

ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LAW

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

(GRADUATE PROGRAM)

ASSESSMENT OF URBAN VERSUS RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LISTENING  
COMPETENCY IN EFL CLASSES: THE CASE OF GORO AND BENBEN PUBLIC  
HIGH SCHOOLS GRADE 10 STUDENTS

BY

LULIE NIGUSSIE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES OF  
ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN ENGLISH

AUGUST 2016

ADAMA

ASSESSMENT OF URBAN VERSUS RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LISTENING  
COMPETENCY IN EFL CLASSES: THE CASE OF GORO AND BENBEN PUBLIC  
HIGH SCHOOLS GRADE 10 STUDENTS

LULIE NIGUSSIE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES OF  
ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN ENGLISH

ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2016

ADAMA, ETHIOPIA

ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LAW

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

(GRADUATE PROGRAM)

ASSESSMENT OF URBAN VERSUS RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LISTENING  
COMPETENCY IN EFL CLASSES: THE CASE OF GORO AND BENBEN PUBLIC  
HIGH SCHOOLS GRADE 10 STUDENTS

LULIE NIGUSSIE

APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS:

|                |           |       |
|----------------|-----------|-------|
| _____          | _____     | _____ |
| Advisor's Name | Signature | Date  |

|                 |           |       |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|
| _____           | _____     | _____ |
| Examiner's Name | Signature | Date  |

|                 |           |       |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|
| _____           | _____     | _____ |
| Examiner's Name | Signature | Date  |

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for any degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

NAME: LULIE NIGUSSIE

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF SUBMISSION: July 19, 2016

PLACE: ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

ASSESSMENT OF URBAN VERSUS RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LISTENING  
COMPETENCY IN EFL CLASSES: THE CASE OF GORO AND BENBEN PUBLIC  
HIGH SCHOOLS GRADE 10 STUDENTS

BY

LULIE NIGUSSIE

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

First, I would like to thank my Advisor, Dr. Mulugeta Shumiye, who has always provided me with constructive advice while I was doing this thesis. Without his all-round support, the successful completion of this work would not have been realized.

Secondly, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Joel Carl for his unreserved support during my work on this thesis. In this regard, I would like to emphasize my gratitude for the audio material from native speaker, which he recorded for me.

Finally, I would also like to extend my gratitude for teachers and students of Goro and Benben High Schools for their collaboration during the data-gathering phase and for the data provided for the study.

## **ABSTRACT**

*The present study was carried with the purpose of assessing the listening competency of Grade 10 students from urban (Goro) High School and rural (Benben) High School to compare the possible differences that could be observed between them. Accordingly, two instruments of data collection, namely a test and interview were developed and administered to the participants: students and teachers at the target schools. The teachers were selected using non-probability sampling technique, whereas the students were selected using simple random sampling (Lottery System) from non-probability sampling category. For the purpose of analysis and interpretation, statistical tools such as measures of location, mean and variation, standard deviation were used in addition to use of percentage. A t-test was also used to test the significance of the difference between the groups of students on their listening competency level by using listening tests. The result of the study showed that the overall performance of the students was less than 'Satisfactory'. Furthermore, Goro High School students showed better performance than Benben High School students did. The analysis of the interview, which was aimed for triangulation, also backed up the finding from the analysis of the test. However, this research was carried not on large population encompassing many urban and rural High Schools and as a result, generalization could not be made. Therefore, interested researchers and stakeholders in the field of education can do this and contribute to academic work in addition to solving the current problem of teaching and assessing of listening task. Besides, taking a larger sample and carrying out a comprehensive analysis will enhance the confidence to replicate or generalize a finding from a population to others of similar or related characteristics attractive. Therefore, this has to be investigated in depth. EFL teachers are also expected to design attractive and adequate listening texts that can better fit the needs of the students from rural areas. Therefore, teachers may use the same technique and output while teaching and assessing listening skill.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Content                                                                          | Page       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....</b>                                                      | <b>ii</b>  |
| <b>ABSTRACT .....</b>                                                            | <b>iii</b> |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>                                                   | <b>iv</b>  |
| <b>LIST OF ACRONYMS.....</b>                                                     | <b>vii</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>                                            | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>1.0 Introduction .....</b>                                                    | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>1.2 Statement of the Problem .....</b>                                        | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses .....</b>                               | <b>4</b>   |
| <b>1.4. Objectives of the Study .....</b>                                        | <b>5</b>   |
| 1.4.1. Broad Objectives.....                                                     | 5          |
| 1.4.2 Specific Objectives .....                                                  | 5          |
| <b>1.5 Significance of the Study.....</b>                                        | <b>6</b>   |
| <b>1.6 Scope of the Study.....</b>                                               | <b>6</b>   |
| <b>1.7 Limitation of the Study .....</b>                                         | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>1.8 Definition of Key Terms .....</b>                                         | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>1.9 Organization of the Study.....</b>                                        | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>                                       | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>2. 0 Introduction .....</b>                                                   | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>2.1 Listening: Meaning, Nature and Essence .....</b>                          | <b>9</b>   |
| 2.1.1 Meaning .....                                                              | 9          |
| 2.1.2 Nature of Listening Skill.....                                             | 10         |
| 2.1.3 Essence of Listening .....                                                 | 11         |
| <b>2.2. Purpose, Types, Modes and Stages of Listening .....</b>                  | <b>12</b>  |
| 2.2.1 Purpose of Listening .....                                                 | 12         |
| 2.2.2 Types of Listening .....                                                   | 13         |
| 2.2.3 Basic modes of Listening.....                                              | 14         |
| 2.2.4 Stages in the Listening Process .....                                      | 15         |
| <b>2.3 Listening Competencies .....</b>                                          | <b>16</b>  |
| <b>2.4 Problems and Issues in the Teaching and Assessment of Listening .....</b> | <b>17</b>  |
| 2.4.1 Barriers to Listening .....                                                | 17         |
| 2.4.2 Common Listening Mistakes .....                                            | 18         |
| 2.4.3 The Place of Listening in EFL/ESL .....                                    | 19         |
| 2.4.4 Listening Texts and other Inputs.....                                      | 19         |
| <b>2.5 Strategies and Ways to Improve Listening Skills and Competencies.....</b> | <b>20</b>  |
| 2.5.1 Listening Strategies.....                                                  | 20         |
| 2.5.2 Ways to improve Listening skill .....                                      | 20         |

|                                                                                                  |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2.6 Factors that Affect Listening Competency .....                                               | 22        |
| 2.7 Related Research Findings on Listening Competency .....                                      | 22        |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>                                      | <b>24</b> |
| <b>3.0 Introduction .....</b>                                                                    | <b>24</b> |
| 3.1 Research Design .....                                                                        | 24        |
| 3.2 Sampling Technique and Sampling Size .....                                                   | 24        |
| 3.2.1 Sites of the Study .....                                                                   | 24        |
| 3.2.2 Target Population and Participants of the Study .....                                      | 25        |
| 3.3 Instruments .....                                                                            | 26        |
| 3.3.1 Listening Test .....                                                                       | 26        |
| 3.3.2 Teachers' Interview .....                                                                  | 26        |
| 3.4 Data Collection Procedures .....                                                             | 27        |
| 3.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures .....                                               | 28        |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>                                          | <b>29</b> |
| <b>4.0 Introduction.....</b>                                                                     | <b>29</b> |
| 4.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data.....                                                           | 29        |
| 4.1.1 Analysis of Overall Performance of Students in Listening Skill .....                       | 29        |
| 4.1.2 Analysis of Comparison of Performance of Urban and Rural Students on Listening skill ..... | 33        |
| 4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data .....                                                           | 36        |
| 4.3 Discussion and Interpretation of Major Findings.....                                         | 38        |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....</b>                                | <b>41</b> |
| 5.1 Summary .....                                                                                | 41        |
| 5.2 Conclusion.....                                                                              | 42        |
| 5.3 Recommendations.....                                                                         | 43        |
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>                                                                           | <b>45</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES .....</b>                                                                          | <b>49</b> |

**LIST OF TABLES**

*Table 1 Overall Competency of Rural and Urban Students in Story Listening*----- 30

*Table 2 Overall Competency of the Students in Listening Comprehension* ----- 31

*Table 3 Overall Competency of the Students in Paragraph Listening (n=120)* ----- 32

*Table 4 Comparison of Performance of Urban and Rural Students on Listening Competencies* ----- 34

*Table 5 Summary of Teachers' Interview Responses* ----- 36

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

***BHS***- Benben High School

***EFL/ESL***- English as a Foreign or Second Language

***GHS***- Goro High School

***HSs***- High School(s)

***MOE***-Ministry of Education

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background**

English gradually changed from being the language of the west to the language of modern era where it is the medium of instruction in all professional arts and scientific educational institutions almost throughout the world (Racio, 2012). English language has been used to project Ethiopian students' achievements in English language literature, science and philosophy, etc besides being the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education. At present, there is a great demand for English language in Ethiopia. However, there seems to be an inadequate communication skill because learning English language is not as simple as it is expected. This is due to the fact that learning a language involves not only knowing the language system (knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, etc) but also the use of the language system (the skills) (ABAX, 2004). The complexity even gets harder if one is learning these language skills in a second or foreign language context (Rees, 2008; and Rixon, 1986).

One of the language skills, listening, which we first experience in life, has a significant role in one's successful communication and academic achievement. No one can deny the importance of listening skills in language learning because the key to acquire a language is to receive language input. Ehrman and Herzog (1984) claim that acquisition takes place only when students absorb enough comprehensible input. Rost (2002), who confirmed that the benefit of listening is vital in language classrooms, because it provides input for learners, supported the same claim. As an input, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Krashen (1985) also argues that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information they hear. Therefore, language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input. This entails that listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language inputs.

Furthermore, it is obvious that without understanding inputs at the right level, any kind of learning cannot simply occur. Hence, listening is a fundamental language skill; as such, it deserves a critical priority among the four skill areas for language students.

As Hansan (2000) pointed out, *“Listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and for development of other language skills.”*

Listening, therefore, is essential not only as a receptive skill but also as a skill to develop students’ spoken language proficiency. Rost (2002) indicates that developing proficiency in listening is the key to achieving proficiency in speaking. According to Devine (1982), listening is the primary means by which incoming ideas and information are taken in. Gilbert (1988), on the other hand, notes that students from kindergarten through high school are expected to listen 65-90 percent of the time. Wolvin and Coakley (1988) conclude that, both in and out of the classroom, listening consumes more of daily communication time than other forms of verbal communication.

Further listening is central to the lives of students throughout all levels of educational development (Wolvin and Coakley, 1988). Listening is the most frequently used language skill in the classroom (Ferris, 1998). Both instructors (Ferris and Tagg, 1996) and students (Ferris, 1998) acknowledge the importance of listening comprehension for success in academic settings. Numerous studies indicated that efficient listening skills are more important than reading skills as a factor contributing to academic success (Wolvin and Coakley, 1988). Moreover, it is evident that listening is more important for the lives of students since listening is used as a primary medium of learning at all stages of education. Additionally, Rost (1990) and Saricoban (1999) further stated that listening provides a basis for the development of other productive language skills.

Although listening skill has such vital roles in our lives, it was regarded as an inactive skill because it was believed that listening is simply receiving language forms and it can be developed naturally while learning a foreign language (Seime, 1989 ; Getachew, 2002). To the contrary, Tewolde (1988) and Seime (1989) showed in their studies that the students’ ability in listening skill as poor. Therefore, further investigation should be carried out to assess the level of listening competency of students at high school level, especially in EFL context.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Contrary to its paramount importance, the use of listening skill for communicative purposes is not satisfactory in most high schools in Ethiopia like everywhere. Learners’ proficiency in

the language in Ethiopian schools is much lower than the level required of them (Derebsa, 2005).

The student researcher has noticed the problem during his three years of teaching English at high schools. Most students face problems to effectively use the language skills while trying to communicate with their teachers, friends, and others in writing and speaking. As a result, it seems that they do not have the required abilities to meet the academic demands in the school. The difficulty they encounter with listening is significant in this regard.

In language learning, when we talk about the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, we always put “listening” at the beginning of them. This is because listening is the most important skill of the four and it is the most useful way of receiving language input. As it is commonly known, we can speak sensibly only if we understand what is said. In fact, people cannot talk if they cannot hear other people’s talk. This simply means that if there is no enough language input, there is no output. For example, no deaf person can speak clearly, because she or he cannot hear clearly. Therefore, listening skill is one of the basics of learning languages and acquiring it becomes very important in language learning contexts. Moreover, with the development of innovations in technology, we more and more rely on our ears to get information. There is no doubt that the speed of getting information tends to be faster through listening than reading. Thus, such situations imply that it is crucial to improve the level of the listening comprehension of students at any cost.

Many studies have been conducted on the neglect of learning the listening skill; however, the truth remains that it is fundamental skill. For example, in Ethiopia, the listening skill has not been taken as a fundamental skill as such that both teachers and students have emphasized on the teaching and learning of language forms, but not on the language use. They have been doing so, may be because questions that assess students’ language skills, like listening, do not appear in the national exams and/or because the communicative function of the language of learners might have not been well emphasized in classroom lessons. It is not surprising, thus if studies in such a situation showed that their listening ability has been of poor standard.

As it could be understood from personal experience, although the present EFL textbooks for all grade levels contain sections to improve students listening skills, still most students have not yet shown the expected improvements in this skill. For instance, the ability of students in listening to what their teachers speak or to the media seems negligible. Furthermore, students

do not show much interest in listening despite the fact that there is no way to escape out from the domain of the world of English.

In practice of language learning, students tend to learn by the way of reading, instead of listening. Sections that deal with listening will be skipped let alone to consider having language labs ( Tekle (2004). It may not be surprising to hear that listening activities in many classrooms are not common for the students. From the teaching experience of the researcher, it is a common knowledge that most students are incapable of taking notes from lessons and lectures.

Though the materials on the audio tape are usually read by English speaking people, there are different accents, difficult idioms and unfamiliar language chunks in their speaking. This is another difficulty hindering the students to grasp the main message conveyed through speaking. For our students, their English teachers are usually local people. So the students may not be used to the accents of the foreign people.

Just like the world's communities, the Ethiopian people are living in the urban and rural areas. Both communities use English language at the level of high school as medium of instructions. In general, the attitude of Ethiopian students at the listening activities in the classroom is low but which category of students, the rural or the urban students is poor in listening activities has not yet been identified. The purpose of this comparative study was, therefore, was to assess and compare the listening competency of grade 10 students on story listening, comprehensive listening and paragraph listening by taking two schools, one from urban area and the other from rural area.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

To achieve the intended objectives the current study, the researcher employed different research methodologies and relevant literatures through which the following broad research questions were tried to be answered:

- a. What does the overall listening competency level of grade 10 students at Goro and Benben High Schools look like in understanding variety of contents listening texts?
- b. Which category of students is more competent in listening activities, the rural or the urban?
- c. How is the degree of their listening capacity varies?

In line with research questions *b* and *c* a null hypothesis with alternative hypotheses was also formulated in order to compare the performance of the students at the two schools and test the significance which could be observed between them on the listening test.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Goro High School (Urban) students and Benben High School (Rural) students.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant difference between the mean scores of Goro High School (Urban) students and Benben High School (Rural) students (GHS≤BHS).

The hypotheses were tested using t-test as a statistical tool by setting 0.5 alpha levels at two tails. The test hypotheses is therefore non-directional. The null hypothesis would be rejected if the test statistic was less than the set alpha. The third research question would be answered by qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interview.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

This study addresses the following broad and specific objectives.

##### **1.4.1. Broad Objectives**

The broad objective of this study was:

To assess English language listening competency of grade ten students of Goro and Benben high schools.

##### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To assess Goro and Benben High Schools grade ten students listening competency in story, paragraph and listening comprehension.
- To compare the students' competency in listening skill on the basis of the locations of locations of different schools (rural versus urban).
- To determine in which of school the students have better listening comprehension skills.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study was expected to provide significant information and insights to EFL teachers and students, curriculum planners, material producers and researchers. In the first place, the finding would show to EFL teachers and students the skill gap they have in language skill and possible ways to improve it. English language teachers, for instance, may make use of it to evaluate their practices on the teaching of the listening skills.

Secondly, it may be of paramount significance specifically to the curriculum setters, educators, and programmers, textbook writers' etc., for evaluation concerning the practicability of the listening texts incorporated in the text books. It can also be used for comparison of skill gap that is observed between urban and rural students. Thirdly, it might be used by other scholars who want to conduct further research on the same or related subject.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study was conducted on Grade 10 students of Goro and Benben High Schools in the year 2015/16 academic year from where only equal sample size of 60 students were selected from each school. Thus, the total number of students involved in the study was 120. The listening materials on which the test was prepared had three kinds of listening content, namely, story listening, comprehensive listening and paragraph listening.

Moreover, although EFL students have problems in listening reading, speaking and writing skills (Tesfaye, 2008), this study was delimited to students' proficiency in the listening skill. That is the study was delimited to comparing students' from the two high schools in listening skill on paragraph listening, story listening and listening comprehension by taking a sample of grade 10 students from the target schools.

Even though the study assessed and compared the listening comprehension skills of students at these schools, which were from urban and rural schools, the finding of the study was not intended to make generalization to other schools. Thus, only descriptive study was used to describe and compare the performances of samples students on listening comprehension.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

This study would have been of much importance if it were carried out on large-scale population encompassing many schools in Adama town and Sire Town, where I work. Conducting a research by collecting broader data for computing has also been the interest of the researcher. Doing so would have involved large sample size over large area coverage, which eventually would make possible to generalize the finding to wider scope of the population. However, constraints of resources (time, space, materials, etc.) became the main hindrance to materialize this study. Thus, the researcher purposively selected grade ten students from the target schools from Goro and Benben High Schools of Arsi zone, Sire district.

## **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

**Cognate-** Similar or associated sets of things, ideas

**Cognitive-** intellectual domain, aspect of knowing, gaining knowledge

**Competency-** skill, capability to listen and comprehend meaningfully

**Metacognitive-** deliberate/ intentional thinking process about one's knowledge or thinking

**Comprehension-** understanding, knowledge, or total command of this sort of experience

## **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with a brief presentation of the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses, significance of the study and scope and limitation of the study. Under this section of the thesis, the rationale and purpose of carrying out the current research was introduced after establishing the topic of the study in the context of EFL/ESL listening comprehension theory and research. The research questions and hypothesis are also included in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with the review of literature and related research findings. Under this chapter, the conceptual and theoretical framework of listening competency and listening comprehension are discussed in relation to the practices of listening assessment in EFL/ESL context. The strategies and ways to teach and improve listening skill were also touched upon

after addressing the difficulties and problems of listening skill in general, and teaching of listening in particular.

The third chapter discusses the research methodology and the procedures used in the process of selecting the study population, sample size, and sampling technique. It also presents data collection and instruments of data collection and analysis used. The fourth chapter deals with data presentation, analysis, and discussion. The fifth chapter of the study provides summary, conclusion and recommendation. In this chapter, first, the summary of the whole process of undertaking of the study is made. Next, some conclusions were drawn based on the findings and hypothesis test. Finally, possible recommendations were forwarded.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of comprehensive review of literature and related research findings from international and local perspective. The chapter is divided into six sub-sections. In the first section, the meaning, nature, and essence of listening as a language skill in which students need to be competent as any other skill, is briefly summarized and presented. In the second section, the purpose, types and modes, and stages of listening are discussed in detail. The third section discusses listening competencies expected to be acquired by learners. The fourth section is devoted to the discussion of instructional problems and related issues prevalent in the teaching of EFL listening. The fifth section treats the strategies and ways through which listening can be improved. The sixth section tries to review related research findings. The final section summarizes the key issues raised in the chapter and sets the current research topic within context in addition to proposing hypotheses on the possible listening competency/skill level differences between urban and rural students.

### 2.1 Listening: Meaning, Nature and Essence

In this section, three aspects of listening skills are discussed in detail. First, the meaning of listening as a skill and cognitive process of acquiring information is presented as various experts in the field explained. Second, the features that characterize listening are briefly discussed. Finally, the importance of listening as a skill is summarized.

#### 2.1.1 Meaning

People often consider hearing and listening as one and the same. Hearing the words merely and really listening to a message are quite distinct. Galvin and Pamela (1999) defined hearing as receiving sounds whereas listening as the activity that involves various aspects including hearing. Nadig (2006) notes that, *“When we listen effectively we understand what the person is thinking and/or feeling from the other person’s own perspective.”* Many scholars have explained this very fact. For example, Underwood (1989:1) defines listening as *“the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear.”*

In general, these definitions portrayed that listening is not a passive skill as it was expected to be and that it is an active skill, which demands more than receiving sounds. In line with this, Nadig (2006) stated that *“In active listening we are genuinely interested in understanding*

*what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means, and we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond with our own new message.”* Regarding the processes involved in listening, Ahuja and Ahuja (1990:18), cited in Daniel (2006), describes listening as, “...*hearing, attending, understanding, concentrating, remembering plus continually grasping and processing information.*”

A widely used concept that is related to listening is *listening comprehension*, Anh & Thanh (2014) explain that the phrase contains the two major aspects of the skill “comprehension” and “Listening” is to receive, memorize, and repeat the sound wave of the voice. “Comprehension” is to explain what one has listened to. Citing (Byrnes, 1984) concludes that the context and purpose of listening play an important role in conducting a listening comprehension. When listeners know the context of a text or an utterance, the process is facilitated considerably because listeners can activate prior knowledge and make the appropriate inferences essential to comprehend the message.

### **2.1.2 Nature of Listening Skill**

Listening is a language modality. It is one of the four skills of a language along with speaking, reading, and writing. It involves an active involvement of an individual. Listening involves a sender, a message, and a receiver. It is the psychological process of receiving, attending to constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and/or non-verbal messages. Thus, this process tells us that hearing is only the first step to listening and that listening is a challenging task that involves understanding the speakers’ accent, grammar, vocabulary, etc. The anonymous saying “*We were given two ears but only one mouth, because listening is twice as hard as talking.*”

On the other hand, listening, in the eyes of many researchers and learners, is also considered as a complex and active mental process that involves perception, attention, cognition, and memory. During the process of listening comprehension, various factors may affect learner listening ability. Lists of general factors have been identified. For instance, some factors that have been the focus of research include phonological features and background knowledge (Chiang and Dunkel, 1992; Flowerdew and Miller, 1992; Long, 1990).

Other issues have also been related to listener difficulties. These range from text structure and syntax to personal factors such as insufficient exposure to the target language, and a lack of interest and motivation. Brown (1994) acknowledged the relevance of all these issues, and

further argued that listener difficulties are also related to the levels of cognitive demands made by the content of the texts. Bloomfield et al. (2011) identifies numerous difficulties which can be confronted in listening tasks such as unknown vocabularies, unfamiliar topics, and fast speech rate.

### **2.1.3 Essence of Listening**

Listening is known to be the most significant part of communication because it is the most important skill in providing a paramount and meaningful response. Without listening and understanding input appropriately, learning cannot be imagined to occur. Thus, without listening skill, no communication thought to be achieved ( Renukadevi, 2014).

Referring to some research findings, Renukadevi further argues that when we communicate, we gain 45% of language competence from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading and 10% from writing. With the highest percentage of involvement in the exchange of information in effective communication, listening has to be considered a language forerunner.

Morley (1991) upholds that we listen two times as much as we speak, four times as much as we read and five times as much as we write. This implies that listening is by far the most frequently practical skill of the four language skills. Saricoban (1999:34) notes that listening is *“a medium through which children, young people and adults gain a large portion of their education, information and understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideas, sense of values and their appreciation.”* This again implies that much of our daily life activities or communication in the real life situation, such as listening to the radio, conversation, lecture, meeting, telephoning, watching films, are dominated by listening.

Furthermore, in fields other than education, good listening skills make workers more productive. The ability to listen carefully will allow a person to understand assignments in better way and find what is expected from him. It can also help one to build rapport with co-workers, bosses, and clients; show support; work well in a team-based environment; resolve problems with customers, co-workers, and bosses; answer questions, and find underlying meanings in what others say. Learning the skill of effective listening is reported to benefits personal growth and development in the following ways as discussed by (Tyagi, 2013:1):

*Effective Communication* – Clear and concise transmission of information is an important component of effective human interaction. Though the onus is often placed on presenting

clear and concise written or spoken directions, the listener also bears a responsibility to hear and understand messages.

*Fewer Misunderstandings* – Regardless of the clarity of written or spoken messages, the effective listener can prevent misunderstandings and salvage what otherwise might be a miscommunication by practicing active listening skills.

*Improved Relationships* – Relationships are damaged by misunderstandings that can lead to unsatisfactory business transactions as well as hurt feelings in personal relationships. Excellent listening practices tell others that they are important, special, and what they have to say is valued. That is very attractive and contributes to strong relationships.

*Personal Growth* – A person learns and grows by listening and understanding others' viewpoints, differing ideas, and exploring conflicting viewpoints. Learning the skill of active and effective listening not only adds a tool to the personal development portfolio, but also equips us to continue growing with tools for exploring new ideas (ibid).

## **2.2. Purpose, Types, Modes and Stages of Listening**

Listening serves different purposes. It also classified into different categories and modes according to the purposes for which it is intended. Additionally, listening involves some commonly accepted stages. Hence, under this section of the research, purpose, types, modes and stages of listening are discussed by citing various authors.

### **2.2.1 Purpose of Listening**

People listen for different purposes. As Tygi (2013) notes, one may for example listen for examination purpose. According to his claims, listening has become one of the major components in exam and test items from primary to university level. Others may listen for key information or news. Still others may listen for critical analysis of input information. Listening could also be for the purpose following certain notice from meeting or a center. Attendees in meeting may be required to write minutes that would not be easy without active listening.

### 2.2.2 Types of Listening

Various scholars have attempted to show the different kinds of listening activities both in academic and non-academic contexts. To begin with, Anderson and Lynch (1983), for example, divide listening into two, namely:

*Reciprocal listening*: Which provides opportunity to interact and negotiate meaning, and *Non-reciprocal listening*: in which information is transferred (gained) from one source. Furthermore, Richards (1985) also grouped types of listening as: *Conversational* which is a type of listening to causal speech and *academic* which is related to listening to lectures, presentations etc in academic contexts.

Another classification is that of Rost (1990). His taxonomy, unlike the above two, seems comprehensive. He categorizes types of listening in to four: *global*, *selective*, *intensive* and *interactive listening*. He described these categories of listening as follows:

*Global listening*: - This is listening to the overall sense of a given text. Such type of listening enables students to develop the ability to extract a topic or theme of a text i.e. to generalize what the text is all about.

*Selective listening*: Unlike the first one, this is listening for the purpose of deriving specific information from any text. This implies that we should not listen to everything said but that we need to be purposeful and selective.

*Intensive listening*: -This category focuses on listening to features of language systems after the text is well understood. As features of a language such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar are building blocks of the language, teachers need to give time for such listening activities.

*Interactive listening*: This is listening to give the appropriate responses /feedback to a speaker. The term ‘appropriate’ here means that the responses should be carefully selected based on the speakers personality or cultural styles.

In relation to the second taxonomy above, Nadig (2006) states,

“In active listening we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond...we restate our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender for verification” (p. 17).

Generally, speaking, what one possibly can learn from these categories of listening is that we use different strategies of listening for different purposes. Hence, listening activities need to be designed with the intention of developing these listening skills.

### **2.2.3 Basic modes of Listening**

According to the experts in the field of the process of listening and listening activities, the modalities involved in listening can be grouped into the categories four categories discussed below.

#### **2.2.3.1 Active or Reflective Listening**

According to Brownell (2005), listening is the single most useful and important skill. In active listening, the listener is genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message mean. The person is active in checking her or his understanding before he or she responds his/her new message. The listener restates or paraphrases our understanding of the message and reflects it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what distinguishes active listening and makes it effective. Essentials of Active Listening are *intensity*, *empathy*, *acceptance*, and recognizing *responsibility* for completeness.

Intensity refers to the degree of effective and uninterrupted communication between two conversant. Empathy is about common understanding or mutual support in effort to understand one another. Without empathy, two people cannot listen to each other and in effect, there would communication gap. One has to try to figure out the feeling, the emotion and aspiration of the other without which communication cannot be the fullest. Acceptance is another essential component of active listening. There should be turn-taking and considering ones ideas by giving time and acknowledging the points that deserve it before rushing to criticizing. It is believed that while two or more people speak one evaluates whether the other is attentively listening or actively responding. In active listening both conversant care about

their speech and recognize their responsibility to complete and be understood, and without active response of listeners this goal cannot be realized (Anh & Tanh, 2014)

#### **2.2.3.2 Passive or Attentive Listening**

The listener is genuinely interested in hearing and understanding the other person's point of view. She/he will be attentive and will passively listen. The listener assumes that what she/he hears and understands is correct but stays passive and does not verify it (Brownell, 2005).

#### **2.2.3.3 Competitive or Combative Listening**

It happens when the listener is more interested in promoting her/his own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else's view. She/he listens either for openings to take the floor or for flaws or weak point (ibid).

#### **2.2.4 Stages in the Listening Process**

Many authors, such as, Rees (2008), Nadig (2006), Daniel (2006) and Getahchew (2002) describe that the process of listening occurs in five stages. These are hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. Each of these is defined below:

*Hearing:* - It is referred to the response caused by sound waves stimulating the sensory receptors of the ear; it is a physical response; hearing is perception of sound waves; you must hear to listen, but you need not listen to hear (perception necessary for listening depends on attention). Brain screens stimuli and permits only a selected few to come into focus- these selective perception is known as attention, an important requirement for effective listening.

*Understanding:* - This step helps to understand symbols we have seen and heard. We must analyze the meaning of the stimuli we have perceived. Symbolic stimuli are not only words but also sounds like applause... and sights like blue uniform...that have symbolic meanings as well. The meanings attached to these symbols are a function of our past associations and of the context in which the symbols occur. For successful interpersonal communication, the listener must understand the intended meaning and the context assumed by the sender.

*Remembering:* - Remembering is important listening process because it means that an individual has not only received and interpreted a message but has also added it to the mind's

storage bank. In Listening our attention is selective, so too is our memory- what is remembered may be quite different from what was originally seen or heard.

*Evaluating:* - Only active listeners participate at this stage in listening. At this point, the active listener weighs evidence, sorts fact from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message. The effective listener makes sure that she or he doesn't begin this activity too soon; beginning this stage of the process before a message is completed shows that we no longer hear and attend to the incoming message-as a result, the listening process ceases.

*Responding :* - This stage requires that the receiver complete the process through verbal and/or nonverbal feedback. Because the speaker has no other way to determine if a message has been received, this stage becomes the only overt means by which the sender may determine the degree of success in transmitting the message.

### **2.3 Listening Competencies**

Competence is the ability to choose and use the knowledge, skills, ability of application, etc. in the implementation of a learning task to a certain standard. It is also defined as a system comprising of the knowledge, skills, and abilities - by definition associated with the inputs and tend to link the specific competencies. Additionally, it can be a list of what students can and required to do. According to Tygi (2013), listening comprises some key components or competencies that include discriminating between sounds, recognizing words and understanding their meaning, identifying grammatical groupings of words, identifying expressions and sets of utterances that act to create meaning, connecting linguistic cues to non-linguistic and paralinguistic cues, using background knowledge to predict and to confirm meaning and recalling important words and ideas.

Some writers also note that the primary justification for testing listening competency is to examine the ability to maintain attention to oral messages, select significant messages while exposed to competing stimuli, process oral language style as compared to written style, process a variety of oral presentation modes, use non-verbal context in processing messages, and self-monitoring the accuracy of comprehension. They further argue that these behaviors cannot be separated from thinking or language skills but can be the focus of the listening test (Erway, 1984).

## **2.4 Problems and Issues in the Teaching and Assessment of Listening**

Host of problems interact in the teaching and assessment of listening skill besides other related issues that make the acquisition of the skill the most difficult especially in the EFL/ESL context. Listening, unlike the other language skills, is felt comparatively much difficult by the learners, as it has all its interrelated sub skills such as receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. Nevertheless, with the advent of communicative language teaching and the focus on proficiency, the learning and teaching of listening started to receive more attention. The subsequent sections here under will deal with the barriers to listening, common mistakes in the learning teaching of the skill, and texts and other input of listening.

### **2.4.1 Barriers to Listening**

As discussed in different scholarly works in the EFL/ESL context, listening is not easy and there are a number of obstacles that stand in the way of effective listening, both within and outside the work place (Rees, 2008; Nadig, 2006). These barriers may be categorized and presented as follows:

*Physiological Barriers:* - some people may have genuine hearing problems or deficiencies that prevent them from listening properly. Some people may have problem in processing information or retaining information in the memory.

*Physical Barriers:* - These referred to distraction in the environment such as the sound of an air conditioner, cigarette smoke, or an overheated room. It can interfere with the listening process. They could also be in the form of information overload. For example, if you are in meeting with your manager and the phone rings and your mobile beeps at the same time to let you know that you have the message. It is very hard to listen carefully to what is being said.

*Attitudinal Barriers:* pre occupation with personal or work related problems can make it difficult to focus one's attention completely on what speaker is saying, even what it is being said is of very importance.

Another common attitudinal barrier is egocentrism, or the belief that the person has more knowledgeable than the speaker, or that there is nothing new to learn from the speaker's ideas. People with this kind of close minded attitude are very poor listeners.

*Wrong Assumptions:* The success of communication depends on both the sender and the receiver. It is wrong to assume that communication is the sole responsibility of the sender or the speaker and those listeners have no role to play. Such an assumption can be big barrier to listening. For example, a brilliant speech or presentation, however well delivered, is wasted if the receiver is not listening at the other end. Listeners have as much responsibility as speakers to make the communication successful. The process should be made successful by paying attention-seeking clarifications and giving feedback.

*Cultural Barriers:* Accents can be barriers to listening, since they interfere with the ability to understand the meaning of words that are pronounced differently. The problem of different accents arises not only between cultures, but also within a culture.

*Gender Barriers:* communication research has shown that gender can be barrier to listening. Studies have revealed that men and women listen very differently and for different purposes. Women are more likely to listen for the emotion behind a speaker's words, when men listen more for the facts and the content.

*Lack of Training:* Listening is not an inborn skill. People are not born good listeners. It is developed through practice and training. Lack of training in listening skills is an important barrier.

*Bad Listening Habits:* Most people are very average listeners who have developed poor listening habits that are hard to say and that act as barriers to listening. For example, some people have the habits of "faking" attention, or trying to look like a listeners, in order to impress the speaker and to assure him that they are paying attention. Others may tend to listen to each and every fact and, as a result, omit the main point (Rees, 2008; Nadig, 2006).

#### **2.4.2 Common Listening Mistakes**

According to a number of writers, there are some widely recognized mistakes that happen in the process of listening that hinders effective communication. An individual while listening makes some common mistakes. Some of these are:

- *Interrupting the speaker,*
- *Completing the speakers sentences in advance,*
- *Habit of topping another person's story with one's own,*
- *Relegating the speaker's story to something less important, and*

- *Dominating conversations*

A person who dominates conversations probably commits all of the above mistakes and she/he is not listening at all (Jung, et. al 2002).

### **2.4.3 The Place of Listening in EFL/ESL**

It is stated that the teaching of listening like other skills was rejected for a long time (Richards, 1990). Long time had to pass for listening skill to gain the importance it deserves in second and foreign language learning in the teaching profession. On the importance of the skill, Rivers (1966) cited in Tygi (2013) claimed, *“Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person. Teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is therefore a primary importance of the communication aim to be reached.”* Reasoning why this could have happened, Morley (1972) discussed in Richards (1990) notes, *“perhaps an assumption that listening is a reflex, a little like breathing - listening seldom receives overt teaching attention in one’s native language – has marked the importance and complexity of listening with understanding in a non-native language”*(p. 67).

According to Richards (1990), now there is strong emphasis on the teaching and assessment of listening skill. Accordingly, unlike the early times current view of listening instruction emphasizes the role of the listener who is seen as an active participant, in listening, employing strategies to facilitate, monitor and evaluate her/his listening. He also noted that there is still lack of commitment among EFL/ESL teachers and learners in the selection of appropriate learning material and lesson design that can attract their learners.

### **2.4.4 Listening Texts and other Inputs**

Listening inputs are materials or texts of any kind that students listen to in any listening lessons ( Rost, 1990). As teaching listening skills in the absence of texts is unthinkable, teachers need to know the different types of texts with their distinctive features, purposes and to which particular group of students they are suitable. According to Anderson and Lynch (1988), listening materials are of three kinds: a) Static texts: Descriptions or instructions in which the relationship between items in the text is likely to be fixed .b) Dynamic texts: Story telling /recounting incidents, which involve shifts of scene and time; and c) Abstract texts: Expressing people’s opinions /beliefs.

## **2.5 Strategies and Ways to Improve Listening Skills and Competencies**

There are a number of strategies and ways that are recommended for a better acquisition and comprehension of listening skill in the EFL/ESL context. Below are reviews of some of these strategies and recommendations by various authors.

### **2.5.1 Listening Strategies**

Listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input (Rocio, 2012). Accordingly, the two types of strategies that many scholars discuss in their academic works are:

*Top-down strategies:* - These strategies are listener based. The listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top-down strategies include listening for the main idea, predicting, drawing inferences, and summarizing (*ibid*).

*Bottom-up strategies:* - Unlike the above ones, these are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning (Rocio, 2012; Richards, 1986).

Research has revealed that strategic listeners also use metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening. Metacognitive development can be described as conscious awareness of one's metacognitive abilities and control of one's learning, selecting appropriate strategies, monitoring the progress of learning, correcting errors, analyzing the effectiveness of selected strategies, and changing learning behaviors and strategies at hand when required. The use of metacognitive strategies ignites one's cognition and leads to improved task performance in learning in general (Renukadevi, 2014)

### **2.5.2 Ways to improve Listening skill**

Hearing and listening are two different activities. Hearing is passive whereas listening is active. Listening is a psychological process. Therefore, it can be improved by regular practice. Listening is a very helpful skill. Active listening is really an extension of the Golden

Rule according to Tygi (2013). Some of the tips that can help the person to improve his listening skill include the following listed ones:

*Face the speaker:* - Sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language. Maintain eye contact, to the degree that you all remain comfortable.

*Minimize external distractions:* - Turn off the TV. Put down your book or magazine, and ask the speaker and other listeners to do the same.

*Respond appropriately to show that you understand:* - Murmur (“uh-huh” and “um-hmm”) and nod. Raise your eyebrows. Say words such as “Really,” “Interesting,” as well as more direct prompts: “What did you do then?” and “What did she say?” (Renukadevi, 2014: 3)

*Focus solely on what the speaker is saying:* - Try not to think about what you are going to say next. The conversation will follow a logical flow after the speaker makes her point.

*Minimize internal distractions:* - If your own thoughts keep horning in, simply let them go and continuously re-focus your attention on the speaker, much as you would during meditation.

*Keep an open mind:* - Wait until the speaker is finished before deciding that you disagree. Try not to make assumptions about what the speaker is thinking.

*Avoid letting the speaker know how you handle a similar situation:* - Unless they specifically ask for advice, assume they just need to talk it out.

*Engage yourself:* - Ask questions for clarification, but, once again, wait until the speaker has finished. That way, you won’t interrupt their train of thought. After you ask questions, paraphrase their point to make sure you didn’t misunderstand. Start with: “So you’re saying...”

Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until they finish in order that you will be able defend yourself efficiently. The speaker will feel as though their point had been made. They won’t feel the need to repeat it, and you’ll know the whole argument before you respond. Research shows that, on average, we can hear four times faster than we can talk, so we have the ability to sort ideas as they come in and be ready for more (Sanjay, 2013).

## **2.6 Factors that Affect Listening Competency**

Some researchers argue that unlike other language skill; there are a number of factors contributing to inability or ability to learn to listen in addition to those issues discussed as barriers in section 2.1.4. For instance, age has been known to be one factor (Erway, 1985). There are also some physical and psychological factors of the listener that may act as hindrance to the listener (Dandapani, 2004). What is emphasized in this research is, however, the possibility of location to be one factor that interacts with the ability of the listener. Geographical and social locations bring one into a different socio-cultural and economic context, which in turn can shape one's cognitive realm (Vijaya, C. B & S. Soundiraraj, 2013). It is based on this proposition that some believe urban students tending to be more interactive who can use their speaking-listening skills than rural students.

## **2.7 Related Research Findings on Listening Competency**

Some studies (Sanjay, 2013; Ayalew, 2012; Tesfaye, 2008) have indicated the neglect of learning the listening skill; however, the truth remains that it is a fundamental skill. For example, in Ethiopia, the listening skill has not been taken as a fundamental skill such that both teachers and students have emphasized on the teaching and learning of language forms, but not on the language use (Girma, 2005). They have been doing so may be because questions that assess students' language skills, like listening, do not appear in the national exams and/or because the communicative function of language of learners might have not been well emphasized in classroom lessons. It is not surprising, thus if studies in such a situation showed that students' listening ability has been of poor standard.

It is helpful for students to learn other language skills (Ellis, 1997). However, various studies conducted at different levels reveal that most students who completed their secondary schools and joined their tertiary level lack adequate proficiency in English language (Girma, 2005; Hailom, 1982; Melese, 1992; Geremew, 1994).

Although listening skill has such vital roles in our lives, it was regarded as an inactive skill because it was believed that listening is simply receiving language forms and it can be developed naturally while learning a foreign language (Seime, 1989; Getachew, 2002). To the contrary, Tewolde (1988) and Seime (1989) showed in their studies that the students' ability in listening skill is poor.

Tekle (2004) carried a research in which he wanted to assess the listening proficiency of high school students on authentic versus non-authentic listening comprehension materials in Sirbo Elementary School. He found out that though students were able to show a higher proficiency in authentic texts than non-authentic texts. However, his study concludes that the listening proficiency of high school students as a whole is less the minimum requirement.

In his investigation entitled “The Effect of Continuous Assessment of Listening and Speaking Skills: A Comparative Study of Urban High School Versus Rural High School Students”, Kebede (1996) indicated that there was no significant difference between the study groups on the effect of skills’ assessment. However, the analysis of the interview data showed the students who were from the urban showed progressive improvement and had more interest to actively engage in the activities that were aimed at assessing their skills.

Most of the studies carried out on EFL listening are not based on the local context. On top of this, these studies focused on students at higher educational institutions. Moreover, the researcher could not find the studies that tried to compare the listening competency of students from urban versus rural contexts. It is also noted by the researcher that no similar or related has been carried on the students of Benben High School where the researcher works. This research, therefore, aimed to assess and compare the listening competency of Goro (Urban) and Benben (Rural) grade 10 students.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This section begins by presenting the research design and the methodology employed to conduct the study. In so doing, first, it provides discussions on the research design and its relevance to the study. Second, it provides the techniques and procedures used to sample the site and subjects from whom data was obtained. Then, it continues to discuss the research methods employed to collect data including the rationale to do so. What finally comes is the discussion to show the procedures employed to gather and analyze data.

### **3.1 Research Design**

As it has been indicated in chapter one of this thesis, the main aim of this study was to assess and compare the listening competency of grade 10 students from urban and rural secondary schools. Thus, based on this aim of the study, mixed method research design was used to conduct the research and both qualitative and quantitative data collected using listening texts and a qualitative interview to assess, compare and contrast the listening competencies of urban and rural grade 10 students. This research design is recommended to offset the weakness each method would possibly have if used alone. Moreover, mixed research design was used in the current study to triangulate the findings of the study.

### **3.2 Sampling Technique and Sampling Size**

In this section, the procedures used to sample, first, schools and classrooms, for the study are given. Second, the techniques used to sample teachers and students are given.

#### **3.2.1 Sites of the Study**

Based on the comparative type of the research, the preferred sites for the study were two secondary schools. One of the study sites was from a rural area while the other one was from urban area. The study site from rural area was Benben HS whereas the study site from urban area was Goro HS based on the rationale given hereunder to sample these sites.

First, Benben HS, which is found in Arsi Zone, Sire District, in Sire town was sampled for these reasons. First, in Sire town, where the researcher lives and works, is found only a secondary school. It is Beneben HS. Thus, using convenience sampling, from the non-probability sampling method, Beneben HS was sampled. The very reason was that since the

present researcher lives in Sire town, he would have ease of access to site and subject if this school was sampled. The other reason was that it was at this school where the researcher observed and felt the problem that compelled him to conduct the study.

The other school selected for the study was Goro SS, which is found in Adama town, East Shoa Zone. In Adama town, there are three secondary schools, namely Adama, Goro and Denbela HSs. To obtain a school sample from the three, simple random sampling from probability sampling technique was used. Then, by drawing a lot, Goro HS was selected. Finally, in such a way, the two HSs were sampled to place the study in context. In such a way, the study site from the rural area became Benben HS while the study site from urban area became Goro HS.

### **3.2.2 Target Population and Participants of the Study**

The target populations of this research were Grade 10 students and all EFL teachers from the two selected schools. To obtain EFL teachers from the two schools the following procedures were considered. First, in Benben HS the number of EFL teachers were two. Both of them were sampled using comprehensive sampling. Second, in Goro HS, there were eight EFL teachers. Out of these, two teachers were selected using convenience sampling techniques since others were not available at the time when the data was collected.

The total student sample size taken from both schools numbered to 120, and this is equal to 4.5% of the total population of the two schools' students considered for the study. Subsequently, equal proportions of students were selected from the target schools. Accordingly, 60 students out of 1400 which were about (4.2%) from Goro HS, and 60 out of 1270 from Benben HS which were about 4.7% of students were selected as the sample of the study. This sample size was taken due to different reasons. In the first place, as it is widely reported in statistical studies, a sample size of 30 or more is well recognized for comparative and experimental research reports. Secondly, as the current search involves comparison of students on test achievement, doing so would be tedious and time-taking if larger sample size was preferred. The technique used to obtain student sample was simple random sampling method.

### **3.3 Instruments**

Since this study employed a mixed method design with that of comparative study type, two kinds of instruments for data collection were used to collect the appropriate data from the target groups and to triangulate the data and the results of the study. The first of this was the listening test that the sampled students took. The second was the interview guide staged for the selected teachers. As per the nature of the study, the instruments for data collection were prepared based on the literature review and related studies. In the coming subsections, discussions are given as to the types of the instruments used in the study.

#### **3.3.1 Listening Test**

The listening test questions were developed to collect the data to assess the students' competency in listening. Different items related to listening skill, namely, story listening, paragraph listening and comprehensive listening were included in the test. The three parts each contained five (5) questions. With respect to the item types, the first five items of the test were on listening consisting of, true/false items; the second section of the listening had multiple-choice items for listening comprehension. The materials for the test questions were taken from Grade 10 textbook and English newspaper entitled *India Today*, published January 16, 2002. Then, the test was recorded on audio tape by an American, a native speaker of English. The audio tape was played twice during the tests and the copy of equal question items prepared were handed to students before the tape played.

The tests were administered to the sampled students in their respective school and classrooms on the same day at the same time. To do so, the researcher himself administered and supervised the test that was given for the students at Goro High School. However, a colleague took the responsibility of doing the same task at Benben High School, where the researcher works. The test was administered once. The test were given on Monday afternoon, on March 10, 2016.. A total of 30 minutes were allowed to complete the test. The collected test papers of both groups of students were marked and the results were recorded by the researcher himself.

#### **3.3.2 Teachers' Interview**

Semi-structured interview was used because the interview was carried on the questions prepared in advance. The items for the teachers' interview consisted of five questions. While preparing the interview questions, due attention was made to encompass adequacy and

quality of listening tasks in students' text, frequency of listening assessment (by subject teachers), attitudes and interests of the students toward listening lessons and the general level of listening competency students were expected to acquire. The interview was staged for four English teachers, who were sampled from the two target schools. The key words and expressions in the teachers' responses were purposively used for the analysis.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedures**

At the very beginning, the schools' communities were approached ethically. The letter, which was written to each school from Adama Science and Technology University detailing all about the research to be carried out at the schools were handed and consent was secured. Then, the selected teachers were requested of their consent. Convenient time for data collection was set with school chapter leader and volunteer teachers. Finally, the required data was collected procedurally as follow:

First, listening test, which was comprising of multiple choices, true or false and short answer questions and set from students' own textbooks was administered as a result of these steps. The test questions were validated through evaluation of language teachers at each school. This was followed by a pilot study that was conducted on February 15, 2016 on a small scale, which considered about 15 grade 10 students from each target school. The Crobach reliability quotient of 0.89, which is highly reliable, was obtained. In the light of the teachers' constructive opinions and result the pilot study, the items were improved in terms of language, format/style and content they had. Finally, the test questions were presented to the students for testing on the scheduled day.

During the testing sessions, the students were arranged in different sitting options while listening to the audio tape. The audio tape was played or the narrator narrated twice. The listening test, which consisted three sections, comprising five minutes of play for each were played with a time interval of three minutes one after the other.

The total marks for the listening test were evaluated out of 100% on the basis of the MoE (Ministry of Education) students' achievement criteria stated as follow:

- Excellent (90-100%)
- Very Good (80-89%)
- Satisfactory (60-79%)

- Fair (50-59%) and
- Poor (0-50%)

On the other hand, to collect the interview data, subjects were given the consent form to sign. After the teachers signed the consent form, a face-to-face interview was carried out and the interview was recorded using an audio recorder. Next, the audio recorded data were transcribed for each subject on a separate sheet. Then, the key words and expressions central to the aims of the study were used as the basic input for data analysis.

The data obtained in this way were prepared for qualitative and quantitative analysis. That is, the useful data where useful narratives were made was used for qualitative analysis. That is, such narratives were used along with the test results. However, the data from similar expressions were quantified to use frequency and percentage.

In such a way, the interview data was chiefly analyzed qualitatively. However, at places where the nature of the data required quantitative analysis, the data were computed quantitatively.

### **3.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures**

The data collected from the teachers and students were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively respectively. The answers of the students to the listening test were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistical measures, such as, percentage, mean and standard deviations as these data were of interval type. Independent sample test was carried out by using Microsoft Office Excel, from Windows 8. Thus, for the description purpose of the magnitude of the difference between the students from the urban and from rural schools, t-value was required to be calculated. The analysis of the quantitative data was carried to test the research hypothesis and answer research questions ‘a’ and ‘b’ stated under Section 1.4 of chapter one.

The interview questions, on the one hand, were analyzed qualitatively and loosely by using the descriptive words and by stressing on the key expressions related to the research question. On the other hand, the key expression from the subjects’ responses were analyzed quantitatively by summarizing them in table to easily pinpoint the major trends in the responses provided.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into three major sections. In the first section of this chapter, the data collected using the listening test is presented, first, in tabular form and then, were analyzed using statistical measure of central tendency, which is, mean in this case, and measure of dispersion or the standard deviation. The t-test was also computed to examine the significance of the difference between the urban (Goro High School) and rural (Benben High School) students. The second section of the chapter deals with the analysis of the qualitative data, which was collected from the selected teachers using the semi-structured interview. The third and the final section of the chapter focus on discussion and interpretation of the findings of the study.

### **4.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data**

The first section, in which the quantitative data is to be treated, is divided in to two sub-sections, namely, the overall performance of the students (in all the three listening content areas) and comparison of the urban and rural school students listening competency. To do so, for the assessment of the students' overall performance, the data collected from both school students were summed up; the mean and the standard deviation were calculated and presented for description purpose. This is shown in tables 1-3. The three listening content areas are depicted in the subsequent tables.

Thus, the quantitative data analyzed in this section was the data collected from students' test using the test on three content area of listening. In the first table below, the sum of the total data obtained from the students at both school on story listening is presented and analyzed using the mean and standard deviation value. These statistical tools were selected since the purpose of the study was to assess and describe the performance of the students at the target urban and rural schools.

#### **4.1.1 Analysis of Overall Performance of Students in Listening Skill**

The following stated research question was answered under this section.

The analysis of the data on the overall performance of the students in the listening skill was carried out to provide answer to research Question 1 as given hereunder.

Research Question 1:

What does the overall listening competency level of grade 10 students at Goro High School and Benben High School look like in the listening of variety of content of listening texts?

*Table 4.1 Overall Competency of Rural and Urban Students in Story Listening*  
(n=120)

|                 | Question | Frequency | Mean | SD   |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|------|------|
| Listening Items | 1        | 78        | 0.65 | 0.48 |
| (1-5)           | 2        | 49        | 0.41 | 0.49 |
|                 | 3        | 55        | 0.46 | 0.50 |
|                 | 4        | 68        | 0.57 | 0.50 |
|                 | 5        | 86        | 0.72 | 0.45 |
|                 | Average  | 67        | 0.56 | 0.48 |

As Table 4.1 above shows, the number of respondents, who correctly answered the first 5 questions were 78 (65%), 49 (41%), 55 (46%), 68 (57) and 86 (72%) respectively. On the average, the number of correct responses provided to each question equals to 67 (56%). This indicates that on average, more than half of the students provided the correct answer for questions 1-5, which aimed to assess students' performance in story listening. Thus, assuming the average score of 56% for individual student, the students' performance on story listening can be equated to 'Fair' according to current evaluation criteria of MoE.

The item in which the students gave the highest correct answer to the most was item number 5, where 86 (72%) of them were correct. This was followed by item numbers 1 and 4, 78 (65%) and 68 (57%) of the test takers got correct respectively. This could probably be due to the fact that the setting of the story was adequately described by words freezing, colder, summer, and shivering in the first question. However, the students did not seem to grasp the opposite case of item 4, 68 (57%) which describes the weather as warm in contrast to item 5, 86 (72%) which correctly state the condition of the man of his being cold. Besides, the students could have deduced that when a man who had nothing left except his coat, sold the coat, that he surely did not have money.

The students were able to give relatively correct answer to item number 4,68 (57%) when compared to the other two items probably because they heard the word ‘dead’ which could not be concurrent with ‘flew away’ or because of the intonation signal provided by the speaker. As to the two items, number 2 and 3, of which correct responses were 41% and 46% respectively and the least answered, it seemed that the students were not able to figure out the contextual clues. For example, in item number 2, the students could have used the indefinite article, ‘a’ which meant one or single. This and others could have contributed to their lack of understanding and, hence, missing the correct answer.

*Table 4.2 Overall Competency of the Students in Listening Comprehension*  
(*n*=120)

|                 | Question | Frequency | Mean | SD   |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|------|------|
| Listening Items | 1        | 59        | 0.49 | 0.50 |
| (1-5)           | 2        | 77        | 0.64 | 0.50 |
|                 | 3        | 73        | 0.61 | 0.49 |
|                 | 4        | 73        | 0.49 | 0.49 |
|                 | 5        | 87        | 0.73 | 0.45 |
|                 | Average  | 73.8      | 0.59 | 0.47 |

Table 4.2 above, illustrates the overall performances of the target students on listening comprehension. The questions in this section required the students to identify associations and distinctions, synthesis or analyze information, derive logical inference, understand the purpose and attitude of the speaker. As it can be seen from the table above, the extent of correct response to the items in this section of the test (1-5) was 59 (49%), 77 (64%), 73 (61%), 73 (61%), and 87 (73%), respectively.

The question with the highest number of correct response was question number 5. The question was intended to test the competency of students on identifying a particular agent of certain action among other actors. A little bit under the majority, 87 (73%) of the students, seemed to understand this purpose of listening possibly because they were able to figure out the frequency of certain actions to the body taking those actions. Closure to two-third, 64% of

the students provided correct answer to question number 2 which required the students to identify the place where a given action was carried out.

Question number 3 and 4 each elicited equal number of responses from the examinees, 73 (61%). The third question required the students to odd out an animal from the rest depending on the issue related to it, whereas the fourth question asked for the logical and possible consequence of an occurrence. Question number one where more than half of the examinees (51%), failed to recall the manner in which certain actions were executed as stated in the listening text. Unlike the first five questions in Table 4.1 on story listening, the achievement of the students on the average was lower than the average obtained because using it was 59% for listening comprehension.

*Table 4.3 Overall Competency of the Students in Paragraph Listening (n=120)*

|                 | Question | Frequency | Mean | SD   |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|------|------|
| Listening Items | 1        | 56        | 0.47 | 0.50 |
| (1-5)           | 2        | 2         | 0.02 | 0.50 |
|                 | 3        | 12        | 0.1  | 0.49 |
|                 | 4        | 61        | 0.51 | 0.50 |
|                 | 5        | 22        | 0.18 | 0.39 |
|                 | Average  | 31        | 0.26 | 0.48 |

As to the third content of listening test, paragraph listening, the data obtained was presented and analyzed in Table 4.3 above. The overall performance of the students in paragraph listening for each item of the section, 1-5 was respectively 56 (47%), 2 (2%), 12 (10%), 61(51%) and 22 (18%). Here, with the extent of the correct responses given to item 2, 3 and 5 it could plainly be evaluated as ‘failure’. The maximum score was 61 (51%) which could also, tells us that a little bit than half of the total sample of students at the two target schools were able to provide correct answer to the question. As to Question 1, 56 (47%) of the

students, which make up clearly less than a half portion of the whole, gave the correct response.

Looking at the mean score for each item, the achieved level was much less than half (50%) except for the first item. The average score for each student was 31 (29%) which was less than a third of the optimal score expected. Thus, it was possible to evaluate the overall average performance of the students on paragraph listening as 'poor' since it was below 50%.

#### **4.1.2 Analysis of Comparison of Performance of Urban and Rural Students on Listening skill**

The data in Table 4.4 below shows the performance of the students of the target schools separately in a way that observable differences could easily be pinpointed. For the purpose of comparison and description, the mean and standard deviations were computed for the two groups of students. The aim was to describe the performance level of each in comparison to the other and report how significantly the groups differ from each other on listening competency. Thus, t-value was additionally used as a statistical tool in order to test the level of significance of the differences to be seen between the groups. For this purpose, alpha level of significance was set at ( $p < 0.05$ ). Two of the research questions were answered on the basis of the result of the analysis in the following sections.

Research Question 2:

Which category of students was more competent in listening activities, the rural or the urban?

The analysis of the overall achievement or performance of the students on all the three listening categories pointed a clearly observable difference between the students of the two schools. The average achievement of Goro (Urban) High School students was about 58% whereas that of Benben High School is 37%. There is a mean difference of 21% between them. Furthermore, according to MoE students' achievement evaluation criteria, the first achievement was 'fair' whereas the later was 'poor'.

*Table 4.4:- Comparison of Performance of Urban and Rural Students on Listening Competencies*

*(n=60)*

| Competencies/Skills        | Urban/Goro Students |      |           | Rural/Benben Students |      |           | <i>t-value</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------|-----------|-----------------------|------|-----------|----------------|
|                            | Frequency           | Mean | <i>SD</i> | Frequency             | Mean | <i>SD</i> |                |
| 1. Story Listening         | 182                 | 0.60 | 0.50      | 154                   | 0.51 | 0.50      | 1.7757         |
| 2. Listening Comprehension | 237                 | 0.79 | 0.41      | 132                   | 0.44 | 0.50      |                |
| 3. Paragraph Listening     | 104                 | 0.38 | 0.73      | 49                    | 0.16 | 0.37      |                |
| Average                    | 174.33              | 0.58 | 0.55      | 111.66                | 0.37 | 0.62      |                |

For the ease of comparison and economization of the number of tables to be used, the data presented here as a sum for each group of students on the three content areas of listening are: story listening, listening comprehension and paragraph listening. Mean and standard deviations were computed for these categories separately. The t-value was calculated based on the average mean and standard deviations using *Microsoft Office Excel, of Windows 8*.

As it can be seen from the table, urban students (Goro) achieved a total score of 182 (60%) on story listening section of the test, whereas their counterparts, Benben (Rural) achieved a total score of 154 (51%) on the same section with an observable mean score difference of 0.09 (9%). To this end, it can be argued that the groups are different on this part of the listening competency.

The listening performance of the groups of the students on listening comprehension is respectively 237 (79%) and 132 (44%) for Goro and Benben Secondary Schools. The observable mean difference between the groups is 0.35 (35%). Given the indicated standard deviation for the groups, the difference that is seen here is overwhelmingly great.

The third section of the listening test is about paragraph listening in which the students were expected to give short answers to complete a short paragraph during or after listening recalling the key information. The students from the respective schools showed a performance of 104 (35%) and 49 (16%), the former for Goro and the later for Benben.

Groups of students both students underachieved in this listening skill as these scores were much less than the average scores of 0.5 and can be evaluated as 'failure'. Looking at the difference between the groups undeniably there is a great difference (amounting to 19%, which is more than 50% of the former school students) was observed.

### Research Question 3:

How was the degree of their differences?

At the beginning of the study, it was hypothesized that there would be no difference between the mean scores of the students from the two different schools: urban and rural. The null hypothesis is stated as follow with the alternative hypothesis:

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban (Goro) and rural (Benben) secondary school students on listening competency.*

*H<sub>a</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban (Goro) and rural (Benben) secondary school students on listening competency.*

Furthermore, the average score of each group is in the first place is either less than or a bit more than 0.50% of the total score. As the data from the table shows, on average Goro(Urban) students showed overall performance of 174.33 (58%), whereas those from Benben (Rural) on average scored 112 (37%). Interestingly, here the students from Goro, which is urban school, achieved far better than the students from Benben with mean difference of (0.21) 21%. The t-value of 1.7757, which is indicated in the table, is significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

As the analysis of the quantitative data shows, when the overall performance or competency of students in English listening is taken into consideration, the students achieved less than 'Satisfactory' whether they were from urban or rural. However, when we compare these groups of students, the students from the urban school were found to be more competent than those from rural school in this case. Additionally, the difference in mean score between these two groups is statistically significant ( $M = 0.21$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ,  $t(118) = 1.7757$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

## 4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The patterns of the interviewees' responses were analyzed from the scripted note and summarized in Table 4.5 below. The patterns vary from teacher to teacher and from school to school. It was on the basis of these unique patterns that it was possible to differentiate or associate the respondents and that the analysis and discussion were carried out under the section meant for qualitative data analysis. The effort here had been to make the analysis objective by quantifying the responses in percentages. However, word description was additionally used to back up the finding as this was basically a qualitative data analysis.

*Table 4.5 Summary of the Interview Responses*

|                 | Teachers' Responses Key Words and Expressions |              |               |                     | Summary in %                                  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Questions (1-5) | Goro School                                   |              | Benben School |                     |                                               |
|                 | Teacher 1                                     | Teacher 2    | Teacher 3     | Teacher 4           |                                               |
| Q. 1            | Adequate                                      | Good         | Good          | Not good inadequate | 75 % Positive, 25% Negative                   |
| Q. 2            | Sometimes                                     | Sometimes    | Rarely        | Sometimes           | 75% Sometimes, 25% Rarely                     |
| Q. 3            | Medium                                        | Low          | Very Little   | Little              | 75% Little, 25% Medium                        |
| Q. 4            | Somewhat good                                 | I cannot Say | Not competent | Poor                | 50% Incompetent, 25% indecisive, 25% moderate |
| Q. 5            | Urban better?                                 | I'm not sure | Urban think   | Urban               | 75% Urban 25% indecisive                      |

N.B:- For the detail of the interview question items and scripted note see Appendix 2.

As the summary of the interview responses in Table 4.5 above indicates, with respect to Question One which was aimed at eliciting responses about the quality and adequacy of listening texts incorporated in the student text, (3) 75% of the teachers' responses indicated that the students' texts fulfill these requirements. The rest, 1 interviewee, whose response accounted for 25%, claimed that the listening texts contained in students' textbooks did not have attractive quality and authenticity. Furthermore, the same respondents added that the incorporated texts themselves were not adequate in amount and do lack variety of content.

Concerning the issue of listening assessment (same table), the second interview question was aimed at obtaining responses from teachers about the frequency of the assessment they carry on listening for whatever purpose they may do so. Accordingly, except 1 (25%) of the responses which was reported by 'rarely' for assessing students on listening tasks for different reasons, 3 (75%) of them, on the other hand, responded to have assessed their students on listening tasks 'sometimes'.

The third item of the interview was intended to gain understanding on the interests of students and their attitudes toward listening assessments and tasks. The semi-processed data in the above table shows that only a single response, which makes up (25%) of the total response, judged the interest and attitude of students on the issue of listening assessment and task as positively 'medium'. In spite of this, the majority of the respondents, 3 (75%), evaluated these variables to their students as 'low', 'little' or even 'very little' on the same issues.

The final question of the interview was designed with the purpose of encouraging the interviewees to rate the extent of their students listening competency on the three main content areas of the skill: story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension. The responses provided here were so divergent unlike that of the other items of the same interview set. As a result, when the data obtained to this question were reviewed, 2(50%) of the respondents rated their students as 'incompetent', the other two, 1 (25%) each of them preferred to be indecisive whereas 1 (25%) of them, on the one hand, reported students' level of competency as 'positively moderate'.

When seen in comparison, there was some difference between the responses of the teachers from the urban area (Goro HS) and rural area (Benben HS). On the first question, for instance, the two teachers from Goro HS revealed that quality listening sections and texts were included in the students' text whereas in the case of the second school only one of the teachers gave the same response concerning the quality of listening texts.

On the issue of the assessment and teaching of the listening, in response to Question 2, alike the former case, two of the teachers from the urban school commented that they 'sometimes' assess their students on different listening tasks. On the other hand, only a teacher from the rural school reported in the same manner by saying that he did it 'sometimes'. The other respondent disclosed that he rarely dealt with listening lesson. Furthermore, the three teachers

with the similar response here confessed that their effort on the teaching and assessment of the skill was not adequate, and the main reason for this was the fact that they cannot produce accent as natural as that produced by the native speakers. The second reason, which all the respondents forwarded, was that the students lacked interest, and would rather attend lessons on language forms and vocabulary.

As to the interest of their students on listening lessons, (Item 3, Table 4.5) the first two teachers who were from Goro Secondary School, responded respectively 'medium' and 'low', whereas the two others from the other school responded, 'Very little' and 'Little'. When asked about their judgment on the competency level of their students (Question 4) on listening skill, a teacher from Goro, described them as 'moderate', whereas his workmate was not able to decide.

Looking to the responses from the teachers from Benben HS a big difference could be observed since they gave 'not incompetent' and 'poor' responses. The final question of the interview was about the view of the teachers on the extent competency level of urban versus rural students. As the response pattern from the table indicates, except one of the teachers from Goro (Urban) HS the other three (75%) responded that students from urban schools were better competent at listening comprehension than those from rural schools.

#### **4.3 Discussion and Interpretation of Major Findings**

In the above section of the chapter, analysis of the overall performance of the target students on the three types of listening content in Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and 4.3 was carried out. Concerning the first question, which was aimed at assessing the listening competency level of the learners on story listening, on average 56% of them had the expected competency in the skill whereas the remaining 44% seemed to lack this competency.

As the mean value indicated, the students overall competency of the learners from both target schools was 56% and according to the evaluation criteria set by the Ministry of Education, we could say that they were 'fair'. Even though more than half of the students on average got a significant proportion of the students scored less than half of the total expected achievement. This seems that because the students were not able to use the given contextual clue in the listening text. Using of contextual clues was reported to enhance a better comprehension (Rocio, 2012; Erway, 1984).

.As to the data presented in Table 4.2 which was on the overall competency of the students in listening comprehension, the students achieved by far better than in story listening. The students seemed to understand ‘agents’ of actions, where the actions happened, and which category of the agents the texts refer to. They appeared to fail to make inference as a large proportion of them missed Item number 4, which required the learners to project their understanding beyond the text (Ayalew, 2012). Though the competency of the learners on this category of questions exceeded that of the first, their overall achievement was still only ‘fair’ based on the MoE evaluation.

On the paragraph listening section, the students achieved the mean score of 26%, which was ‘poor’ performance. In other words, only 26% of the students were able to get correct answer for all questions in this category. This may be due failure to recall information; reason out cause-effect relations through focus on the link between and among sentences in the listening paragraph.

On the comparison of the students from urban and rural sites, the students from the urban site had a better competency in listening as on all the three contents of listening they achieved. In story listening they got correct answer 60% of the time as compared to those from the rural area who got correct answers 51% of the time. On the listening comprehension the students from the rural area achieved 79% whereas those from the rural achieved 44%. On the third section of the of the listening test, the urban students achieved 38%, while the rural students achieved 16%. In all the cases listed here, the students from urban school had a better listening competency.

The statistical test, which was carried out to test the significance level of the difference in mean between these two groups of students also showed the existence of statistically significant difference.

Concerning the teachers’ interview analysis above, it could be argued that listening texts in the students’ texts were more or less attractive, had variety of content and adequate in size. Contrary to this fact:

1. Teachers only sometimes or rarely assessed students on listening tasks,
2. Students did not have interest in listening lessons (tasks) or had no good attitude toward listening tasks
3. Thus, it could be argued that the students were not competent in listening.

Comparing the same issues between the two schools:

1. Teachers from urban schools might have a better commitment in teaching and assessing the listening skill,
2. Students from urban school might be in a better position to follow listening lessons, and
3. Urban students were by far better competent in listening comprehension than rural students.

When the result of the analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative data is combined, it was possible to speculate that the overall listening competency of the students at the target schools is satisfactory or less because of possible reasons. These may including, the lack of commitment on part of the teachers to consistently teach and assess listening activities, students attitude toward listening and lack of interest to participate in listening activities (Erway,1985; Dandapani, 2004).

.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with summary, conclusion, and recommendations. In this section, first, the procedures of the study and its major findings are summarized. Second, the conclusions drawn from the fundamental findings are given. Lastly, some possible recommendations are provided based on the findings of the study.

### **5.1 Summary**

A number of research findings disclose that even though it is an important and complex language skill, listening is the most neglected area of endeavor in EFL/ESL research. On top of this, besides being supported by research, school experience itself makes it clear that both teachers and their students often ignore the teaching and assessment, and learning of listening skills. This discrepancy is especially the case in Ethiopian high schools in spite of the tremendous effort that has been exerted to adequately include listening sections with attractive contents. Besides, as research finding indicates listening is known to be influenced by different demographic factors among which the location of a given school, urban or rural, is often speculated to be a determining one.

This mixed method type of research was carried with the purpose of assessing the listening competency of Grade 10 students from an urban (Goro) high school and rural (Benben) high school and comparing the possible difference that could be observed between them. Accordingly, two instruments of data collection, namely a test and interview were developed and administered to the participants: students and their teachers at the target schools. The teachers were selected by non-probability sampling technique, where as the students were selected using simple random sampling (Lottery System). For the purpose of analysis and interpretation, statistical tools, such as, measures of location, mean and variation, standard deviation were used in addition percentage. A t-test was also used to test the significance of listening competency level between the groups of students.

Since the main purpose was to assess and make comparison on the competency of the target population of the study of interest, a listening test consisting of three sections (listening content area), namely, story listening, listening comprehension and paragraph listening texts were used as the basis tool for data collection. For the purpose of data triangulating, a

qualitative data was additionally sought where a five item interview questions were developed for the participant English teachers.

The quantitative data obtained from 120 students, 60 from each school, was analyzed quantitatively using the above-mentioned statistical tools. In order to do so, first, the scores were added for each group on sections of the test separately. Since each question was treated as a variable, a mean was calculated for the sample altogether and independently for each group as well. A value of '1' was assigned to correct answer, whereas a value of '0' was assigned to wrong answer. The value of the correct answer, and the total average scores were thus mainly used in the analysis of the data. For the sake of evaluating the performance of students, the achievement assignment criteria values by MoE (Ministry of Education) ranging from Excellent (90-100%), Very Good(80-89%), Satisfactory(60-79%) , Fair(50-59%) and Poor(< 50%) was used as a benchmark.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the current research endeavor for the research questions and hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the undertaking of the study.

The analysis of data in Table 4.1, which was intended to answer the first research question, showed that the overall average listening performance of the students at both schools was less than 'Satisfactory'. As a whole, students achieved the least on paragraph listening, which required them to attentively listen and then recall the key information in the speaker's narration to complete some gaps.

As the data analysis from Table 4.2 revealed, the students from urban area, showed a better competency level than the students did from the rural area. Thus, we could reasonably argue that urban students (Goro HS) are better competent at listening skill when compared to their counterparts, rural (Benben HS) students.

The analysis of the t-test had showed there was a significant mean difference between the target schools on the listening test. Goro High School students showed by far better performance than Benben High School in all the three categories of the test. The analysis of the interview, which was aimed for triangulation purpose, also backed up the finding.

The teachers seemed to agree on the fact that less attention was paid to the teaching and assessment of listening. Moreover, students, too, seemed discontent with listening tasks. Moreover, the teachers also had the opinion that urban school students are better at listening than the rural ones. Even though some effort had been made to shed light on the topic under investigation, it could not be, by any means a comprehensive one since the study was basically descriptive from which generalizations could not be made to other similar populations. However, it is the belief of the researcher that the current study has achieved its main objectives.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

As it had been pointed out above, this research is not a comprehensive one due to multiple of factors as stated in the introductory part. However, the finding of this research may have a number of implications for other researchers. Thus, depending on what was discussed above and on the finding that had been arrived at, the following important recommendations are made.

Since this research work is a descriptive one in nature and cannot be used to refer to other population of related or similar characteristics, other interested researcher and stakeholders in field of language education, more particularly English teachers, are expected to carry out in depth investigation on the problems students encounter during listening tasks and assessments, and to the causative factors behind. The possible remedial measures that could be taken to alleviate the problem are among others, the following:

- Other interested researchers and stakeholders in the field of language education can do this and contribute to academic work in addition to solving the current problem of teaching and assessing of listening task.
- Besides, taking a larger sample and carrying out a comprehensive analysis will enhance the confidence to replicate or generalize a finding from a population to others of similar or related characteristics

As the finding of this study indicated, students at urban location are found to be better at listening competency. This may be due to different reasons which could be attributed to different stakeholders and factors, including teachers, parents, additional educational materials and others.

- This has to be investigated in depth. EFL teachers are also expected to design attractive and adequate listening texts that can better fit the needs of students from rural areas.

Furthermore, there could be some efforts by EFL teachers, if positively pursued, which can alleviate the incompetency of our students till further investigations are carried out. Teachers have lion's share in this regard. When listening assessment was carried out for the purpose of collecting data, some students were really enthusiastic to complete the task. That could be partly because the speaker was native speaker and the selected texts were attractive.

- Therefore, teachers may use the same technique and output while teaching and assessing listening.

Finally, the researcher wants to recommend that teachers and others, including families should encourage their children to have exposure to English audio-visual media. One of the possible causes behind the better achievement of urban students could be partly the opportunity they have to listen to various audio-visual inputs produced by native speakers of English.

- Therefore, rural school students may not have access to such things. School communities may play their role in this regard. this can be done by provision of English medium tv programs and audio and video equipments.

## REFERENCES

- ABAX. (2004). *Teaching Listening Better: Is Listening Taught as Well as it*
- Ahuja, P and Ahuja, G.C. (1990). *How to Listen Better: A Hand Book for Improving your Listening Skills*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.
- Anderson, A. and Lynch, T. (1983). *Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anh, D.T, & Tanh, P.X. *Competence Based Assessment of Listening Skill for ESL Students*, in VNU Journal of Science: Education Research, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2014) 7-16 9
- Ayalew, M. (2012). *Assessment of the Practice of Listening Skill of Primary Schools in Addis Ababa*. Available online at: <http://www.academia.org>
- Bloomfield, A. et al. 2011. *What makes listening difficult?: Factors affecting second language listening comprehension*. University Of Maryland Center For Advanced Study Of Language
- Brown, H.D. (1994). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York: Prentice-Hall Regents.
- Brownell, J., 2005. *Listening, attitudes, principles and skills*. Recherche, 67: 02.
- Chiang, Ch. S., & Dunkel, P. (1992). *The effect of speech modification, prior knowledge, and listening proficiency on EFL lecture learning*. TESOL Quarterly, 26, 345-374.
- Cook, V. (2001). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press. Could be? : <http://www.abax.co.jp/listen/lindex.html>.
- Daniel Truneh. (2006). "An Assessment of the Practices of Teaching Listening Skills with Reference to Kotebe College of Teachers Education: Language Students in Focus." Unpublished M.A. Thesis. A.A.U.
- Derebsa, D. (2006). *Tension between traditional and modern teaching learning approaches in Ethiopian primary schools*, in Journal of International Cooperation in Education, Vol. 9(1), pp.123-143.AAU.
- Erway, E. (July 1984). What is Competency? In International Listening Association Journal
- Ferris, D. & Tagg, T. (1996). *Academic listening/speaking tasks for ESL students: Problems, suggestions, and implications*. TESOL Quarterly, 30, 297-320.
- Ferris, D. (1998). *Students' views of academic aural/oral skills: A comparative needs analysis*. TESOL Quarterly, 32, 289-318.

Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (1996). *Student perceptions, problems and strategies in second language lecture comprehension*. *RELC Journal*, 23, 60-80.

from <http://www.ripublication.com>

Galiva, K. and Pamela, J. (1999). *The Basics of Speech: Listening to be a Competent Communicator*. USA: Illinois.

Getahchew Baye. (2002). *Teaching Language Skills (Enal 243). Teaching Listening Skill*. A.A: Educational Media Agency.

Gilbert, M. B. (1989). *Perceptions of listening behaviors of school principals*. *School Organisation*, 9, 271- 282.

Hansan, A. (2000). *Learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems*. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 13, 137-152. Devine, T. G. 1982. *Listening skills schoolwide: Activities and programs*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. Retrieved from <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge> on 12/11/2015.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno\\_docs/distribution.asp](http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp)

Insaf, A. (2008). *Investigating the Students' Attitudes towards Using the Best Practices in English Listening in the Blended E- learning Environment*. Retrieved from [http://www.qou.edu/arabic/magazine/openEdu/issued4\\_7/research5.pdf](http://www.qou.edu/arabic/magazine/openEdu/issued4_7/research5.pdf)

Jung, T., Osterwalder, H. & Wipf, D. (2002). *Teaching and Assessing Middle-Years Students' Speaking and Listening Skills*. Arlington Avenue: Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation.

Kebede, J.(1996). *The Effect of Continuous Assessment of Listening and Speaking Skills: A Comparative Investigation on Urban Versus Rural High School Learners*. Unpublished MA Thesis. AAU.

Krashen,S.D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis*. London: Longman.

Krashen,S.D., Terrell, T.D., Ehrman, M.E., & Herzog, M. (1984). *A theoretical basis for teaching the receptive skills*. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17(4), 261-275

Lewis,M.P.(2009). *Ethnologies*. (16<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Retrieved on Septemeber 4, 2015 from *Lin Siew Eng, Abdul Rashid Mohamed and Muhammad Javed: Analysis of Students' Competency in Listening Comprehension of the English Language at Pakistani Secondary School Level*, *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 16 (3): 331-341, 2013

Long, D. R. (1990). *What you don't know can't help you: An exploratory study of background knowledge and second language listening comprehension*. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12, 65-80.

- Morley, J. (1991). "Listening Comprehension." In Celce Murcia, M. (Ed.) *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. (2nd ed.) Boston: Heinle and Heinle. Pp 81-105.
- Nadig, L. (2006). *Tips of Effective Listening*. <http://www.drading.com/selecting.htm> 2.3 Importance of the Listening Skill
- Rajeev,K.(2002).*Animal stories, family tips, in India today*,vol.320,pp.21-22,January 2002.
- Rankin, P.T., 1928. *The importance of listening ability*. The English Journal, 17(8): 623-630.
- Reichards, J.C. (1985). *The Context of Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rees, G. (2008). *Pre-Listening Activities*. Retrieved on 25/3/2008.
- Renukadevi, D. (2014). The Role of Listening in Language Acquisition; the Challenges & Strategies in Teaching Listening In International Journal of Education and Information Studies. Volume4, Number 1 pp. 59-63
- Richards, J.C. (1992). *Teaching Listening and Speaking: From Theory to Practice*. Downloaded from [http://www.int.journal/teaching\\_listening\\_and\\_speaking/](http://www.int.journal/teaching_listening_and_speaking/) /pdf
- Rixon, S. (1986). *Developing Listening Skills*. London: Mac Millan.
- Rocio, A. (2012). The importance of teaching listening and speaking skills. Unpublished MA Thesis. Complutensis University.
- Rost, M. 2002. *Teaching and Researching Listening*. London: Longman.
- Sanjay, K. J. (2013). *English in Eastern Ethiopia is learnt; not mastered*. In Journal English Language Teaching, Vol. 6, No. 4. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n4p42> doi:10.5539/elt.v6n4p42
- Saricoban, A. (1999). *The Teaching of Listening*. The Internet TESL Journal Vol V, No 12.
- Seime Kebede .(1989). "An Investigation of Listening Abilities of Bahir Dar Teachers Collage Students." Unpublished M.A. Thesis .A.A.U.
- Tekle, A. (2004). Assessment of Listening Skill on Authentic Versus Inauthentic Listening Texts: The Case of Shirka Secondary School. Unpublished MA Thesis. Haromaya University.
- Tesfaye, T. (2008). *Factors that contribute to the Problems EFL Learners Face in the Listening Skills Classroom*. Unpublished MA Paper. AAU.

- Tewolde Gebryohannes .(1988). “*A comparison of the Listening Abilities of Junior Secondary School Students with the Listening Level Required of them in their Subject Areas.*” Unpublished M.A. Thesis. A.A.U.
- Tyagi, B. (2013). Listening: An Important Skill and Its Various Aspects, In International Journal in English from [www.the-criterion.com](http://www.the-criterion.com) on 13/02/2016
- Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching Listening*. London: Longman.
- Vijaya, C. B & S. Soundiraraj. (2013). *A Study on Change in the Attitude of Students towards English. In Journal of Language Learning English Language Teaching*, Vol. 6, No.5, 2013. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n5p111>  
doi:10.5539/elt.v6n5p111
- Wolvin, A., Coakley, C. (1991). *A Survey of the Status of Listening Training in Some Fortune 500 Corporations. Communication Education*, USA.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Listening Test

##### Story Listening

A man who had wasted his fortune had nothing left but the clothes he wore. On seeing a bird that arrives in summer one spring morning he decided the weather would be warmer, so he sold his coat. The weather however turned colder the next day and killed the bird. When the shivering man saw the dead bird he moaned, "Thanks to you I am freezing."

**Instructions: You will hear a short passage two times. Listen carefully. After the second time, answer the true/false questions.**

##### True / False

1. The man had no money.       \_\_\_
2. He saw many birds.       \_\_\_
3. The weather was warm.       \_\_\_
4. The bird flew away.       \_\_\_
5. The man was cold.       \_\_\_

##### Comprehensive Listening

Many animals around the world are very rare, gorillas and tigers, for example. There is a danger that in a few years time these animals will disappear from the world forever and we will only see them in photographs. Animals like these are known as endangered species and there are laws which protect endangered species. However, some people are buying and selling rare and endangered animals on the internet.

Investigators working with an international animal charity say that people are openly buying and selling thousands of endangered animals on the internet. The investigators looked at

nearly 100 websites around the world and found a “shocking” selection of rare and endangered animals for sale. They included a Siberian tiger (\$70,000), a young gorilla (\$8,100) for sale in London, and other rare monkeys, birds, seahorses and whole turtle-shells. One of the most expensive was a two-year-old giraffe on sale for \$15,500 in the US.

**Instructions: You will hear a short passage two times. Listen carefully. After the second time, answer the multiple choice questions.**

1. How are endangered species protected?
  - a. The police protect them.
  - b. There are laws to protect them.
  - c. They have nothing to protect them.
  - d. Volunteers protect them
2. Where are endangered animals sold?
  - a. In markets around the world.
  - b. Zoos sell animals.
  - c. The internet.
  - d. None of them
3. Which animal was not found for sale on the internet?
  - a. A snake.
  - b. A tiger.
  - c. A gorilla.
  - d. A giraffe
4. If endangered animals disappear, what will be the only way to see them?
  - a. In the forest.
  - b. In a national park.
  - c. In a zoo.
  - d. In photograph
5. Who is investigating the sale of endangered animals?
  - a. Investigators and an international animal charity.
  - b. Volunteers from many different countries.
  - c. National police.
  - d. National park workers.

## **Paragraph Listening**

Dr Muhammad Atash is the Manager of Ariana, the national airline of Afghanistan. Ariana has a number of "problems", he explains. "Employees steal from the company. They give jobs to members of their family. A lot of our employees have no qualifications and many of them do not want to work. But I think we are starting to make progress."

Ariana has a very bad image. Its history is terrible. During the 25 years of war in Afghanistan, Ariana lost many of its planes. No-one wants to fly Ariana today. Its safety record is very bad and this means Ariana planes cannot fly to most European and American airports. Chartered Nations officials and foreign diplomats never take Ariana flights. Many of Ariana's 1,700 staff are corrupt, Atash says.

**Instructions: You will hear a short passage two times. Listen carefully. After the second time, answer the short answer questions.**

1. What is the name of the national airline of Afghanistan?
2. What is one of the problems that the airline faces?
3. Why does no one want to use the airline today?
4. How many staff members does the airline have?
5. Why did the airline lose many of its planes

## Appendix 2

### List of Total Scores for Sample Students from the Target Schools

| Story Listening         |          |          |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
|                         | Goro     | Benben   |
|                         | 46       | 32       |
|                         | 26       | 23       |
|                         | 25       | 30       |
|                         | 43       | 25       |
|                         | 42       | 44       |
| <b>Total</b>            | 182      | 154      |
| <b>Mean</b>             | 36.4     | 30.8     |
| <b>SD</b>               | 10.06479 | 8.228001 |
| Comprehensive Listening |          |          |
|                         | 35       | 24       |
|                         | 50       | 27       |
|                         | 44       | 29       |
|                         | 54       | 19       |
|                         | 54       | 33       |
| <b>Total</b>            | 237      | 132      |
| <b>Mean</b>             | 47.4     | 26.4     |
| <b>SD</b>               | 8.049845 | 5.272571 |
| Paragraph Listening     |          |          |
|                         | 41       | 15       |
|                         | 2        | 0        |
|                         | 9        | 3        |
|                         | 36       | 25       |
|                         | 16       | 6        |
| <b>Total</b>            | 104      | 49       |
| <b>Mean</b>             | 20.8     | 9.8      |
| <b>SD</b>               | 16.99117 | 10.18332 |

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Interview Consent Form**

I am carrying out research in order to assess the listening competency of urban and rural students and compare whether is a significant difference between the students from these schools.

I have no doubt that you would provide me with invaluable information on the subject at hand. Your privacy will not be exposed in any means. I would like to thank you for your collaboration to share your time in order to respond to my interview.

Respondents Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Job: \_\_\_\_\_

Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4**

### **Interview Guide**

First, I would like to thank you for your collaboration to share your time in order to respond to my interview. I have no doubt that you would provide me with invaluable information on the subject at hand.

1. How adequately do you think variety and attractive listening content are incorporated in students' text?
2. How often do you assess your students on listening tasks?
3. How do you view the interest of your students during and on listening tasks and assessments?
4. How do you describe your students on listening competencies (story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension)?
5. Which students do you think are better competent in listening comprehension, the urban or rural?

## **Appendix Five**

### **Interview Transcript**

Respondent 1

Researcher: Than you for your collaboration. Can we start the interview now?

Respondent: You are welcome. No problem. We can start.

Researcher: Well. How adequately do you think variety and attractive listening content are incorporated in students' text?

Respondent: I think they are adequately attractive and have some varieties from different genres such as literature, news paper and the like.

Researcher: How often do you assess your students on listening tasks?

Respondent: I only sometimes assess. You see it is not convenient to test listening. Additionally, our students do not like it. Again, we do not have audio-visual materials and our pronunciation is not good.

Researcher: How do you view the interest of your students during and on listening tasks and assessments?

Respondent: Our students' interest at listening is medium, especially when compared to other school students in the town. They are not grammar focused.

Researcher: How do you describe your students on listening competencies (story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension)?

Respondent: Somewhat good . I think some of the students have good understanding and interest. They want to listen when they find opportchaptery.

Researcher: Which students do you think are better competent in listening comprehension, the urban or rural?

Respondent: I guess students from urban better competent that students from rural areas. The students from rural areas are usually good at grammar and reading. Urban students, on the other hand, out do in vocabulary, speaking and listening.

## **Respondent 2**

Researcher: How adequately do you think variety and attractive listening content are incorporated in students' text?

Respondent: It is good because some listening texts are taken from real and authentic lif experiences that can attract students.

Researcher: How often do you assess your students on listening tasks?

Respondent: I sometimes assess my students on listening especially when students seem to be happy with the selected topic and text for listening comprehension.

Researcher: How do you view the interest of your students during and on listening tasks and assessments?

Respondent: The interests of our students, so to speak truth, is low when seen in comparison to other skills and language activities.

Researcher: How do you describe your students on listening competencies (story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension)?

Respondent: I can't say... It is difficult to decide.

Researcher: Which students do you think are better competent in listening comprehension, the urban or rural?

Respondent: I am sorry, I can't be sure here to speak about this. I have been teaching in urban area and have little information about the performance of students from rural students on listening performance.

### **Respondent 3**

Researcher: How adequately do you think variety and attractive listening content are incorporated in students' text?

Respondent: I think the texts are good with attractiveness and incorporation of variety of contents even though we do not teach them to our students.

Researcher: How often do you assess your students on listening tasks?

Respondent: We rarely assess our students in listening. That is mainly due to our problem and the students also do not want listening activities let alone being assessed.

Researcher: How do you view the interest of your students during and on listening tasks and assessments?

Respondent: The interest of our students' as I told you before is very little when we talk about listening activities. So, we simply jump listening activity section.

Researcher: How do you describe your students on listening competencies (story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension)?

Respondent: They are not competent- it is obvious.

Researcher: Which students do you think are better competent in listening comprehension, the urban or rural?

Respondent: I have no doubt. The urban students are competent enough to do and be assessed on listening tasks.

### **Respondent 4**

Researcher: How adequately do you think variety and attractive listening content are incorporated in students' text?

Respondent: They are not good and adequate in content variety and attractiveness. They are long and unattractive. They have also some difficult words that students can find meaning for easily. Another reason for which I only sometimes assess is the fact that we as a whole have native accent.

Researcher: How often do you assess your students on listening tasks?

Respondent: Sometimes, I assess my students when I have time to cover annual lesson.

Researcher: How do you view the interest of your students during and on listening tasks and assessments?

Respondent: Oh, they have little interest. The majority of the students hate to follow listening activities. They sleep or talk about topic of their interest leaving behind the topic of the lesson.

Researcher: How do you describe your students on listening competencies (story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension)?

Respondent: Our students are so poor in listening competency.

Researcher: Which students do you think are better competent in listening comprehension, the urban or rural?

Respondent: I am sure urban students are better in listening than rural students. Urban students have a number of opportunities to listen to different media.