax, spelling, and vocabulary: using the right words in the proper order and spelling.
- Transaction and contact dependent features, and how simply and correctly the meaning is conveyed in effective communication.
- Social and cultural rules concerning turn-taking and the duration of breaks between speakers, and the position and interaction between speaker and audience.

All these considerations are relevant for demonstrating the oral development of students and should be taken into account when preparing lessons by the teachers.

In addition to speaking, this research incorporates listening and reading as a means to promote language skills learning as these practices are considered valid language usage models. Via them students will concurrently internalize form and pronunciation. Listening activities likewise help students improve their aural awareness which is important for communication. Through the activities performed in this study, students were given the opportunity to identify and report relevant information and to give their opinion on the different stories studied. The role of the teacher is important during listening and speaking activities not only in the planning and execution of the activities, but also in the provision of appropriate feedback motivating the use of the language by students. Richards (2008) argues

that feedback is necessary to correct grammar, pronunciation, coherence and cohesion during or after the activities. This process also helps students to create their own improvement plan, considering that errors should not be a barrier to communication but rather a normal way of improving language use.

## **2.8. Characteristics of Choosing Adequate Literary Texts in EFL Classes**

Cole and Slater (1990) stated that when choosing the literary texts to be employed in language classes the language teachers should take into consideration necessities, motivation, involvements, cultural knowledge and the language level of the learners. Yet, a major component should be taken into consideration is whether a specific work is eligible to indicate the kind of personal interest by eliciting the student's interest and stimulating strong, positive, constructing results from them. Reading a literary work is more potential to have a long term memory and beneficial effect on the learner's linguistic and extra-linguistic information when it is significant and amusing. Choosing books related to real life-experiences, feelings, or fantasies of the learner are of tremendous significance. The hardship of the language has to be taken into account as well. If the language used in literary texts is simple, it makes its comprehensibility easier.

## **2.9. The Characteristics of a Good Story**

Short stories are known to be informative because they are realistic, amusing, enjoyable, and based on human beings and their experience as an accurate and reliable source of knowledge. Bausch (1994, p. 29-80) added some features of a strong story as follows.

Stories give rise to excitement and require replay. Healthy tales are so compelling that people would like to read them again and again.

Stories bind humanity to nature in a holistic way. A good story induces the sensation of being linked to nature and to the Spirit of nature for a believer. The connection helps people feel holistic about themselves.

Stories are a gateway to the origins of one's society. One may have traditional stories evoking his or her identification to the origins of past generations and others.

Stories connect the listeners to the general, common bond. One can be surprised to learn that other cultures have common motivations, particularly as believers. These tales may have a significant effect, inspiring people to recognize that they are all members of a single family, independent of colour, race or creed.

Stories tend to keep their audience in sight. The tales people hear and tell them remember their origins, the things they have in common, honour and shame. Stories make use of a common language. Stories use all manner of linguistic conventions to make the narrative both unforgettable and vivid.

Stories recover the word's initial strength. Words which are spoken and written bear tremendous strength. Stories offer an escape; a good story draws hearers away from the real and allows them the chance to re-enter reality. When a parent says tale, think on how children neglect their hurts.

Stories stimulate right-brain creativity in the audience. Stories bring on harmony by relying for the audience to use the brain's right hand. Stories inspire reconciliation that offers peace and pardon. Stories include a basis for hope and moral values; they call the listeners to the imagination of hope, so hope must save them.

### **2.10. Audio-stories Definition**

The phrase audio-story is a two-word combination: audio and narrative. By description, audio is the sound that is available to human kinds within the aural spectrum. Audio stories can now be used for many purposes, and the most important is the introduction of EFL learners to the actual language of native speakers. Rubin (2015) points out: "Audio stories are an immersive mode of communication incorporating voice and music into convincing storylines." That is, audio stories are just the process of telling stories through sound and sound effects.

In comparison, audio stories are commonly certified to advance in portable devices (electronic devices), such as smartphones, tablets, and digital entertainment systems. So it is easy and enjoyable for EFL learners to listen to those audio stories.

### **2.11. The Advantages of Using Audio-stories**

The use of audio versions of literary works is one of the most useful technological tools in the language learning and teaching process (Blum et al., 1995; Koskinen et al., 2000,p.32). similarly, other studies have been conducted concerning the effectiveness of using audio material aids in both learning and teaching processes, according to O'day (2002), the

audio versions of literary works help the learner in many ways, like enhancing the reading and listening comprehension skills and improving the vocabulary acquisition. (International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching, 2015) In the same researches conducted about the use of audio books, some scholars focused on the connection between the audio versions of literary works and the reading skills (Bulum et al., 1995; Golonka et al., 2012; Serafini, 2004; Whittingham et al., 2012).

Even though, the recommendations of the use of audio literary works, many researchers did not give it much attention in regard to its effect on pronunciation. Scholars in the field has acknowledged the connection between listening and enunciation to observe the influence of listening to audio versions of the texts to improve articulation (Couper, 2003). They asserted that listening to audio literary works improve the learner's language acquisition. In a study conducted by Saka (2015), she mentioned the significance of listening to audio books effects on EFL learners. Addedly, she came with the result that most of her research concerning this topic and the participants were positive about the use of literary works audio-versions.

The successful use of audio stories in EFL classrooms is definitely helpful to both learners and teachers. First of all, as Rodero (2012, as quoted in Eckert,2016) claimed: "Audio stories that use sound effects and sound shots enhance the learner' s attention and creation of visual images significantly compared to those without them" (p. 16). In other words, using audio stories in EFL classrooms creates learning and listening experiences and offers an imaginative experience inside their minds to students. As it strengthens the speech of the learners, as the s / he is introduced to the natural voice. In addition, EFL instructors can use audio stories as a reference to their class, or at the end of the course they can use them as a prize. In addition, EFL teachers focus on audio stories to develop vocabulary by memorizing learners. Whenever learners listen to these stories, they will expand their vocabulary, since each time a few new words are learned. Finally, particularly for those learners who are not addicted to reading, audio stories will increase curiosity.

### **2.12. Conclusion**

To sum up, teachers do not provide only lectures from the curriculum, but they teach their students lectures for life and skills that can help them in the class and the outside environment. Skills like listening comprehension can be improved by the aid of teachers. The

## Chapter Two: Literary Texts and Short Stories Overview.

---

more skilled learners are in listening comprehension, the more they are familiar with the tools that lead to effective comprehension. Improving student's listening skills will benefit them to be good language learners. It is therefore, necessary to understand the process and strategies that can assist good language learning. For the goal of teaching such valuable skills, teachers may use different techniques like the use of audio materials of literary works.

# **Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Analysis**

### **Introduction:**

Research methodology is the human contribution towards science through the methodical collection, understanding, and evaluation of data. The research methodology represents the researcher's strategy towards the final results. It includes specific techniques that are implemented in the research process to collect, assemble, and evaluate data. It defines the tools used in a particular research study to collect relevant information. It illustrates the approaches used to draw the appropriate conclusions by applying the data collected.

The present study is purely descriptive and qualitative research methods. It should be noted that no experimental intervention or manipulation are made in the assignment of participants group, due to the international pandemic Covid-19 sanitary crisis.

### **3.1. Research local:**

This study is a study focused on EFL L3 students of Ammar Thelidji Laghouat University.

#### **3.1.1. Sampling:**

A sample is a small group of people selected randomly for observation and analysis. The research population is a mix of people from various aspects: gender, age, linguistic background, and culture. In this research L3 EFL students are chosen for the research analysis.

#### **3.1.2. Participants:**

This study will include a group of 21 participants, who are third-year (L3) Literature and Civilization students, at Ammar Thelidji University (Laghouat) for the academic year 2019-2020.

### **3.2. Research Methodology:**

Research Method represents the tools or instruments used to accomplish the goals and attitudes of conducting a research process.

### **3.2.1. Case Study:**

“Case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context.” (Case study as a research method, 2007) In this research, we consider that this study design will be useful. In the case of this study, we examine the views of different participants to learn more and better meet the needs of EFL students to improve their listening comprehension skills through literary texts and the manipulation of the different speech rate speeds.

### **3.2.2. Descriptive Research Design:**

In this research we will use a descriptive method in order to see to what extent the manipulation of acoustic and the use of literary texts improves listening comprehension skills.

### **3.2.3. Explorative Research Design:**

Lawrence indicates that an exploratory design is employed when the research topic is either new, or when relatively little has been written about it, as it is the case with the particular study of implementing literary texts to improve listening comprehension. Due to the national hiatus, there was no exploratory research.

### **3.2.4. Interpretive Research Design:**

Besides the exploratory nature of this research, it will also adopt an interpretive research that seeks to examine EFL students' perspective about the influence of speech rate in improving listening comprehension. In this study quantitative data (questionnaires) will be analysed and interpreted using the interpretive research methods.

### **3.2.5. Quantitative Research:**

Quantitative research methods deal with numbers and anything measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena. It typically begins with data collection on a hypothesis or theory followed by the application of descriptive statistics.

### **3.3. Techniques of Collecting Data:**

The supervision of the questionnaire was carried out online due to the fact that the university was at a national-level suspension. Having improved the final version of the questionnaire, the research made use of students' social media gatherings on Messenger and Gmail. A copy of the questionnaire was sent online randomly to third year students, and the participants filled their answers on Google Forms. The number of participants resulted in only 21 participant only, some of them contacted personally.

#### **3.3.1. Questionnaire:**

This tool attempts at finding answers to the research questions and building reliability for the topic. The questionnaire is the most practical technique to raise questions; that illustrates the participant's conception of literature classes and listening comprehension activities.

#### **3.3.2. Observation:**

Because of the international Pandemic Covid-19, the research has been conducted online.

### **3.4. Data Analysis:**

After having set up a ground as to how and which techniques and methods will be used regarding how data will be collected. Qualitative methods are more suitable for this type of study analysis rather than quantitative one.

### **3.5. Limitations:**

Various limitations influence the interpretation of the findings of any research. As the case of the exploratory nature of this study, a major limitation was the global pandemic COVID-19 which limited sources of information in addition to the national hiatus that left us forced to renounce the technique of focus group study. Moreover, to the small sample size (21 participants) was other obstacle in the path of this study. Thus, similar studies of larger scope are required to draw stronger conclusions and make generalizations.

### **3.6. Thesis Structure:**

The dissertation is initiated with theoretical chapters, chronologically, the general introduction includes the background of the study, the problem statement, the main objectives of this research, research questions, and hypotheses. The first chapter will be a review of related literary works. Which consists of two major parties that includes an overview of listening comprehension and speech rate. The second chapter tackles an overview of literary texts and short stories and the importance of teaching literature to improve listening comprehension. Unlike the initiation, our research comes to end with a practical chapter of data collection that sets, analyses, and organizes the questionnaire's findings, and the general conclusion in which recommendations, suggestions are proposed; in a sequence to give the study its significance.

### **3.7. The Questionnaire Sample:**

The questionnaire was sent to L3 Literature and Civilization students (EFL students), at Ammar Thelidji University (Laghouat).

#### **3.7.1. Description of the Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire was done in Google Forms, due to the current circumstances of the pandemic, to facilitate distribution and data collection. The questionnaire was consisted of close-ended questions to narrow and control the data needed and have more objectivity in answers, in addition to open-ended questions to give the students the chance to share their thoughts and experiences. We sent the questionnaire to random students; only 21 participant answered all the questions.

The questionnaire includes four sections which covered personal areas. The first section (Personal Background) contains four items that give information about the participant's age, gender, and academic background. The second section (the Use of Audio Materials to Aid Literature Teaching) consists of two items that offers an idea of the current use of audio materials to aid literature teaching. The third section (Attitudes towards the Use of Audio Materials to Aid Teaching Literature) contains three items that help showing the effective use of audio materials. The fourth and last section (Speech Rate) contains five items

that is related to the speed of audio materials in literature classrooms and which one is optimal for understanding.

### 3.7.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire:

- **First section: (personal background)**

#### **Question one: (Age)**

The table shows that the majority of the participants are within the same age. This infers that age is less likely to have any statistically considerable significance on the study dependent variables. Nevertheless, the age variable is included in the covariate analysis.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20-24	19	90.5
26-30	02	9.5
Total	21	100.0

**Table 3.1: Distribution of Participants by Age.**

#### **Question two: (Gender)**

The participants are divided into the two-gender groups (15 females and 06 males). We notice that the sample is female-dominant.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	15	71.5
Male	06	28.5
total	21	100

**Table 3.2: Distribution of Participants by Gender.**

#### **Question three:**

Rate your level in English:

<b>scale</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>number</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 3.3: Scale of the Participants' Language Level.**

**Question four:**

It aims at identifying the participants' language level. Such variable helps discerning if the student's level affects in the language learning and teaching. The data provided a 38.5% percentage of students in a scale of 7.

**Question four:**

Rate your listening comprehension level.

<b>scale</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>number</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table 3.4: Scale of Participants' Listening Comprehension Level.**

It is important to know about the learner's listening comprehension level. We notice that the majority 38% of the participants have a good listening comprehension level in a scale 8 out of 10.

**The Second Section: the Use of audio Materials to Aid Literature**

**Teaching Item 1:** literature teachers employ audio materials to aid teaching.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage

Literature teachers employ audio materials to aid teaching	Males	01	16.5%	0	0	01	16.5	03	50.5	01	16.5
	females	01	6.5%	04	26.5%	02	13.5%	07	47%	01	6.5%

**Table 3.5: literature teachers employ audio materials to aid teaching.**

Those who agree and strongly agreed formed 57%, 12 participants approved the use of audio materials in literature classes. 6 participants disapproved the use of audio materials by literature teachers, and three of them were neutral.

**Item 2:** I use audio versions of literary works to promote my understanding.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
I use audio versions of literary works to promote my understanding.	Males	01	16.5%	0	0	0	0	04	67%	01	16.5%
	females	01	6.5%	02	13.5%	02	13.5%	09	60%	01	6.5%

**Table 3.6: The Participant's Use of Audio Materials to Promote Listening.**

The great majority 71% (15 participants) agreed on using audio versions of literary works to improve their understanding. While, 19% of the participants opposed the use literary works audio versions.

### Section three: Attitudes towards the Use of Audio Materials to Aid Teaching Literature.

**Item 1:** Audio versions of literary works are more practical.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage

Audio versions of literary works are practical.	Males	01	16.5%	01	16.5%	0	0	03	50.5%	01	16.5%
	females	0	0	04	26.5%	04	26.5%	06	41%	01	6%

**Table 3.7: audio versions of literary works are practical.**

The numbers indicates that 52% agreed and strongly agreed that audio versions of literary works are practical. On the other hand 20% were neutral and 28% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

**Item 2:** Audio versions of literary works are easier to understand.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Audio versions of literary works are easier to understand.	Males	01	16.5	01	16.5	0	0	03	50.5	01	16.5
	females	01	6%	03	20.5%	04	26.5%	05	33.5%	02	13.5%

**Table 3.8: audio versions of literary works are easier to understand.**

The table demonstrates that 57% of participants find audio versions of literary works are easier to understand. While the other 43% of participants disagreed, strongly disagreed and neutral.

**Item 3:** Audio versions of literary works are available whenever needed.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Audio versions of literary	Males	01	16.5%	01	16.5%	01	16.5%	02	34%	01	16.5%

works are available whenever needed	females	0	0	03	20%	05	33%	07	47%	0	0
-------------------------------------	---------	---	---	----	-----	----	-----	----	-----	---	---

**Table 3.9: Audio Versions of Literary Works Are Available whenever Needed.**

Those who agreed and strongly agreed formed 47.5%, 10 participants approved that the audio versions of literary works are available whenever needed. 28.5% denied the availability of audio versions of literary works, and 24% were neutral.

### Section Four: Speech Rate

**Item 1:** teachers do some audio editing to change the quality of the materials.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	Gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Teachers do some audio editing to change the quality of the materials.	Males	0	0	01	16%	0	0	04	68%	01	16%
	Females	04	26%	03	20%	03	20%	05	34%	0	0

**Table 3.10: Teachers Do some Audio Editing to Change the Quality of the Materials.**

The numbers demonstrates that 47% of the participants (10 students) either agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers do some audio editing to change the quality of the materials. 38% disagreed and strongly disagreed. 15% were neutral.

**Item 2:** the speed of the audio materials is the main source of apprehension.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage

The speed of the audio materials is the main source of apprehension	Males	0	0	01	16%	01	16%	03	52%	01	16%
	females	01	6%	02	14%	03	20%	06	40%	03	20%

**Table 3.11: The Speed of Audio Materials is the Main Source of Apprehension.**

The great majority of the participants 62% either agreed or strongly agreed that the speed of the audio materials is the main source of apprehension. While the other 38% either disagreed, strongly disagreed or were neutral.

**Item 3:** natural speech rate is optimal for understanding.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Natural speech rate is optimal for understanding.	Males	02	34%	0	0	01	16%	02	34%	01	16%
	females	01	6%	01	6%	06	6%	06	41%	01	6%

**Table 3.12: Natural Speech Rate is Optimal for Understanding.**

The numbers demonstrates that 47% approved that the natural speech rate is optimal for understanding. 20% opposed and 33% were neutral

**Item 4:** Faster speech rate is optimal for understanding.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Faster speech rate is optimal for understanding.	Males	01	16%	04	68%	0	0	01	16%	0	0
	females	01	06%	12	82%	01	06%	01	06%	0	0

**Table 3.13: Faster Rate is Optimal for Understanding.**

The great majority 85% disapproved that the faster speech rate is optimal for understanding. Only two participants agreed, and one was neutral.

**Item 5:** slower speech rate is optimal for understanding.

-Strongly disagree    -disagree    -neutral    -agree    -strongly agree

Statement	gender	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Slower speech rate is optimal for understanding.	Males	02	33.3	0	0	0	0	02	33.3	02	33.3
	females	0	0	02	13%	04	26%	07	48%	02	13%

**Table 3.14: Slower Speech Rate is Optimal for Understanding.**

The table indicate a 61% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that slower rate is optimal for understanding. Four participants disagreed, and the last four participants were neutral.

### 3.7.3. Interpretation:

This section is dedicated to illustrating the outcomes of the current study. The results of the current research are both qualitative and descriptive, namely in the student’s questionnaire. The kinds of results, of both descriptive and qualitative methods, reveal that the manipulation of the acoustic cues and the use of literary works in EFL classrooms are of enormous help in developing the basic listening comprehension skills.

### 3.8. Conclusion:

This chapter presents research methodology in addition to the analysis of the data collected form the various researches which are presented by the theoretical and practical aspects and the review of literature presented earlier. The collected data originate from the questionnaire that was given to L3 EFL students in literature classes. All the questions of the

questionnaire have been analysed, and their responses are represented in tables and bar graphs.

# **General Conclusion**

Nowadays learning new languages has become the goal of several individuals. Scholars and researchers became concerned with finding new methods and techniques to facilitate the task of teachers and their learners. Furthermore, listening comprehension constitutes a major part in the learning process, as it is the primary resource for information followed by reading. It is influenced by a number of factors such as the speed of speaker, the acoustic cues and the listener proficiency. Teachers make use of audio materials such as short stories in order to make it easier for their learners to follow and comprehend. However in Algeria students are not exposed to English at an early age, which leads them to perform poorly in their EFL classroom.

This study attempts to describe the effect of speech rate on listening comprehension through the use of literary texts. This study aims at deciphering the different factors that prevent the teachers from reaching their pedagogical goals in their listening comprehension course. It also seeks to determine the impact of literary texts on students and their listening comprehension.

The first chapter of this dissertation defines listening comprehension and identifies its main stages, strategies and sub-skills, in addition to discussing the main factors that influence it. It also defines speech rates and shows its importance in L2 teaching. The second chapter, however, provide a comprehensive understanding of literary texts and the use of short stories in language acquisition; especially the advantages of audio-stories in facilitating the learning process. Finally, the third chapter provides a methodological framework for this study. It enumerates the used approaches, methods and techniques, as well as, describing the provided questionnaire, and analyses the data collected.

This study culminates in determining that the manipulation of the acoustic cues and the use of audio material in EFL classroom are extremely beneficial for the students' comprehension. Through the questionnaire, it was determined that the audio versions of literary works are effective and easier to understand for the participants. The majority of participants agreed that slower speech rate is optimal for understanding. Hence, to the use of audio literary works is practical in listening comprehension as long as the teacher uses the correct rate, tone, and volume.

However, there are some limitations which prevent the success of this study. First literary texts are not always available which makes it difficult for students to be exposed to foreign material. Also, not all teachers can successfully manipulate their speech rate. Lastly, due to the lack of participants the findings may not be accurate. Therefore this topic requires further research.

Based on this analysis it is considered very important to make the following recommendations:

**3.9.** Audio materials must be implemented in EFL curriculum by decision makers.

**3.10.** Teachers must attend workshops to learn how to adequately implement literary works in their class rooms.

# References

- Abbas, P.G & Nardjess B.S. (2016). Learners' listening comprehension difficulties in English language learning: a literature review. Iran: published by Canadian centre of science and education. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n6p123>
- Abdolmajid. H. (2010). The Effect of Speech Rate on Listening Comprehension of EFL learners. Iran: Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran. Retrieved from: <http://www.SciRP.org/journal/ce>
- Anderson, A. & Lynch, T. (1988) *Listening*. Oxford University Press.
- Bain, K., Basson, S. H., & Wald, M. (2003). Speech recognition in university classrooms:
- Blau, E. K. (1990). The effect of syntax, speed, and pauses on listening comprehension.
- Ellis, R. (2000). Task-based research and language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*,
- Eva, B. (2010). Test takers' listening comprehension sub-skills and strategies. Budapest: Budapest business school.
- Fushun, L. (2006). Faster, normal or slower? : the effects of speech rates on high intermediate ESL learners' listening comprehension of academic lectures. Capstones: Iowa state university. Retrieved from: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/16121>
- Griffiths, R. T. (1991). Language classroom speech rates: a descriptive study. *TESOL*
- Griffiths, R. T. (1991). Pausological research in an L2 context: A rationale and review
- Griffiths, R. T., & Beretta, A. (1991). A controlled study of temporal variables in NS
- Kissner, E. (2006) *Summarizing, Paraphrasing and Retelling: Skills for Better*
- Koutsompou, V. (2015). Use of Literature in the Language Classroom: Methods and Aims. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 5(1), 74-79.
- Littlewoods, W. (1995). *Foreign and Second Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mendelsohn, D.J. & Rubin J. (2004) *A guide for the teaching of second language*
- Michael, R. (2011). Teaching and researching listening. United Kingdom: Pearson.
- Morley, J. (2001). Aural Comprehension Instruction: Principles and Practices. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (pp. 69-85) Boston: Heinle and Heinle. Retrieved from: <http://gaining.educ.msu.edu/resources/files/Teaching%20listening.Morley%202001.pdf>
- O'Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U., R., & Kupper, L. (1985). *Learning strategy*
- O'MALLEY, J.M, CHAMOT, A.U & KUPPER, L. (1989) *Listening Comprehension*
- O'MALLEY, J.M, CHAMOT, A.U, and KUPPER, L. (2009) *Listening Comprehension*
- Richard, J (1987) *Listen for it :A Task Based Listening Course*. Oxford University
- Robb, M. P., MacLagan M. A., & Chen, Y. (2004). Speaking rates of American and New
- Roell, Kelly (2009) *Reading for the Main Idea: How to Find the Main Idea in a*

- Rubin, J. (1995). *The contribution of video to the development of competence in*
- Underwood ,M. (1989). *Teaching Listening* , Longman . London.
- Ur.P. (1998)*Teaching Listening Comprehension* .Cambridge University Press.
- Young-sug. K. (2016). What is listening comprehension and what does it take to improve listening comprehension? . California: university of California, Irvine. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304054472>
- Zhao, Y. (1997). The effects of listeners' control of speech rate on second language: *Strategies in Second Language Acquisition* Georgetown University, InterAmerica 19,285-296.
- Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing Listening*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carrel. P. (1988). INTERACTIVE APPROACHES TO SECOND LANGUAGE READING. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chastain, K. (1971). *The Development of Modern Language Skills: Theory to Practice*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.
- Chris.L. (2010). Selecting literary texts for language learning. *Journal of Nelta* vol.15 No. 1-2. comprehension. *Applied Linguistics*, 18,49-68.
- *Curriculum* .Action Research.Al ñQattan Center for Educational Research and Development QCERD . Gaza
- Dirven, R., & Oakeshott-Taylor, J. (1984). *Listening Comprehension (Part I)*. Language Teaching: The
- Elliot, R. (1990). Encouraging reader-response to literature in ESL situations. *ELT Journal*, 44(3), 191-198.
- Gladis .L. (2017). Students' language skills development through short stories. Colombia: Ikala Revisita de language y Cultura. Retrieved from: [www.udea.edu.com](http://www.udea.edu.com)
- Goh, C. (1998). How ESL Learners with Different Listening Abilities Use Comprehension Strategies and Tactics. *Language Teaching Research*, 2, 124-147.retrived from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/136216898667461574>
- Griffiths, R. T. (1990). Speech rate and NNS comprehension: A preliminary
- Griffiths, R. T. (1992). Speech rate and listening comprehension: Further evidence of the <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732959>

- <http://www.liberatedlearning.com/publications/assetsconference2003.htm>
- International Abstracting Journal for Language Teachers and Applied Linguistics, 17(4), 326- 343. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S026144480001082X> ISSN 0142-6001, Oxford University Press. Retrieved from: <http://apliij.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/10/4/418>
- Khadeja A.S. (2010). The Effectiveness of Using Storytelling Technique in Enhancing 11th Graders' Listening Comprehension Sub-Skills in Middle Gaza Governorate. Gaza.
- Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (1999). Foreign Accent, Comprehensibility and Intelligibility in the Speech of Second Language Learners. *Language Learning*, 49(1), 285-310. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.49.s1.8>
- Reading Passage, London. Retrieved from: <http://www.slideshare.net/angelamaiers/finding-the-main-idea> \ [http://testprep.about.com/od/tipsfortesting/a/Main\\_Idea.htm](http://testprep.about.com/od/tipsfortesting/a/Main_Idea.htm)
- Research Associates , Interstate Research Associates Online ISSN 1477-450X - Print
- Rubin, J. (1995). *The contribution of video to the development of competence in*
- Saricoban, A.(1999).The Teaching of Listening. The Internet TESL Journal. Retrieved from: <http://iteslj.org/>.



# Appendix

## Appendix 01:

### Questionnaire

Dear participant,

The present study aims at investigating the use of different speech rates as a strategy to promote the teaching of literature. Your answers will be used for research purposes only, and your identity will remain anonymous.

#### Section One: Personal Background

- Gender
- Age
- Rate your level in English

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

- Rate your level in listening skill

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

#### Section Two: the use of audio materials to aid literature teaching

- Put a tick on the cell that corresponds to your opinion

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Literature teachers employ audio materials to aid teaching					
I use audio versions of literary works to promote my understanding					

### **Section Three: attitudes towards the use of audio materials to aid teaching literature**

- Put a tick on the cell that corresponds to your opinion

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Audio versions of literary works are more practical					
Audio versions of literary works are easier to understand					
Audio versions of literary works are available whenever needed					

### **Section Four: speech rate**

- Put a tick on the cell that corresponds to your opinion

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Teachers do some audio editing to change the quality of the materials					
The speed of the audio materials is the main source of apprehension					
Natural speech rate is optimal for understanding					
Faster speech rate is optimal for understanding					
Slower speech rate is optimal for understanding					

**Your contribution is highly appreciated**