The Role of Folktales and Short Stories in Teaching Listening: The Case of Oromo Language

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Abstract:
The main purpose of this study was to examine the role of literary texts (folktales and short stories) in teaching listening. The study involved three government secondary schools namely Jiren, Aba Buna and Seto Semero in Jimma Zone in the 2014/15 academic year. For the purpose of interventions listening skills activities were set from folktales and short stories. The task preparation was rooted in a language based approach and socio-cultural language learning theory. During the intervention in-class observation notes and non-participant classroom observation was conducted by the researcher to see the implementation process and students’ performance in the actual classroom. The students’ listening performance was examined through pre-test and post-tests. To get students’ opinion about the role of prose narratives in the teaching-learning of listening in the Oromo Language class, questionnaires were administered to the students in the experimental group. For a similar purpose semi-structured interviews were conducted with randomly selected students and Oromo Language teachers. The data gathered through listening tests were analyzed by using SPSS. In this method an independent samples t-test was employed. The analysis revealed that both the experimental and control groups were almost equal in listening performance at the beginning of the experiment. However, after the treatment, the analyses of data indicated that the experimental group outscored significantly (p < 0.05). The major findings of the study showed that prose narratives (folktales and short stories) play an important role in the teaching of listening skills in grade ten Oromo Language classes.

Key words: Oromo Language, literature, folktales, short stories, listening skills

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of literature is seen from different points of view. Putting the notion of literature in a single term is not appropriate, because literature does not lend itself to a single tidy definition since its evolution over the centuries has been as complex, heavy, and natural as life itself (Meyer 2005). Moody (1971) defines it as an umbrella term, that is used to express in words some special aspects of the human experience. Furthermore, Lombardi (2013) defines literature as a work that uses creative thinking in expressing thoughts and ideas. Meyer also explains literature as fiction consisting of carefully arranged words designed to show imagination, stories, poems, and plays. These genres represent imagination based on actual historical events. Imaginative writing differs from other kinds of writing. Like other art forms, imaginative literature offers pleasure and usually attempts to convey a perspective, mood, feeling, or experience. Writers transform the facts the world provides people, places, and objects into experiences that suggest meanings (Meyer, 2005). Literature also includes the oral traditions, legends, myths and saga from classical time’s right through to the folktales’ of non-literate societies. Literature further includes our own living tradition of children’s games, songs and stories. One way one can distinguish literature from history is by the language use. Literature is art; literature is literature not because of what is written about but because of the artistic point of view, the artist’s transformation of ideas and notions (Obi, 2010). From different reflections, the concept of literature is refers to an art, imagination, fictional, in the form of spoken or written work. In all these forms, the raw material of literature is language either written or spoken. In general, language and literature are entwined entities. Literature reflects language and literary experiences are impossible without language. These two prominent aspects are interwoven with human life at large. The existence of a speech community is demonstrated only when it is able to express its literature and experiences in its own language. The society expresses its accumulated experiences and passions like love, appreciation, hatred, gratitude, apology, etc. through literature. Thus literature can be seen as the sum total of human experience reflected through language. In using literature students are significantly benefited in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, and changing views towards native and target societies. Therefore, the main aim of the present study was realizing these functions specifically the functions of folktales and short stories in Oromo Language teaching. The Oromo speak Oromo Language, an Afro-Asiatic language and the most widely spoken language of the Eastern Cushitic linguistic sub-phyllum (Tilahun, 2006; Bender, 1976). According to Gada (1988) and Hamid (1995) the Oromo Language is the third most widely spoken language in Africa next to Arabic and Hausa.

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to examine the role of folktales and short stories in teaching listening skills in grade ten Oromo Language class. The research questions were as follows:

1. How can folktales and short stories serve as a resource for teaching listening skills?
2. What are the pedagogical advantages of folktales and short stories in teaching listening skills in the Oromo Language classroom?

3. What activities can be designed based on folktales and short stories to develop listening skills in Oromo Language?

4. What are the effects of folktales and short stories in promoting grade ten students’ listening skills in the Oromo Language class?

5. What is the view of students towards using folktales and short stories in teaching listening skills in the Oromo Language classroom?

Review of Related Literature

This section deals with the idea of literature in language teaching from the perspectives of different scholars.

Folktales

Folktales form one of the genres of prose narratives. Ruth (1984, p.163) describes a folktale as, “The prose narrative genre” of oral literature while Bascom (1965, p. 4) says folktales are prose narratives regarded as fiction. They are not considered as dogma or history, they may or may not have happened, and they are not to be taken seriously. Folktales may be set in any time and any place and in this sense they are almost timeless and placeless. Furthermore, a folktale especially the common type of tale follows conventions such as formulaic beginning and ending (“Once upon a time . . .” “. . . they lived happily ever after”), a setting not highly particularized in terms of time or place, flat and often stock characters, animal or human, and fairly simple plots (Kennedy and Gioia, 2007). Folktales provide a good source for language teaching. Kachru (1991) asserts that folktales sensitize the learners to language skills and should be employed by the teacher in the language class. Apart from inculcating certain cultural values in the learners, folktales offer them a variety of speech forms which he/she can imitate to greater communication efficiency. At the point where the child considers folktales as language, the literary genre further facilitates language learning In similar ways, Courtney (1974) pointed to the educational values of folktales showing that there is a similarity between ancient thinking and the thought of childhood, and that folktales make direct appeals to the thought of the child because they evoke the elements of man’s curious nature. Recall of folktales has such a compelling force on the child as would induce him to learn in order to become a complete human being. The impressions that folktales create in the minds of children often last long. For example, May (1998) repeated that children experience the least difficulty when they have to retell their favorite folktales earlier read to them by their teacher. In this observation, the understandability of the folktale emerges from the familiarity of the folktales with students’ experience.

Short Stories

Short stories are works of prose fiction, which are shorter than the novel, more restricted in characters and situations. The structure of a short story is usually concerned with not more than a few effects, problems or themes. In terms of character development, generally, a single aspect of a character’s personality undergoes change or is revealed because of some incidents, confrontation or conflict. A short story usually concentrates on a single character involved in a single event. The turning point in action (climax, the point of highest interest or of highest tension) may occur at the very end. This point may or may not involve denouement (the explanation or resolution of the complications of the story) (Kennedy and Gioia, 2007). Short fiction is a great resource for observing not only language but also life itself. In short fiction, characters act out all the real and symbolic acts people carry out in daily lives, and do so in a variety of registers and tones. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives. In brief, the use of a short story seems to be a very helpful technique in today’s language classes. As it is short, it makes the students’ reading task and the teacher’s coverage easier. An important feature of short fiction is its being universal. To put it differently, students all over the world have experienced stories and can relate to them. Moreover, short fiction, like all other types of literature, makes contribution to the development of cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment (Sage, 1987). Likewise, short stories allow language teachers to teach language skills at all levels of language proficiency. Murdoch (2002, p.9) indicates that “short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance students language.” According to him, short stories could be very beneficial materials in language teaching reinforcement when used in learning activities such as, discussion, individual work and group work. They also enable a student-centered approach that allows more exploration of the short story, offers the students more opportunities to formulate their own ideas or feelings about issue(s) as well as to improve their basic skills in the language learning process. To employ various learning styles, it is necessary to devise various kinds of tasks and activities. In developing such activities the short story comes in as useful resource.

II. The Rationale for Using Prose Narratives (folktales and short stories) in Language Teaching

Authenticity

Literary texts expose learners to fresh themes and authentic language. In this sense, “a literary text is authentic text, real language in context, to which we can respond directly” (Brunfitt and Carter, 1986, p.15). This quality appears to make literature suitable and valuable to language teaching in many contexts and cultures. Such a text securely grips the reader’s imagination and makes scopes for the examination of the language. In addition, since literary texts contain language intended for native speakers, literature stands as a model for language learners to become familiar with different forms and conventions (Collie and Slater, 1991).Authenticity is a criterion considered highly essential in the current literature in language teaching (Khatib, et al., 2011). The learners are exposed to actual language samples from real life and literature acts as a beneficial complement to such materials. Authentic texts are real - life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes. Peacock (1997) says the purpose of producing this material is to fulfill some social purpose in the language community. The sources of authentic materials that can be used in the language class are infinite and Berardo, (2006)
proposes four factors worth taking into consideration when choosing authentic material for the classroom. These factors are suitability of content, exploitability, readability and presentation. He believes that the main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom include a positive effect on student motivation; authentic cultural information, exposure to real language, relevance to students’ needs and conditions for a more creative approach to teaching.

Cultural and Language Enrichment

Literature promotes cultural understanding and awareness. Literary materials are effective when teaching culture to first/second/foreign language students. Literature transmits the culture of the people about whom the stories are written. By learning about the culture, students learn about the past and present, and about peoples’ customs and traditions. Culture teaches students to understand and respect peoples’ differences. When using literary texts, instructors must be aware that the culture of the people (if different from that of the students’) for whom the text was written should be studied. As students face a new culture, they become more aware of their own culture. They start comparing their culture to the other culture to see whether they find similarities and/or differences between the two cultures. Thus, literature has the power to promote greater tolerance for cultural differences for both the teacher and the students (McKay, 1986). According to Maley (1989), literature deals with universal concepts such as love, hatred, death, nature, etc. that are common to all languages and cultures. The similarities and even differences between cultures and languages can further our understanding of the world. Collie and Slater (1991) conclude that reading or using a literary text is one of the ways of helping students to imagine how life is like in other societies and enables them to gain useful and often surprising perceptions about how the members of a society might describe or evaluate their experience. By reading literary works, learners learn to see the world through a different perspective, observing differences in human values and life styles. They will understand and become broadly aware of the social, political, historical, and cultural events happening in a certain society. Through literature, learners can deepen their cultural understanding since culture is embedded in literature. Language and culture is inseparable, interdependent, and interactive (Damen, 1987). According to Valdes (1986, p.137) "one of the major functions of literature is to serve as a medium to transmit the culture of the people who speak the language in which it is written.” Therefore, language and culture are bound and inextricably tied together and it is quite impossible to learn the language without learning the culture (Alptekin, 1993).

Motivation

The other advantage of literature, which is highlighted here, is its impetus to bring about desirable motivation on the part of the learners. Literature is a voyage of discovery since it abounds with different new experiences all of which are applicable to real world situations. When something is pertinent to real life situations, it arouses interest and enthusiasm in learners; consequently, they become motivated and immerse in the experiences of any kind they wish (Tina et al., 2007). Literature is more likely to engage and motivate a learner than artificial teaching inputs because it is generated by some genuine impulse on the part of the writer and deals with subjects and themes that may be of interest to the learner (Duff and Maley 1991). If students are highly motivated and if they find what they are learning is of great interest and relevance to them, they can learn the language better (Kramsch, 1993). From the reflections of different scholars, literary texts are very motivating due to their authenticity and the meaningful context they provide. Also from the researcher’s experiences, students are highly motivated when they are exposed to literary texts in Oromo Language learning. It could also magnify a visually aesthetic experience in the learners. Therefore, learners’ motivation is augmented, and learning is facilitated as a result.

Personal Involvement

Literature can be used as an important tool to educate a reader to become a whole person. It can also be a helpful tool in the language learning process since it fosters personal involvement in the readers (Collie and Slater, 1991). Encouraging students to explore a literary text imaginatively enables them to start to inhabit the artificial world of the text and exert effort to find out what happens as events unfold and share their emotional responses. McRae (1997) also shares this perspective and says that any kind of literary work can evoke a reaction and response from anyone who reads it. In order to provoke a reaction and response, the initial stimulus must attract the receiver’s attention sufficiently to communicate something. A response generated if this expression reaches the receiver at a particular level of involvement or interest. Then a kind of interaction can begin between the receiver and the text. As Maley (2001) points out, the use of literature to teach language can often also open the way for an enlargement of literary understanding and sensitivity. He adds that literary texts invite multiple interpretations. This perspective is shared by Carter, et al. (1989) when they say that ambiguities and indeterminacies in experience are preserved, thus providing many natural opportunities for discussion and for resolution of differing interpretations. Literary texts generate many questions about what means what and how things come to mean what they mean. According to Brumfit and Carter (1986) literary texts provide examples of language resources being used to the full, and the reader is placed in an active interactional role in working with and making sense of this language. According to McKay (1982) in aesthetic reading, the experience is primary and what is important to a reader in aesthetic reading is enjoyment attained by interacting with the text. McRae (1997) also believes that representational teaching and learning will help to promote students’ thinking ability.

Literary Material Selection for the Language Class

When selecting the literary texts to use in language classes, it is important to take into account language level, subject matter, interest, and background knowledge of the students (Collie and Slater, 1991, Carter and Long, 1991).

Language Level

The language difficulty level of literary texts has to be considered, because as Carter and Long (1991) explain, students might feel de-motivated if they cannot attain a basic level of
comprehension. They suggest that generally it is important to choose literary texts as resources that are not too far beyond the students’ normal reading comprehension. Little wood (1986) argues that students might not appreciate literary works if they are not linguistically ready to meet the demands presented by the texts. As McRae (1997, p. 46) explains, “the student gains a great deal of confidence if he or she can get through to the end of the text, then do the task, or answer question, set on it.” Therefore, it is necessary to select literary texts that consist largely of words or expressions sufficiently familiar to the students. The text should be short with understandable sentences combined in clear textual cohesion. If the language of the text is too difficult and it departs much from the usual norms of language use, or includes a great deal of metaphors, students might not be able to cope with. Students might find the text useful and enjoy reading it if the language of the text is standard and free from dialectal entanglements.

**Subject Matter**

Similarly, it is important to pay heed to subject matter issues during text selection. There is a strong possibility that one studies literature because he/she wishes either to learn the language or the culture of the society in which it is written. Hill (1992, p. 146) proposes that the subject matter of the text needs to deal with events or experiences, which the reader has been through. The events and experiences of the texts should not fall outside the reader’s life experience. “It is not essential that the reader should have actually experienced in a text to make it accessible. This would render inaccessible …I mean rather that the reader must look at a literary text as exemplifying situations that would occur in real life.” Carter and Long (1991, p.142) share the perspective that the theme of the text must relate to some extent to the country or culture of the reader. If it is unrelated to the culture of the reader, they may not be able to acquire the background knowledge of the text. In this context subject matter is not the theme of the literary text; it generally refers to the language through which the text is presented. It is about construction and the ease of deconstruction for a particular level. This is not however tantamount to requiring that there should be easy and exact correspondence between the classroom language and the literary work selected to teach the language. The focus of the teacher should be the language in which the text is written. To do so, before selecting the literary text the teacher should know the content of the teaching material to be used for teaching the language and its objectives.

**Interest**

Additionally, to have an appropriate literary text for use in the language classroom, it is crucial to select texts which are interesting and relevant to students’ own experience so that personal involvement and individual response, which are useful factors to stimulate students’ learning motivation, can be obtained. Collie and Slater (1991) suggest that we should also consider whether a particular literary work is able to stimulate the kind of personal involvement, arouse the learners’ interest and provoke strong, positive reactions from them. The two scholars further claim that if the work is meaningful and enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learners’ linguistic and cultural knowledge. McRae (1996) argues that the relevance of literary texts to concerned students’ interest is very important since the function they serve in the language classroom is to motivate and stimulate interest.

**Background Knowledge**

During the process of material selection, it is important to think about students’ background knowledge. To be correct in literary text selection, knowing students pre-knowledge is very important. It is important to consider how much background knowledge students need to interact with the text ordinarily it is important that they have at least a basic understanding of the text.

**Prose Narratives (folktales and short stories) and Listening Skills**

Listening is about identifying and understanding what others are saying. For learners, listening is how spoken language becomes input (i.e., it is the first stage of learning a new language). In the classroom, this happens by listening to the teacher, a CD, or other learners. It is the process of interpreting oral messages (Saricoban, 1999). It is also aimed at helping pupils to listen carefully to get things done, to derive pleasure, learn moral lessons and gather facts and information, among other things. With particular reference to prose based listening one may exploit the stories in the class, after they have been prepared based on estimations of students’ understanding and included in teaching materials in writing or in the form of recordings. For listening purposes, the learners can be exposed to the audio or oral versions of folktales, legends, short stories and novels (Erkaya, 2005). Stories can develop all children’s skills by addressing universal themes which go beyond the useful level of basic dialogues and daily activities. They allow learners to play with ideas and feelings and to think about issues which are important and relevant to them. They also provide ideal opportunities for presenting cultural information and encouraging cross-cultural comparison (Ellis and Brewster, 2002). The learners always have a purpose for listening. They listen in different ways based on their purpose. Having a purpose helps them listen more effectively. The teacher can help students listen more effectively if he/she spends some time teaching them about purposes for listening. Students listen for different purposes (1) for main ideas, (2) for details, and (3) making inferences. Listening for main ideas means that the listener wants to get a general idea of what is being said. Listening for details is something we do every day. A third important reason for listening is making inferences. Speakers do not always say exactly what they mean. That is, important aspects of meaning are sometimes implied rather than stated. Listeners have to “listen between the lines” to figure out what really is meant. This helps students develop a sense of why they listen and which skill to use to listen better (Mally and Chamot, 1990). “One way of helping students to become attentive listeners is to give them a specific purpose for listening. For instance, by giving specific questions and asking students to listen for the answer to these questions.”

**Pedagogical Principles of Teaching Listening**

verall, there is general agreement among scholars that a three-stage approach is
the most effective way to present listening activities through literature. These stages are: pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening (Flynn et al, 2004). Pre-listening stage introduces the story and motivates the students in order to make the story comprehensible through various tasks. Students are assisted to activate their schema, and relate the story to their own experience using various techniques, such as brainstorming events, characters, feelings, etc., and predicting the content of the story from the title. The creation of a mental set at this stage facilitates access to the folktales and short story to be learned. Pre-listening activities or activities that precede the listening passage should prepare the students for the comprehension task by activating their vocabulary and background knowledge or by providing the students with the information needed to comprehend the content of the listening text (Dunkel, 1986). It is just as important to give the students the opportunity to use what they already know—prior knowledge—to help them do the task. This may take the form of having them say some points or answer the pre-listening activities. It really doesn’t matter whether the answer is correct or not because activating prior knowledge, in addition to helping comprehension, motivates students by bringing their lives into the lesson. At the while-listening stage, students’ attention is directed to a study of the theme and the language of the stories through different student-centered activities in order to help the students understand the meaning of the story. In analyzing the stories, the kind of technique utilized depends on the characteristics of each text. Each story will be exploited in a more communicative or student-centered manner and students will be encouraged to participate in the creation of meaning. Listening activities should help the students develop the skill of extracting meaning from the speech stream. Post-listening stage comprises a variety of integrative tasks. Students are provided with a focused purpose to help them imagine that they will produce a writing task relevant to the theme of the story from the story heard. Therefore, each story is extended with some follow-up tasks to consolidate the students’ language knowledge, improve their creative/academic writing skill, to enable the students to connect the story with their own life. Post listening activities or activities that follow the listening passage, on the other hand, consist of extensions and developments of the listening task; they may emphasize cultural themes and socio-linguistic aspects related to the materials (Underwood, 1989).

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Method

This research follows mixed research methods. Mixed research is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Using both in combinations provides a better understanding of the research problem than either method by itself.

Research Design

In this study, quasi-experimental non randomized control group pretest-posttest design was employed. The following diagram shows a quasi-experimental non-randomized control group pretest-posttest design proposed by (Ellis & Levy, 2011, p.157).

Table 1. Research Desing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (t)</th>
<th>t1</th>
<th>t2</th>
<th>t3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Tx</td>
<td>M_A1</td>
<td>M_A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-randomly Assinged</th>
<th>Group A (The Experimental Group)</th>
<th>M_A1</th>
<th>T_x</th>
<th>M_A3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group B (The Control Group)</td>
<td>M_B1</td>
<td>-NO-</td>
<td>M_B3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concept in the above design shows the experimental group (Group A), is the group that undergoes the treatment (Tx), while the control group (Group B), is the group that received no treatment at all and serves as the benchmarking point of comparison. At the beginning of the treatment both groups (M_A1 and M_B1) showed similar results in the pre-test, whereas in the post test measure (M_A3 and M_B3) the groups showed significant mean differences with the experimental group outperforming.

Sampling techniques: From the total population planned for the study, representatives were selected to generalize about the target population. From the total of twenty seven secondary schools found in Jimma Zone three schools (forming 11%) namely, Jiren Secondary School, Seto Semero Secondary School and Aba Buna Secondary School were selected. For the selection convenience sampling method was used. The participants of this study and the source of data were tenth grade students and teachers of Oromo Language in Jimma Zone. In more specific terms, the participants were purposively selected students and teachers of Jiren, Seto Semero and Aba Buna Secondary Schools in the academic year of 2014/2015. From the general population (2,222), 360 (16%) of the students participated in the study and
from the total of 15 teachers in three schools six (43%) were participated.

**Research Instruments:** The study utilizes a mode of triangulation in which diverse data was collected using distinct data collection instruments such as pre-test and post-test, questionnaire, observation and interview.

**Pilot Study:** A pilot study was carried out on 40 students at Jiren secondary school. An analysis using the reliability test – Cronbach’s Alpha (α) was conducted to ensure the reliability of the constructs. The reliability of all question items in the questionnaire was at a high level, depicting 0.822. As for the two main constructs in the questionnaire, both constructs indicated a fairly high reliability that is 0.864 and 0.801, respectively.

**Data Analysis and Procedures:** The study required quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Descriptive statistical analysis, SPSS Version 20 –and the Independent Samples T-Test were used for the quantitative data. Classroom observation field notes were compiled. Each observation was summarized and compared in order to draw appropriate conclusions and interpretations. The interview transcripts were grouped, coded and verbatim from the transcripts and were quoted to strengthen the basis of argument during the data analysis.

**Discussion and Findings:** To develop listening skills using folktales and short stories, teachers can do the followings: Folktales and short stories were selected based on students’ understanding and background. From the selected stories, different listening activities were designed and used for teaching listening skills in the Oromo Language class. The teacher can read the story out loud so students have the opportunity to listen or play the story if a recording is available. The result of the application indicates, students enjoyed the activities and participated avidly. The class was very entertaining and the reactions of the students to the overall activities were also exciting. This in turn resulted in students’ good performance in listening. This also has been reflected in the difference between pre and post intervention tests.

**Table 1. The Difference between Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups of Jiren Secondary School Students on Listening Skills Pre-Test and post-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. D</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64.87</td>
<td>10.752</td>
<td>1.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>65.05</td>
<td>11.676</td>
<td>1.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71.34</td>
<td>9.123</td>
<td>1.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>66.04</td>
<td>11.898</td>
<td>1.499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data pertaining to the experimental and control groups’ performance in the listening skills pre-test and post test is presented. As can be seen from the table, the two groups obtained similar scores on the pre-test. The descriptive analysis indicates that the mean score of the experimental group on the pre-listening test is 64.87 and the standard deviation is 10.752, whereas the mean score of the control group is 65.05 and the standard deviation is 11.676. This reveals that students in both groups had similar levels of listening proficiency. However, the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the listening skills post-test depicts the mean score of the experimental group 71.34 and the standard deviation 9.123, while the mean score of the control group was 66.04 and the standard deviation was 11.898. This shows that there is a difference between the mean scores of Jiren Secondary School students of the experimental and control groups in the listening skills post-test.

**Table 2. Independent Samples Test: T-Test for Significance of Means Difference between Experimental and Control Group of Jiren Secondary School Students on Listening Skills Pre-Test and post-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% confidence interval of the d/ce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test Equal variance Assumed</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 on the independent samples t-test also shows the p-value (probability value) of 0.929 which is higher than 0.05 alpha levels. If the value of p is more than the value of alpha it indicates the similarity of variables. Thus the pre-test listening skill indicates that the two groups obtained similar scores on the pre-test. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the control and experimental groups in the entry performance at the beginning of the study. But, the independent samples test for the post test shows the significance value or p-value is 0.006 which is low at 0.05 of alpha level. The independent samples test mean difference shows that there is a significant difference between the subjects of Jiren Secondary School students of experimental and control groups in the post-test listening scores favoring the experimental group.

Table 3. Difference between Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups of Aba Buna Secondary School Students on Listening Skills Pre-Test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. D</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Experimental group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>11.810</td>
<td>1.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Control group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65.21</td>
<td>11.140</td>
<td>1.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Experimental group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75.18</td>
<td>11.194</td>
<td>1.445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Control group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66.75</td>
<td>10.957</td>
<td>1.415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows a comparison of the mean scores obtained by the subjects of the experimental and control groups in the pre and post-testing of listening skills. The mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in pre-test are 66.27 and 65.21 while the standard deviation is 11.810 and 11.140 respectively. Thus, the two groups of Aba Buna Secondary School students are similar in their listening skills performance at the entry level. The standard deviation also indicates the similarity of the students’ scores at the beginning of the study. However, the result of post-test indicates the difference between the two groups of Aba Buna Secondary School students. The mean score of the experimental and control groups on listening skills is 75.18 and 66.75 respectively. The standard deviation is 11.194 for the experimental and 10.957 for the control group. Hence, the difference may be attributed to the use of folktales and short stories based activities in the experimental group that helped them to outperform in their listening skills.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test: T-Test for Significance Difference between Experimental and Control Groups of Aba Buna Secondary School Students on listening skills Pre-Test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in table 4 on the independent samples test also shows that the t-value is 0.505, and the p-value 0.615, which is higher than 0.05 alpha levels, indicates the similarity of the variables. Hence, the pre-test of the listening skills indicates the two classes obtained similar scores. This shows that there is no significant difference between the subjects of control and the experimental group of Aba Buna Secondary School students in the entry performance of listening skills at the beginning of the study. In the same table the independent samples test reflects the significance value or p-value is 0 which is low at 0.05 of alpha level. The independent samples test mean difference of post-test listening performance shows that there is a significant difference between the students of the experimental and control groups of Aba Buna Secondary School with the experimental group making better gains.
The experimental group in the three schools increased listening skills, the listening performance of the experimental group in the results of the test analysis with regard to students' participation, motivation (develop imagination, arouse curiosity, draw on personal experience), and potential for skill development, language practice, recycling, and learning the target and other cultures is to be recommended. In the same way Rivers (1981) argues that choosing texts relevant to the real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner is of great importance, since students listen to and enjoy a text if the subject-matter of the text is relevant to their life experience and interests. When folktales and short stories are used as source material for language teaching, the focus of attention needs to be considering appropriate language level (vocabulary, structures), content (interesting, fun, motivating, memorable, encourages participation), motivation (develop imagination, arouse curiosity, draw on personal experience), and potential for skill development, language practice, recycling, and learning.
the advantage of the interesting nature of the texts. This helps to create motivation in students, and devise activities suitable to their proficiency level. Our primary concern should be to ensure that students interact with the text and with each other. This interaction will lead to language learning and literary understanding which can be gained from their involvement in and engagement with the texts (Maley, 1989). Likewise, Stern (1991); Belcher & Hirvela (2000); Erkaya, (2005) assert that literature (folktales and short story) can be a medium through which these [language skills] can be addressed and these genres can improve language skills. Moreover, the result of data from classroom intervention, questionnaire and interview, indicates folktales and short stories have pedagogical functions in teaching listening skills. The activities developed from the two genres made students participatory, motivating, letting students think critically and providing information about the culture in which the language is written. When the activities were practiced in the classroom, the learners showed good levels of participation in each activity and appeared motivated. They also had positive perceptions about the pedagogical role of both stories.

**Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Scores on Students’ View towards the Role of Folktales and Short Stories in Listening Skills Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements about the listening activities practiced based on the texts, and students sentiment during the practices</th>
<th>1=Strongly agree</th>
<th>2=Agree</th>
<th>3=Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4=Disagree</th>
<th>5=Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have practiced giving short answers, gap-filling, chart completions, matching, and multiple choices activities in listening class.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven’t practiced re-narrating the stories heard during the listening class.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The texts for teaching encourage me to listen, understand and explain a given text in the future.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The exercises on listening are not boring. So, it entertains me during the practice.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I faced difficulty to memorize what is described in the text during the practice of listening activities.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on the present class, I can say the activities from the texts are understandable for practicing listening skill.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To measure the opinion of the students about the role of folktales and short stories in developing listening skills, different statements were constructed and distributed to the students. From the data in table 5.13, about 57.6% reported strong agreement,  40.6% agreement, 1.2% showed neutrality and 0.6% disagreement. The median of the item is 5, which shows strong agreements these folktales and short stories are suitable in practicing listening tasks. The value of the median corresponds to the actual value of ‘strongly agree’. This also confirms the students’ support for the idea of using literature in the Oromo Language class. Furthermore, the distribution of scores for item two shows that, 43.5% disagreed, 28.8% neither agreed nor disagreed, 23.5% strongly disagreed, and 4.1% agreed and the median is 2. Together the evidences suggest that the students’ concept predominantly reject the view that “texts used for teaching listening do not help to practice re-narrating activities.” The median is equal to the actual value of ‘disagree’ thus suggesting a similar symmetrical distribution. Therefore, the students see the advantage of folktales and short stories in helping in the practice of re-narrating a story. In the same table, the distribution of the scores for item three indicates 43.5% agreed, 40.6% strongly agreed 31.2% strongly disagreed, 10.6% neutral, and 4.1% disagreed. The median of the item, which is 4, also suggests symmetrical distribution with the real value of
‘agree’. This shows students’ agreement that folktales and short stories motivate the learner to listen to and explain about a given text in the future. Likewise, the median of item four is 5, shows a symmetrical value of ‘strongly agree’ that most of the students’ marked. About 48.2% of the respondents expressed strong agreement, 39.4% agreement, 8.2% neutrality, 2.4% strongly disagreement and 1.8% disagreement about the life-relevance of the literature utilized. This in other words shows the general agreement of the students with the function of folktales and short stories in dealing with every aspect of life that can aid practicing listening skills. Similarly, in response to statement five the students commented on the entertaining function of folktales and short stories in the learning of listening skills. Of the total respondents, 54.7% expressed strong agreement, 40.6% agreement, 4.1% neutrality, 0.6% disagreement. Additionally, the median value of 5 implies that the students believe folktales and short stories can serve to entertain. The distribution is also positively symmetrical. On the other hand, 37.1% disagreed, 29.4% strongly disagreed, 21.2% were neutral, 10% agreed, 2.4% strongly agreed in reference to statement six. This indicates students’ do not believe story based texts are difficult to recall in listening skills activities, the similar value of median, value of 2 with ‘strongly disagree’ also strengthens the inference. Finally, the table also illustrates students’ view towards the suitability of folktales and short stories for learning listening skills. The scores were 54.7% agreed, 42.9% strongly agreed, 2.4% neither agreed nor disagreed with a median of 4. This implies that the students have agreement with the idea of folktales and short story being suitable for teaching listening skills as also indicated in the median that further supports the position. In general, the distribution of the scores shows students’ positive observation on the role of folktales and short stories in developing listing skills. The value of median is also a quantative matrix about the similarity of students’ feeling i.e. it is positive for a positive view and negative for a negative view. Data from the interview also provided insights into the students’ feelings on the advantages of folktales and short stories based activities. According to the subjects, when they learn listening skills through folktales and short stories, the advantage is not only developing listing skills; but additionally the text also motivates them to read other literary texts, makes the class very interesting, free from boredom when listening to such texts. It also helps them think in depth and reflect their ideas. To obtain data that helps to corroborate findings the teachers were also interviewed about the function of folktales and short stories in teaching listening skills. In response to the question, “Do you think that folktales and short stories serve as a resource for teaching listing skills in the Oromo Language class, how?” All the teachers interviewed strongly believed in the function of folktales and short stories in teaching listing skills. They stated that the texts can be used by careful selection based on students’ level of understanding. The texts also should be short which can be listened to in a short period of time. They also gave views in response to the question “What are the possible listing activities that can be designed from folktales and short stories? Please, list them.” They stated that using folktales and short stories in the language class needs selection since not all stories may be of suitable to the students’ level of comprehension. After selecting the appropriate story different activities can be designed for teaching listing skills such as gap-filling, short answer giving, matching, true /false, multiple choices, re-narrating the story, and others. As their responses from the questionnaire show most of the students indicated agreement or strong agreement about the role of literature. Data from the interview also supports the result from the intervention and questionnaire. The result goes in line with scholars’ view of the pedagogical role of folktales and short stories. Durant (1993, p. 161) showed that “literary texts are inherently motivating and interesting, because they are written in genres specifically directed towards giving pleasure.” Motivation is one of the functions of folktales and short stories which are very important in the language classroom to create conducive classroom learning. Folktales and short stories being authentic texts serve fruitfully in teaching listing skills. In this instance the artistic nature of folktales and short stories facilitates teaching listing skills by acquainting the learners to unfamiliar texts. The other advantage of using folktales and short stories in Oromo Language classrooms as revealed from the data is that it could improve students’ critical thinking ability. Because folktales and short stories deal with ideas, sensations and events which either form part of the reader’s experience, or which they can enter into imaginatively, the students are able to relate it to their own lives (Maley, 1989). In a similar way, different pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities were designed from folktales and short stories were implemented in the teaching of listing skills. The activities were student centered and participatory. Based on this issue, some questions were raised to students to see their attitude towards the activities used to teach listing skills. Students noted that they have practiced different listing activities during the intervention by indicating agreement. This assumption is supported by different scholars: In this study, students’ and teachers’ perceptions concerning the extent to which folktales and short stories were used for teaching listing skills in the Oromo Language class were identified. As the data from the students indicated, stories were not being used to promote listing skills development. This was further validated by the interview presented to the students and teachers. But literature is rich with innumerable authentic tokens of language for the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills (Belcher & Hirvela, 2000, Erkaya, 2005, Fitzgerald, 1993) Thus, if folktales and short stories are used in teaching listing skills, they help students in developing listing ability in similar ways as other skills. But, this potential is not exploited in grade ten students’ Oromo Language classroom. Generally, the strategies used to design different activities from folktales and short stories and their implementation in the actual classroom follow the socio cultural theory of language learning. Students participated in all activities and tried to create their own meaning by using their background knowledge and the texts used for teaching listing skills. The use of stories in teaching listing skills encourages the students to use their previous experiences. In doing this, the learning process was student-centered. Student-centered approach allows more exploration of the stories, offers the students more opportunities to formulate their own ideas or feelings about the stories as well as to improve their listing skills in the language learning process. This confirms the hypothesis that state using folktales and short stories in language class can help students in developing their listening ability. To cater for various learning styles, the activities devise various kinds of tasks based on the type of listening that was practiced. Hence, the intervention made was found to be harmonious with the various concepts of teaching methods and language learning theory used in the study. Furthermore, the results obtained through the intervention, test and questionnaire are reasonably consistent with scholars’
views towards the role of folktales and short stories in teaching listening skill in the Oromo Language class.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Using prose narratives (folktales, short stories) in grade ten Oromo Language class requires the use of suitable texts that consider students’ understanding. The production of the relevant prose narrative texts and their use in the classroom underlines the important roles of teachers and material designers in this regard. In using prose narrative texts in developing listening skills in particular different considerations need to be paid heed in determining the aim of language teaching in relation to the needs and expectations of the students; selecting the appropriate language teaching method, teaching techniques, and classroom activities and folktales, and short stories relevant to the aim and the objectives of language teaching. While selecting different genres of prose narratives to be used in the language classroom, the students’ background, language proficiency, interests, age, etc. need to be taken into account in order not to bore students with inappropriate materials. Selecting a text with many new and difficult vocabulary items and grammatical structures would be detrimental to students understanding. This will discourage the students because they cannot make sense of the prose narratives due to the difficult vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Pedagogically, the present study finds that grade ten Oromo Language learners can be successfully taught listening skills using the technique of teaching language through prose narratives. The genres are found to be good resource to facilitate listening skills teaching and learning. In this study, prose narratives used with grade ten learners at Jimma Zone for the purpose of teaching listening skills were to be found beneficial. The texts provided authentic materials and offered rich contexts of language use. They helped students to learn the language in context and made the students feel more comfortable and relaxed. The universal issues discussed in different stories expanded the horizon of knowledge of the students’ and promoted cultural enrichment. Prose narratives foster empathy, tolerance and awareness of global issues. Working with such stories involves harnessing interpretive ability, which aids the multidimensional development of the language skills by stimulating imagination, and liberalizing the mind. Multiple exercises and activities made the tasks interesting and cover all the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. It can be emphatically asserted that teaching listening skills using different stories through appropriate classroom tasks is an effective way to teach Oromo Language learners. In using prose narrative texts for teaching listening skills, the activities were task-based and student-centered in which the students took the responsibility for their own learning. The lessons were also at the students’ level of understanding; and the task designed within their abilities needs to be achievable but at the same time sufficiently stimulating for them to feel satisfied with their work. The listening activities are oral based (reading aloud, audio recorded) performed based on the pedagogical principles of presenting listening skills lessons, involving sequentially pre-listening activities, while-listening activities and post-listening activities. Based on the objectives of each stage, the following listening activities can be set from folktales and short stories: gap filling, giving short answer, chart completion, re-narrating the story, role playing, summary writing, writing a report from listening to similar stories from other sources, reporting the theme of the story and a variety of other tasks. The findings show that grade ten students and teachers from Jiren, Aba Buna and Seto Semero Secondary Schools have positive view towards the use of prose narratives in Oromo Language instruction. Prose narrative texts motivate students’ interest in learning listening skills in the Oromo Language classroom. It also develops language ability, literary appreciation, moral values, and raises awareness of the target language cultures. In short it improves students’ listening skills, provides motivating materials, stimulates language acquisition, enhances critical thinking and develops emotional awareness.

V. REFERENCES


