

Practices of Listening Test at Secondary Level

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
In Partial Fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by
Madan Chapagain**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal
2022**

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Declaration

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date: 14/07/2022

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Recommendation for Acceptance

This is to certify that **Mr. Madan Chapagain** has prepared the thesis entitled **Practices of Listening Test at Secondary Level** under my guidance and supervision.

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Dedication

Dedicated to my parents

for the exceptional love, endless support and sacrifices.

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I would like to extend my deep sense of profound gratitude to my thesis supervisor, **Mr. Bhim Prasad Wasti**, Reader, Department of English Education, University Campus, Kirtipur for making constant supervision and guiding me with regular inspiration, encouragement and insightful as well as valuable suggestion throughout the study.

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Madan Chapagain

Abstract

The present thesis entitled 'Practices of Listening Test at Secondary Level' aimed to identify the present practices of testing listening skill and to explore the view of English teachers towards testing listening skill along with the challenges and their solutions following survey design and collecting data from forty secondary English language teachers of Nawalparasi (East) district through questionnaire. The results from this study indicates that the present practice of testing listening does not strictly follow the process mentioned in the English curriculum and it lacks its effectiveness. However, it was found that teachers construct varieties of test items and use different sound files concerning the listening activities mentioned in the textbook to conduct listening test. Similarly, the teachers expressed that unavailability of required materials, lack of training, teachers' negligence are some of the major challenges. Furthermore, following process mentioned in the curriculum, providing trainings to the teachers, and managing materials are the ways to solve the problems.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms. The second chapter deals with the review of theoretical and empirical literature review, implications of the study, and conceptual framework. Likewise, the third chapter incorporates design of the study, population and sample, research tool, sources of data, data collection procedures, and analysis and interpretation procedures; and fourth chapter is the detailed analysis and interpretation of the data and results; and fifth chapter is related with conclusion and implications of the study. References and appendices have been presented in the final part of this thesis.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CDC	:	Curriculum Development Centre
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
Ibid	:	In the same place
IELTS	:	International English Language Testing System
SEE	:	Secondary Education Examination
TELC	:	Test of English Listening Comprehension

Chapter I

Introduction

This introduction chapter consists of background of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and operational definition of the key terms.

Background of the Study

The present structure of Education system in Nepal is divided into two levels; Basic and Secondary level. The grades from nine to twelve is considered as secondary level (National Curriculum Framework, 2076). However, in this study, two grades of secondary level; nine and ten are focused.

Listening is the activity of paying attention to and get meaning from something we hear (Underhood, 1989). It has a significant role in day to day communication. It involves identifying tone, stress and intonation of the spoken language. Similarly, testing listening skill, simply, refers to assessing students listening abilities. Buck (2010) says that test developers while testing listening skill would choose the aspects like knowledge of sound system, understanding local linguistic meanings, understanding full linguistic meanings, understanding inferred meanings, and understanding listening ability.

At present, teaching language is highly concerned with communicative competence. For the development of communicative competence, listening skill is as equally important as other skills. Interestingly, what we could found that the four skills are highly interconnected. This indicates that speaking can be developed through listening, reading, and writing, listening can be updated through speaking, reading, and writing; and so forth. So addressing all the skills in teaching and testing language is important.

Thus, teachers should take consideration of all skills and aspects while teaching and testing English. Teaching language is taking as the process of enhancing students' quality of communicating in particular language. To know effectiveness of teaching, we need testing. Language testing is the practice and study of evaluating the

proficiency of an individual in using a particular language effectively (Allen, 2009 as cited in Joshi, 2019). Henning (1987) opines that testing is helpful to find out strengths and weakness in the learned abilities of students. Along with that, testing helps to judge the achievement gained by the students. Thus, testing important in order to identify the level of students. For the effective testing of English, we need to focus on all skills of it.

Considering the undebatable and equal importance of four skills in teaching and testing English, English curriculum (9-10) has emphasized on the giving equal attention on four skills in English language classes. The competencies of the English curriculum at this level (9-10) are to enable the learners to understand spoken English for general purpose with a good degree of perception, use spoken English for general purposes with a good degree of fluency and accuracy, interact, communicate and collaborate effectively with others orally in pairs, groups and whole class discussion, read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, write descriptive, narrative and imaginative texts, use all four skills in a variety of personal, social and academic context, and use English language to think creatively, critically and to solve problems that crop up in the real life. While observing these competencies mention in the English curriculum what can be concluded is English curriculum of grade 9 and 10 has been focusing on the development of English language through the development of students in four skills of language. While speaking about the provision of test; forty, thirty-five, fifteen, and ten marks are allocated for reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills respectively. That is to say, while conducting English test, teachers must address all skills. It is highly recommended that all four skills should be tested. Thus, an examiner need to focus on all four skills while testing. For this, the system of written and practical is made. The written covers seventy- five marks for the assessment of reading and writing skill whereas twenty- five marks is allocated for practical exam which includes the test of speaking and listening skill. That is to say, listening skill cannot be separated while testing other skills of language.

The textbooks of grade nine and ten include different listening activities in each unit for the development of listening skill of the students. For instance, listen to the conversation and fill in the blanks with suitable words or phrases, listen to the conversation and choose the best answers, listen to a religious programme on the

radio or television and note down a few ideas of the prophets and convey to your friends, listen to the description about nutrition and answer the following questions, listen to the description of the two pictures and complete them drawing what is missing, and so on. Such activities in the textbook are enough to make students well in listening skill. It is also helpful for the teachers to run a listening test to identify the students' capacity in listening skill.

While conducting listening test, item developers should go with the learning outcomes in listening skill prescribed by the English curriculum. Some of the outcomes in English curriculum for grade nine are identify and discriminate sounds, stress and intonation patterns, practice thinking while listening etc. along with that curriculum of English (9-10) has also provided clear specification grid consists of purpose of listening test, listening constructs, types of sound file, number of sound file, length of the sound file, types of the test items, total number of test item, marks per item, time, and alternative test methods for students with speech and hearing difficulties.

Present English curriculum and textbooks of grade ten and nine have shown clear way to test listening skill of the students. Allocating ten marks for listening test, setting clear objectives in the development of listening competence, mentioning different listening activities in the textbooks, providing clear framework on how to assess listening skill are some strong and positive steps of English curriculum in the field of listening skill. An English teacher can clearly get enough insights to teach and test English observing the English curriculum and the textbooks prepared by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). In this context, it is very important to study on how listening skill of students is being tested at present. Along with that the validity and effectiveness of such practices must be studied. For this, teachers are major aspect of the study. As teachers are directly associated with development of test items and conducting test, we need to study their own views so that we could get authentic and valid results.

This study mainly focuses on finding the current practices of listening test and teacher's view on quality of listening test in terms of its effectiveness. This study will be helpful for making English test more effective. Concerned authorities will be informed about the current practices of the practical test of English.

Statement of the Problem

Language testing is the process where examiner examines the students' capacity on the aspects and skills of particular language. Language testing can include skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Ur, 2009; as cited in Joshi, 2019). Heaton (1990) opines that it is examiners' work to assess the relative importance of the four skills at the various level and to devise an accurate means of measuring the students' success in developing four skills. Furthermore, Heaton (ibid) believes that we cannot get full benefit of separating the four skills while testing, rather, it would be better if we interconnect all the skills and language tester should always give equal importance to four skills equally.

While testing English language it is most important to address its all components equally. A test cannot measure the accurate capacity of English till it includes the entire aspects and skills. What we can easily experience is that only reading and writing skills are highly prioritized while testing. This sort of testing can never speaks how well a student can speak and how well listening competency s/he has. Without knowing the listening competency, how can a teacher tell about his/her students' learning achievement as it is the most important part of language learning? If a student is not well in listening skill, it can be said that s/he is not perfect in entire language. Listening test speaks about learners' ability on his/her control over the speed of speaker, capacity of identifying the things repeated, vocabulary power, skill of interpretation, and so on. For this reason, teachers must address all the skills perfectly as it is suggested by the English curriculum (9-10).

Even though listening test is allocated for ten marks, my personal experiences speak that testing of listening skill is not taken as important as the testing of reading and writing skills. Written exams are conducted with full concentration whereas practical exams are not taken seriously. Such practice in language testing cannot make evaluation system effective. In this case, it is most important to find out the effectiveness and validity of English test from teachers' view. Along with that, it is necessary to dig out the current practices of listening test in secondary level so that we could understand about its effectiveness. This study will find out the effectiveness and practicality of English test focusing the practice of listening test.

Objectives

This research work is highly concerned in exploring the practicality of listening test in secondary level. The main objectives of this study were:

1. To identify the current practices of listening test at secondary level.
2. To explore the teachers' view towards the quality of listening test in terms of its effectiveness.
3. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

Research Questions

In order to get this benefit, the research had the following research questions:

1. How does testing listening practice at present?
2. What are teachers' view towards listening test?
3. To what extent process of testing listening skill prescribed by English curriculum (9-10) is addressed?

Significance of the Study

Each research work has its importance on its related field. This study is concerned with exploring the present practice of listening test. Moreover, teachers view towards quality of listening test is another focus in this study. This study will be beneficial for the English teachers to make practical exam of English more effective. Furthermore, this study is significant to give insights to English teachers to test all skills of English language (Listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and it helps to transform the current practices of listening test to reality from formality. It will be useful in providing information to the concerned authorities on how testing listening skill is going on and helps them to give directions or suggestions to the English teachers to run listening test effectively.

Delimitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

- i. The study was conducted within the secondary level schools of Nawalparasi East district.
- ii. The study was delimited to forty teachers teaching English to ninth and tenth graders in different schools of Nawalparasi East district.
- iii. The study was confined to the practices of listening test at secondary level with teachers' view towards testing listening.
- iv. The data were collected through questionnaire.

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

Listening skill. An ability to listen the utterances and capacity of understanding what the speaker has said. One of the basic skill of language.

Secondary level. Though present education system takes 9-12 as secondary level, for this study, only 9 and 10 classes are related.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This part consists of theoretical and empirical literature on the related field. For the purpose of literature review, different books, articles, and other related documents have been studied. This work helps to build up theoretical as well as practical knowledge to run the research smoothly. Moreover, existing gaps on the related field also come into mind through it. Here, the ideas from different books and articles are organized on different topics.

Review of Theoretical Literature

This sub part includes theoretical ideas related to language testing. This sort of knowledge provides theoretical insights and helps to carry out entire work more systematically and scientifically.

Listening skill. Listening is one of the most fundamental and inseparable skill of teaching English and it is primary language skill for foreign language learners (Ghimire, 2019). Listening is the natural precursor to speaking; the early stage of language development in a person's first language (and in naturalistic acquisition of other languages) are dependent on listening (Nation and Newton, 2009). Palmer (2014) also believes that listening always comes first before a child speaks and well before s/he reads or writes. Joshi (2019) takes listening as multifaceted process, and also a reciprocal skill which comes most of the time with speaking skill too. In listening the listener receives the incoming data, an acoustic signal, and interprets in on the basis of a wide variety of linguistic and non- linguistic knowledge (Khania, 2005).

Rost (1994) presents the components of listening as discriminating between sounds, recognizing words, identifying stressed words and grouping of words, identifying functions in conversation, connecting linguistic clues to paralinguistic clues, recalling important words, topics and ideas, giving appropriate feedback to the speaker, and reformulating what the speaker has said.

Problems with testing listening skill and solutions to the problems with testing listening skill. As testing listening is the matter of difficulty, Santawona Memorial Academy (P) Limited (2013) has discussed the problems in testing listening in the context of Nepal. According to them, lack of cassette, cassette players, and the electricity facility at school, insufficiency and problems in creating and maintaining supporting materials, characteristics of the text, the characteristics of the students and the assigned tasks to them, the process used in teaching, and teaching listening in isolation are the major problems for testing and teaching listening skill. Along with that we could face some other problems in listening test associated with students. For instance; speed of speaker and students' ability to grasp, being unable to identifying the sound and so on.

To deal with such problems, Santawona Memorial Academy (ibid) has provided the suggestions like the application of continuous assessment (informal) system for the evaluation of students' language performance (in addition to formal examinations and assessment conducted from time to time), strictly apply the tests recommended by the prescribed curriculum such as dictation, composition, note taking and oral interviews, etc. to assess the level of learning, the adaptation of an alternative provision to make testing measures for underprivileged, hearing impaired and poor eyesight, students, the teacher should evaluate listening skills of students internally, a listening comprehension test should be used to assess students' comprehension skills through the multiple-choice test framework or variety/series of other types of comprehension questions like matching, true/false, completion, listen and draw, listen and act.

In order to reduce problems in testing listening, it is most important to provide the materials needed to run exam. Trainings should be given to the examiners in order to make them able to deal with the different aspects of listening test like developing test items, considering the provision of curriculum, and so on. Furthermore, teaching listening should be given focus first, then teachers could get insights as well as ideas to run listening test.

English curriculum (9-10) and listening skill. The present English curriculum of Nepal is based on communicative language approach, that is to say it has incorporated four language skills and language functions equally. It has focused

on developing English language and the target competencies through the enhancement of all four skill.

Learning outcomes in listening skill. English curriculum has set up grade wise learning outcomes for all four skills. Dealing with listening skill, it has mentioned different learning outcomes in grade nine and ten. Identify and discriminate sounds, stress and intonation patterns (compare similar and contrastive sounds between Nepali and English, identify different positions of stress in words and junctures across words), respond accurately to spoken directions or instructions from a variety of sources (follow multi-step oral instructions, respond tag questions and different wh-type questions), listen to spoken language text, understand the gist and retrieve specific information from it, practice thinking skills while listening (making predictions, generalizations, and reflection based on various texts) etc. are learning outcomes for grade nine. While considering about grade ten; identify and discriminate sounds, stress and intonation patterns (identifying confusing sounds in Nepali and English like think- sink, identifying meaning from different intonation patterns), listen and respond to common expressions (complete various types of listening comprehension tasks based on audio-visual information given in pictures, short stories and descriptions), record in note or make summary from the main points of spoken messages, practice thinking skills while listening (draw conclusions related to the mood of the speaker, listen to discussions to agree or disagree) etc. are some learning outcomes of grade ten.

Understanding learning outcomes focused by curriculum helps teachers to design test items and to test accordingly. For this research study, it is helpful in order to identify whether teachers have focused on such outcomes.

Assessing listening. English curriculum of grade nine and ten has made the provision of internal exam for testing listening. Language teachers are responsible to run listening test internally. According to the curriculum, multiple- choice test framework or other types of comprehension questions like matching, true/false, listen and draw, listen and act, table completion, drawing a map, gap- filling, and labeling diagrams are some test items which can be used to run a listening comprehension test. Along with that, dictation and note taking can also be used for the effective

assessment of listening skill, in which dictation can also help to assess spelling and pronunciation of students.

Specification grid. Specification grid speaks that the secondary English curriculum is based on language skills and aspects. It has allocated forty percent marks for reading, thirty- five percent for writing, fifteen percent for speaking, and ten percent for listening.

It has provisioned that ten test items should be there having one mark for each and testing listening takes twenty minutes of time. Furthermore, it has included following components:

Purpose. The purpose of listening test according to the curriculum is to find whether the students have obtained the learning outcomes of listening mentioned in the curriculum.

Listening constructs. Listening for the gist, listening for specific information, listening for main ideas and supporting details, listening to deduce the meaning of words, and listening to infer meaning are the listening constructs mentioned in the grid.

Types of sound files. Interviews, conversations, short discussions, advertisements, reports, announcements, news, operating instructions, messages, whether forecast, personal profiles, short narratives, and recorded or broadcast audio material are some sound files discussed in the curriculum.

Number of sound files. Three sounds files which contains 4, 4, and 2 marks respectively in order test sounds, stress, and intonation.

Types of test items. Multiple choice, fill in the blanks, ordering, matching, and short answer questions are mentioned as test items. It is requested that there should be different questions for three different files.

Criteria for marking. While marking, teachers need to focus on the learners' ability to understand the content and context rather than their ability to write.

Language teaching and testing. Teaching is considered as an art, science or profession and testing is a part of teaching (Sharma, 2012, as cited in Rayamajhi, 2016). What we can clearly understand is the aim of testing is to provide guidelines for measuring the linguistic ability of one which will be practical in use and gives helpful information to both teachers and students about their success and failure (Joshi, 2019). Considering testing and teaching as integrated part Heaton (1989) says;

Both testing and teaching are so closely interrelated that is virtually impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other. Test may be constructed primarily as devices to reinforce learning and to motivate the student or primarily as a means of assessing the student's performance in the language. In former case, the test is geared to the teaching that has taken place, whereas in the latter case the teaching is often geared largely to the test.

Following Joshi (2019, p.102) teaching is incomplete without testing. Teaching and testing are two main tools of learning. Since, they are two sides of a single coin. Test helps the teachers for remedial teaching. Testing is the way of finding out the effectiveness of teaching which applies for remedial teaching and it guides the teacher to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of students so that s/he could remove weaknesses. Furthermore, testing is an input for teaching. Supporting testing, teaching shows the path and testing helps to go ahead to get to summit.

In this respect, teaching and testing are closely related. These two elements cannot be separated as they are core part of English curriculum. Teaching and testing comes side by side, that's why teachers have to test students immediately considering the expectations of curriculum after they teach (Rayamajhi, 2016).

Qualities of good testing. A good test always comes with its good qualities so that it could show its proper usefulness and authenticity. Bachman and Palmer (1996) believes that in considering the specific qualities that determine the overall usefulness of a given test, it is essential to take systematic view, considering tests as part of a larger societal or educational context. Testing has its own important components which play important role to make testing more useful and authentic.

Validity. The most essential quality to be a good test is validity. The term ‘Validity’ in language testing has traditionally been understood as one of the basic considerations of a test which helps to know ‘the extent to which the test measures what it is intended to measure’ (Harrison, 1983; as cited in Joshi, 2019). Harmer (2007) also believes that such tests are valid which tests what it supposed to test. Following Anastasi (1982), ‘A validity of a test concerns what the test measures and how well it does so’. Henning, 1987 (as cited in Alderson, Clapham, and Wall, 1995) defines validity as:

Validity in general sense refers to the appropriateness of a given test or any of its component parts as a measure of what it is purported to measure. A test is said to be valid to the extent that it measures what it is supposed to measure. It follows that the term valid when used to describe a test should usually be accompanied by the preposition for. Any test then may be valid for some purposes, but not for others.

This view of validity presupposes that when we write a test we have an intention to measure something, that the ‘something’ is ‘real’, and that validity enquiry concerns finding out whether a test ‘actually does measure’ what it intended to measure (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007, p.4).

Validity cannot be expressed in single sense. So, it is better to explain validity in different types to speak different essential qualities for a valid test. In the previous studies on validity, it was broken down into three types (criterion-oriented validity, content validity, and construct validity) that were typically seen as distinct (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). Over recent years the raising interest on the field of validity has led to a confusing array of names and definitions, but mainly we have three types of validity: rational, empirical, and construct validity (Thorndike and Hagen, 1986; as cited in Alderson, Clapham, and Wall, 1995). However, we can find more types of validity while going in deep sense. Mostly, the types of validity are discussed below:

Content validity. Content validity, as its name suggests is concerned with the content or subject matter of particular subject. A test is said to have content validity if its content constitutes a representative sample of the language skills, structures, etc. with which it is meant to be concerned (Hughes, 2003). The test items need to

represent the contents given in the course so that it could be representative test item to test overall aspects of learning. In language learning, a good test item must include its skills and aspects given in specification grid. Anderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995) describes content validity as:

Typically, content validation involves ‘experts’ making judgment in some systematic way. A common way is for them to analyze the content of a test and to compare it with a statement of what the content ought to be. Such a content statement may be the test’s specification.

Then, how to identify the test items have content validity? Following Fulcher and Davidson (2007):

This is usually done using expert judges. These may be subject teachers, or language teacher who have many years’ experience in teaching English. The judges are asked to look at texts that have been selected for inclusion on the test and evaluate them for their representativeness within the content area. Secondly, the items used on the test should result in response to the text from which we can make inferences about the test takers’ ability to process the text in ways expected of the students on their academic courses.

Construct validity. Following Ehel and Frisbie, 1991 (as cited in Alderson, Clapham, and Wall, 1995), the term ‘construct’ in construct validity is related with psychological construct like intelligence, achievement motivation, anxiety, achievement, attitude, dominance, and reading comprehension, which cannot measured or observed directly. For them, construct validation is the way of getting evidences that the psychological construct of students are measured by the designed test item. Heaton (1990) describes construct validity as:

If the test has construct validity, it is capable of measuring certain specific characteristics in accordance with a theory of language behavior and learning. This type of validity assumes the existence of being certain learning theories or constructs underlying the acquisition of abilities and skills. For example, it can be argued that a speed reading test based on a short comprehension passage in an inadequate measure of reading ability (and thus has low

construct validity) unless it is believed that the speed reading of short passage relates closely to the ability to read a book quickly and efficiently and is a proven factor in reading ability.

As this study is connected with the validity of listening test at secondary level, it has become very helpful to identify various aspects of validity after the reviewing the literature related to validity. More importantly, review on validity provided clear concept on what validity is and what makes an exam really valid exam. This study wants to identify whether the contents or the area given in the course book has been covered or not. Additionally, this study intends to study does the testing listening covers the real competencies of the students in listening skill? For the study of such aspects the study on content and construct validity has helped to become more clear.

Types of test items. Harmer (2007) believes that the major factor of any test's success or failure as becoming good measuring depends upon the test items that it contains. He has described the following test items:

Direct and indirect test items. Adapting Harmer's (2007) concept, if the test items intends explore students' communicative skills to be tested, it is called direct test items. On the other hand, indirect test item is concerned with testing students' knowledge and ability focusing their receptive and productive skills. Harmer clarifies that direct test items deal with analyzing students' capacity for day to day communication that is to say real life language use as possible. Whereas indirect test items try to examine a student's language knowledge using more controlled items like multiple choice items or grammar transformation items. As indirect test items are simply like controlled items are often faster to design, easy to mark, and produced high inter-scorer reliability.

According to Hughes (2003), "Testing is said to be direct when it requires the candidate to perform precisely the skill that we wish to measure." For example, according to Hughes, if we are interested in identifying students' pronunciation skill, we get them to speak. Citing Hughes (ibid), "Indirect testing attempts to measure the abilities that underlie the skills in which we are interested."

Discrete- point and integrative test items. Following Harmer (2007), discrete-point test items are those test items which tests one thing at a time. For instance, test items which requests students to choose correct tense of verb (I (am going, was going) going to market now). Integrative test items cover verities of language skills in a single time as they concerned with composition writing or a conversational oral test.

What Harmer (ibid) thinks that in most of the proficiency test with different papers are mixture of direct and indirect, discrete- point and integrative testing. He adds that test designer find that this sort of mixture of different test items provides a good overall picture of students' ability.

To study the effectiveness of listening test, it is necessary to identify what types of test items have been used while testing listening. It is important to study whether the item developers have developed test items focusing on the level of students and items mentioned by the curriculum. This study helped me to identify the different types of test items and it helped to conceptualize what might be possible test items in testing listening skill.

Testing language skills. It is well known that English language has four skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As language has this four skills, a teacher has to examine all of them in order to understand their students' complete knowledge of language learning. The word 'test' is a device with the help of a tester wants to find out whether the testers have grasped, what that one had taught them (Joshi, 2019). It is important for the test designers to focus on those type of test items which should become relevant to use language for real- life communication (Heaton, 1990).

Testing listening skill. According to Heaton (1990), "An effective way of developing the listening skill is through the provision of carefully selected practical material. Such material is in many ways similar to that used for testing listening comprehension". Heaton, furthermore, say that it is necessary to create an awareness on that spoken language differs from the written language is important while testing the listening skills. It is because the spoken is much more complex than the written language from grammatical as well as in phonological features. Similarly, Hughes (2003) opines:

It may seem rather odd to test listening separately from speaking, since the two skills are typically exercised together in oral interaction. However, there are occasions, such as listening to the radio, or listening to lecture, when no speaking is called for... Listening is also be tested for diagnostic purpose... Because it is receptive skill, the testing listening parallels in most ways the testing of reading.

Along with this, Hughes (ibid) states some abilities for listening; obtain the gist, follow an argument, and recognize the attitude of the speaker. Furthermore, he adds some operations as; obtain factual information, understand instructions (including direction) and requests for information, understand expression of need, requests for help, apologies, and requests for permission, follow sequence of events and justification of opinions, recognize and understand suggestions, comments, excuse, expression of preferences, complaints, and speculation, understand expression of agreement, disagreement, and request for clarification, recognize speaker's purpose, recognize and understand corrections by speaker (of self and others), recognize and understand modifications of statements and comments, recognize speaker's desire that listener indicate understanding, recognize when speaker justifies or supports statements, etc. of other speakers, discriminate between vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes, and interpret intonation patterns (recognition of sarcasm, questions in declarative form, etc., interpretation of sentences stress).

To make listening test valid and backwash, Hughes (ibid) states that text should be specified as fully as possible. For this, according to Hughes (ibid) text type might be first specified as monologue, dialogue, or multi- participant, and further specified: conversation, announcement, and instruction, text form should include description, exposition, narration, argumentation, and length may be expressed in second or minutes. The extent of short utterances or exchanges may be specified in terms of the number of turns taken.

In order to make listening test effective, following Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995), the room for the test need to be effective and clear considering the number of students. Along with this, the tester need to take trial of test to check whether the person who is speaking is visible and audible for all of the examinees and the equipment like microphones, cassette, and video recorders, loudspeaker, and tapes are

in correct order. Furthermore, clear instructions about what to do in the entire the test should be given very explicitly. Similarly, Rayamajhi, 2016 opines that the testers, for effective listening testing, have to focus the different aspects of listening skill like listening perception, listening comprehension, grammatical knowledge, discourse knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and sociolinguistic knowledge. In addition to this, Buck (2010) has suggested to take consideration the aspects of language competence like knowledge of the sound system: the relevant aspects of grammatical knowledge like phonology, stress, and intonation need to be addressed, understanding local linguistic meaning: this includes the overall knowledge of grammar, for instance, phonology, stress, intonation, vocabulary, syntax, and ability of identifying the language in real life situation, understanding full linguistic meaning: here grammatical knowledge comes with discourse knowledge, and calls for comprehension of longer texts, understanding inferred meaning: this suggest to include grammatical, discourse, and pragmatic knowledge in testing listening, communicative listening ability: this is mostly connected with sociolinguistic knowledge.

As listening is core skill in language, the skills should be tested with high valid insight. Generally, in listening testing, the ability of students to discriminate sounds, discrimination among intonation and stress pattern, and comprehension of short and long listening text at lower level are included (Joshi, 2019). For this, Hughes (2003) has presented the following possible ideas or items for effective and valid testing of listening skill:

Multiple choice. For listening test, multiple choice is one of the best item. In this type of test item, alternatives should be given in short and simple way. Here one question comes with four alternatives. The difficult with this type of test item is that students to go with four alternatives while listening to the text. So multiple choice might be complex test item for students. Multiple choice test items examined students' lower level skills like phoneme discrimination. For example:

Q. What do the policemen do when they get call from John?

- a. They don't believe him.
- b. Policemen go to the john's home to protect him.

- c. They advised John to visit them in police station.
- d. They start to laugh listening him.

Short answer. Hughes (ibid) takes short questions as a best item for listening test. Here, short, unique, correct, and straightforward questions should be provided for the response of students. For example:

- a. What was the date of their picnic programme?
- b. How long was their picnic sport?

Gap filling. This testing item could be suitable where short question answer with unique answer is not possible.

Teacher: you have to draw picture with pencil. Pen is not allowed to use in drawing.

Students: sir, can we use color pen in our drawing?

The teacher asked students not to use while

The students asked if they use

Information transfer. Thus technique is useful in listening test as it is useful for other skills too. This testing item demands little productive skills too. Here, students can be involved in such activities like labelling of diagrams or pictures, completing forms, making diary entries, or showing routes on a map.

Note taking. It seems more realistic practice of listening test. Students takes notes while listening to their teacher, and after the talk is completed they see the items to which they have to answer. Such passage should be selected from which students can takes notes easily and successfully while constructing this type of test item. To make it more effective, it is better to attempt the task first by the test writers.

Straightforward sentences need to be used so that appropriate notes could be taken.

For instance:

Listen to the teacher and write important information on your copy.

The form 'a' is used before singular countable noun or noun phrase beginning with a consonant sound even though the letter is vowel. For example, a boy, a

European. We use 'an' before singular countable noun or noun phrase beginning with vowel sound regardless of whether the first letter is vowel or consonant. Whereas, 'the' is used before the names of river, seas, groups of island, historical places etc.

Partial dictation: Even though dictation could not be a particular authentic listening activity, it can be effective as well as useful as a testing technique. It can also be used to diagnosis of students' ability to deal with particular difficulties. As traditional dictation loses its reliability in scoring, it is recommended that partial dictation can be used. It has the following form.

The students sees:

Life and labour are inseparable. Ever since man has been hard to keep himself alive. He, drives, and drags, till the soil and does a lot of other things to keep his and together. There is no ... from it. It is necessary, universal, and

The tester reads:

Life and lobour are inseparable. Ever since man has been working hard to keep himself alive. He digs, drives, and drags, till the soil and does a lot of other things to keep his body and soul together. There is no escape from it. It is necessary, universal, and inevitable.

While scoring, examiner can provide score if s/he could get strong evidence which could prove the student have recognized the sound of the missing word. Correct spelling is not needed if students have identified the word correctly. This system has to be admitted earlier to the test so that there could be the problem in scoring.

Transcription. In this activity of listening test, the students are asked to transcribe numbers or words that are spelled letter by letter. Here telephone number can be used. It is necessary to choose such a words to which students are not familiar. That is to say, they are not able to spell the words as they are not well known them.

These all are the listening items as suggested by Hughes (2003). He also recommended that the testers need not to focus on grammar and spelling while scoring the answers. S/he can provide score to students if the answer can provide the clear evidence of that students have recognized the sounds.

This study could not move ahead without reviewing what listening skill is and what testing listening is. This has become clear after reviewing testing listening skill. Along with that, it assisted to know the abilities in listening skill. Knowing the types of text to be selected for listening test is essential for the researcher so that s/he could search whether the text is appropriate for the listening test. Study on listening items suggested by Hughes assisted on what might be the possible items in the field of listening test and whether such items are prescribed by the curriculum.

Communicative Language Testing. Communicative language testing emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a reaction against tests constructed of multiple choice items and the perceived over-emphasis of reliability (Fulcher, 2000). In communicative language testing, focus is given on performance while assessing students' ability in the particular language. Moreover, the performance is judge subjectively, qualitatively, and impressionistically, by a sympathetic assessor (Fulcher, 2000). Morrow (1980) also opines that 'communicative tests' always involve performance (as cited in Fulcher, 2000). Real life tasks, authenticity, and performance are keys in 'communicative language testing'.

There are some specific criteria that is used to tell whether the test is communicative test. Fulcher (2000) has presented criteria as follows:

Communicative tests involve performance. This criteria comes with the idea that test-takers should actually have to produce language. There need to be actual face to face oral interaction which involves not only the modification of expression and content but also an amalgam of receptive and productive skills (Morrow, 1979; as cited in Fulcher, 2000). Furthermore, the concept of 'real-world communication' which includes interaction, unpredictability, and integration of skills.

Communicative tests are authentic. This criteria talks that the test-taker must be able to recognize communicative purpose and be able to response appropriately

and input and prompts in the language test should not be simplified for the learner. Furthermore, context is another important aspect in communicative test as language varies from one context to another. Thus, the test-taker should consider the context of situation and linguistic context too.

Communicative tests are scored on real-life outcomes. Communicative tests focused on the behavioral outcome. That is to say, it concentrates on whether the learner is able to achieve the intended communicative effect.

Communicative language testing, thus, focuses on testing the students' real performance so that teachers can get clear picture on what students have mastered while learning. It accepts validity as an important quality of testing process and do not accept the over emphasis on reliability. It, rather, believes that teachers can get clear picture of students' competency if test focuses on both receptive and productive skills while testing. Thus, this theory on testing language is important for this work as it is concerned with testing listening skill which is related with the performance of the learners.

Review of the Empirical Literature

The previous studies give insight or field for the upcoming studies in any particular field. There has been carried different researchers in the field of teaching and testing English language at national and international level by different scholars. In the context of Nepal, there was very little research focusing testing listening. However, in the present time, it has drawn the attention of many researchers to deal with it. As every researchers have to incorporate with the previous researchers, I had gone through some of the researchers.

Santawona Memorial Academy Limited (2013) carried out a research entitled "A study on implementation of English listening and speaking skills". This study attempted mainly to explore the current level of learning achievement of the secondary level student in listening and speaking skills in English and to find out the problem in teaching, learning, and speaking skills at secondary level. This study was conducted in the descriptive, exploratory, and the analytical research design along with the incorporation of both the qualitative and quantitative data. The study found

that the overall level of learning achievement of the students in English listening and speaking skills in the secondary level was found 16.06 out of 25, in which proficiency of listening was 79.6 percent in total 10 and of speaking was 54 percent in total 15. The study also explored some difficulties in learning listening skill like discriminating sounds they listen, constructing meaning of the word etc. Furthermore, this study explored problems in teaching and testing listening and speaking skill. Lack of cassette, nature of text, process in teaching etc. are the problems in listening skill. Additionally, the ways for improving in testing system for listening and speaking skill also suggested by the study.

Similarly, Rayamajhi (2016) investigated the perception of secondary level English teacher on testing listening skill and difficulties faced by the teachers while conducting listening test on his research entitled “Perception of secondary level English language teachers on testing listening skill”. In order to meet the objectives of the study, survey research design was adopted. The data were collected using the questionnaire to the secondary English language teachers. The study showed that the majority of the teachers were found having good theoretical insights on testing listening skill but they do not test listening on a regular basis as equal to testing reading and writing. Almost all the teachers like to use audio-visual scripts for testing listening. They also adopt different kinds of the test items to test listening competency. 50% of teachers perceived that testing listening includes teaching as a basic skill and 26% of teachers perceived that it was tested satisfactory.

Mu-Hsuan Chou (2017) conducted a study entitled “Impacts of the Test of English Listening Comprehension (TELC) on teachers and teaching in Taiwan”. The main aim of the study was to find out to what extent the TELC impact on the English language teachers and teaching in senior high schools in Taiwan. This research involved a semi-structured interview with 20 senior high school English teachers in Taiwan. The finding revealed that the new English listening test had both positive as it reflects the intended purpose of the test policy and negative side as there is heavy emphasis on test practice and drilling of grammar. The study suggested that teachers need first to strengthen their pedagogic content knowledge of listening instruction, and then to integrate the result into current instruction practice, while weighing the

impact of the pressure from other stakeholders in order to produce a positive backwash effect on teaching and learning in the long run.

Dawadi (2019) carried out research entitled “Students’ and parents’ attitude toward the SEE English test”. She carried out this research in order to reflect on the quality of the SEE English test in terms of its fairness and accuracy as perceived by students and their parents and to suggest to make more effective and valid SEE English test. This study was based on mixed method research design with longitudinal survey and case studies. This research got that the practice of English language testing is not fair, especially the test of speaking skill as it was taken the matter of formality only. The students considered the test to be an accurate before they attempt the test but they did not seem to have trust on the test accuracy in post-test context. It was also found that students have more trust on writing test than on speaking test. Considering the attitude of parents, parents with high education had mostly negative attitude in both pre-test and post-test context, while, parents with low education could not comment on the test accuracy.

Ghimire (2019) carried out a research to explore realities, problems, and their solution of teaching listening in English in secondary level education in Nepal in his study entitled “Veracities of teaching listening in Nepal”. This study was qualitative in nature (narrative inquiry). Three English teachers from three different secondary community schools and six students for focus group discussion were selected for data collection using non-random purposive sampling procedure. The finding demonstrated that listening skill is neglected skill in our schools thinking that testing listening skill is not important. Lack of audio-visuals devices, less dedicated and untrained teachers, and weak monitoring system are the major causes for ignoring listening skill. The study suggested that teachers have to use various activities like role-play, pair work, group work, and communicative games using authentic materials, students should be proactive, and school administration need to take responsibility for making availability of listening equipment and materials.

Likewise, the research entitled “Teaching and testing of English listening and speaking in secondary schools: Pretend or praxis?” was carried out by two scholars named Kesh Rana and Karan Rana in 2019. It was aimed to examine how listening and speaking in English subject in secondary level has been conducted in board exam

and to report on how secondary teachers and students perceive and practice listening and speaking test. This study was based on qualitative (case study) research design. As a tool for data collection semi-structured interview was used. The findings were that teachers focus on center-based written exam and less emphasized the teaching and testing of listening and speaking skills. Along with this, it was found that private schools in the capital city have mandated English-only for communication in school premises with an expectation of developing students' English language competency. This study suggested to develop sustainable system for teachers to teach all language skills equitably to release the effective examination of English language competency.

The research entitled "Exploring the validity of a comprehension listening test to identify differences in primary school students' listening skills" was carried out by Heleen Bourdeaudhul, Koen Aesaert, and Johan Van Breaak in 2020. This study aimed to explore the validity of a comprehensive listening test for primary school students and to identify the relationship between home language, gender, and students' listening skills in the language of schooling using the developed measurement instrument. It is quantitative in nature. For the data collection, listening test was administered to 1001 sixth-grade primary school students in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and Final listening test consisted of 24 multiple-choice and open-ended test items. The listening test was used to identify differences between students' listening skills based on gender home language. The result revealed that there was not great role of gender to listening comprehension skills, but home language the home language created differences. The study got that internal validity that favors the use of the listening instrument.

Lianzhen He and Ziyun Jiang (2020) have carried out research entitled "Assessing second language listening over the past twenty years: a review within the socio-cognitive framework". For this study, 14 peer-reviewed journals, Educational Testing Service (ETS) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) research reports series were included to provide comprehensive picture of second language listening assessment research. Along with this, two research report series were chosen as they include rigorous studies conducted by leading researchers from all over the world. The study explored that, the vast majority of the studies done in testing field explored test-takers characteristics, cognitive validity, context validity,

and scoring validity, accounting for 94.25% and a variety of test-takers characteristics were investigated as important variables influencing listening test scores. In addition to this, it was found that task setting, linguistic demands, and speakers have received considerable attention for the discussion of context validity. Furthermore, it was explored that item bias, internal consistency, and grading and grading are three parameters influencing the scoring validity of second language listening assessment. This study found that there is a small number of studies focusing on consequential validity and criterion-related validity, with only one study addressing the issue of test wash-back, and three studies on focusing criterion-related validity.

Dealing with the case of listening test, very little research has studied the area. Two studies from the international level (Lianzhen He and Jiang, 2020; Bourdeaudhul, Aesaert, and Braak, 2020) have discussed on the validity of listening test. However, Lianzhen He and Jiang (2020) focused on the, while Bouedeaudhul, Aesart, and Break (2020) concentrated on validity of listening comprehension at primary level. In Nepal, the researchers like Rana and Rana (2019), Dawadi (2019), Rayamajhi (2016) etc. have contributed in the field of listening test. Nevertheless, none of them have talked on the quality of listening test in terms of its effectiveness. It is, therefore, significant to examine how teachers feel about the effectiveness of listening test at secondary level.

Implications of the Review

Literature review is the base of every research. Without reviewing literature no research could find its way to move. Once the researcher select the topic and method for the study, the researcher needs to review the topic related literature which helps to determine whether the topic is worth studying (Creswell, 2014). Literature review is done to find out and examine what has been done in that particular field. The process of synthesizing the literature provide explicit picture of the research on the targeted topic for the study and draw connection between the different pieces of research (Levy, 2017). Literature review has important role form identifying field to drawing conclusion. One can select better topic and set relevant objectives with the help of the previous researchers. A researchers cannot handle his research until he gain sound knowledge on that targeted field, and this is helped by literature review. In order to select reachable and noble topic in the field of language testing, I have studied the

books published in the field of language testing and language teaching too. Along with that, I have gone through the studies in the field of testing listening.

The books authorized by different scholars like Heaton (1990), Hughes (2003), Harmer (2009), Buck (2010), Bachman and Palmer (1996), and others helped me to develop my theoretical knowledge in language testing. Such theoretical review helped me also in developing the central concept of this research. To be specific, Hughes (2003), Anderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995), Heaton (1990), and Fultcher and Davidson (2007) helped me to develop good understanding on content and construct validity. Furthermore, the books I have reviewed assisted me to narrow down my study on listening test as it has covered the wide range of knowledge on different aspects of language testing.

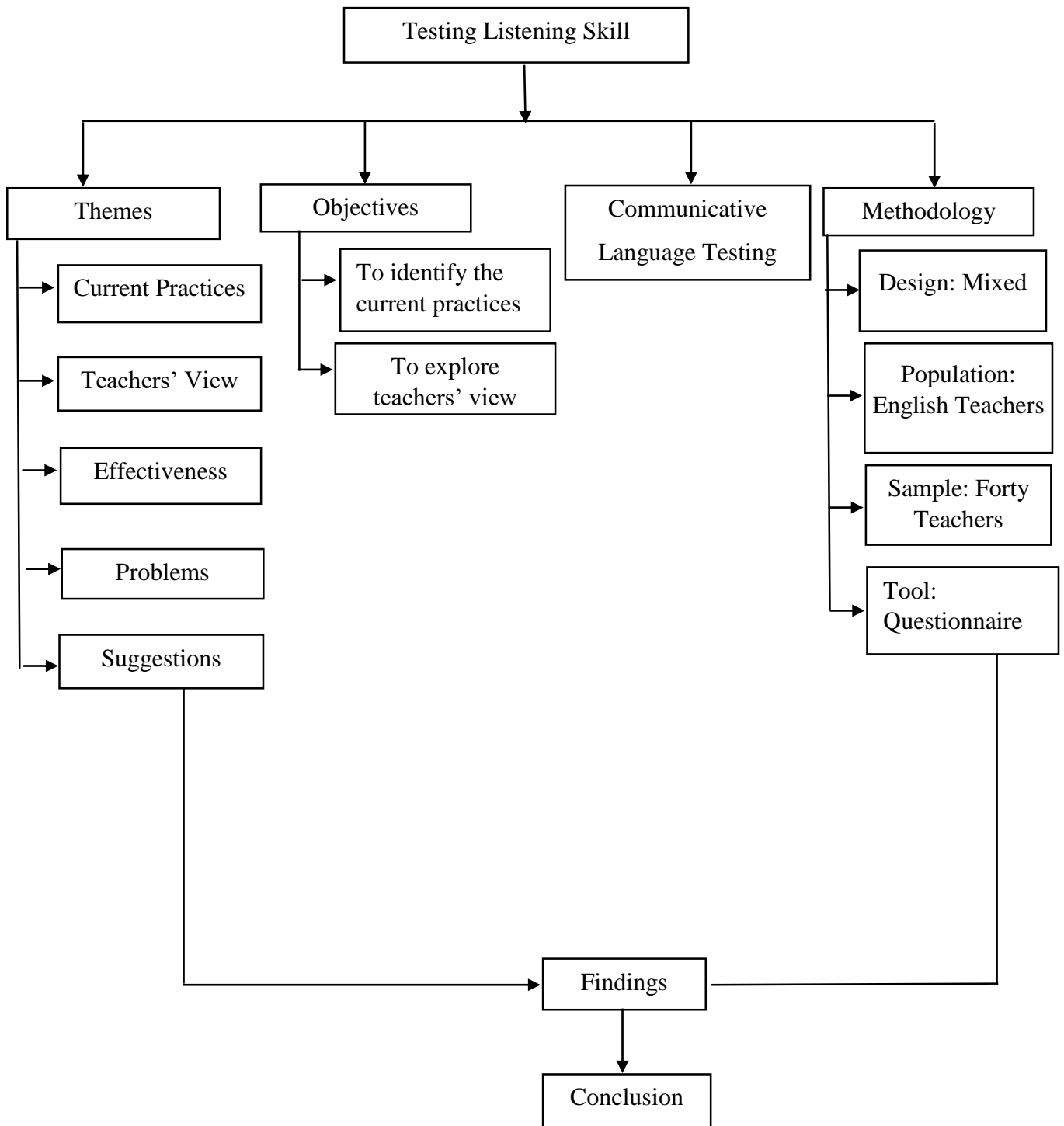
More importantly, study of English curriculum had great importance for this study. It helped to know about the level wise competencies. Clear provision on how to assess listening skill is given there. How much marks for which skill is also became clear through the study of the curriculum. More importantly, it made clear on the number and types of test items, time necessary for testing listening, mark for each item and criteria for marking, purpose of testing listening, listening constructs, number and types of sound files, and learning outcomes in listening skill. To be frank, this study could not go ahead without reviewing the present curriculum of English. It is because in order to study the current practices in testing listening, one need to be well known on what type of provisions has made by present curriculum.

Empirical literature review has played significant role in my study. The study conducted by Mu- Husan Chou (2017) used semi- structure interview to collect data and came up with finding that English listening test has both positive and negative side. Similarly, Dawadi (2019) carried out research to reflect on the quality of SEE English test through mixed method research approach and got the result that speaking skill is only the matter of formality. Similarly, Rana and Rana (2019) came up with the idea that teachers focus on center- based written exam and teaching and testing is less emphasized using qualitative approach. That is to say, researchers had use different methods and came up with different findings. Nevertheless, very few of them has talked about the present practice of listening test and talks about the view of

teachers on the quality of listening test. Thus, empirical literature review helps to find out the gap and to use the appropriate approach for this work.

Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual framework has drawn in order to run this research after the detailed study of the related literature:



Chapter III

Methods and Procedures of the Study

This chapter deals with the methodology and procedures used in the research. It includes design of the study, sources of data, population, sample, and sample strategy, research tools, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation, and ethical considerations.

Design of the Study

While conducting, there have been different design chosen by the researchers. For instance, action research, survey, experimental, co-relational (quantitative), case study, ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, historical (qualitative), mixed designs and so on. A researcher follow a particular research design according to his/her nature of the problem.

This study was based on mixed- method research design. Mixed method research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms of research and it involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study (Creswell, 2009). According to Levy (2017), “Mixed methods involves collecting and integrating qualitative and quantitative data in a single project and therefore may result in a more comprehension understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.” This approach is appropriate when the purpose is concerned with describing, explaining, or evaluating and are particularly useful when the study is related with complex issue (Levy, 2017) and it is useful to convey basic definition and description of the problem and it is useful to go for the further depth (Creswell, 2009). My study is concerned with identifying the validity along with effectiveness of listening test analyzing the teachers’ view. It seems that it is a bit complex to identify and assess the problem explicitly only with quantitative data, so I had to go further depth with the help of qualitative data. Thus, I had chosen mixed- method of research design to get both qualitative and quantitative data.

While conducting this research, I collected teachers' views and then go further depth to assess the problem and to find out the solutions explicitly. For this study, I had chosen survey design which helps to get both qualitative and quantitative data. William, 2011 (as cited in Joshi, 2019) says:

Asking question is an obvious method of collecting both quantitative and qualitative information from the people. Questionnaire are a particular suitable tool for gaining quantitative data but can also be used for qualitative data. This method of data collection is usually called survey.

A survey design is the method of study which provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinion of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2015). Surveys are inclusive in its types and number of variables that can be studied, require minimal investigate to develop and administer, and are relatively easy for making generalization (Bell, 1996). Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Marrison, (2010) opines that survey is used to assess results, self-completion, questionnaires, and attitude scales. Furthermore, they believe that survey can be both descriptive and analytical. Descriptive surveys describe the data on variables of interest, whereas analytical surveys operate within hypothesized predictors or explanatory variables that are tested for their influence on dependent variables.

To get qualitative data I added open ended questions (in the same tool which includes close format questions) in which teachers reply on their own words freely. By this way, my study was based on quantitative and qualitative data because I want get teachers' attitude on listening test using questionnaire. I hope, this method was appropriate to achieve the determined objectives of this research work. As it deals with collecting both quantitative and qualitative data using open ended and close ended questionnaire, this study was connected with mixed method approach.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources were used for the collection of data needed for the study.

Primary sources of data. Forty secondary level English teachers were the sources of primary data.

Secondary source of data. Different books (books of Harmer, Heaton etc.), journal writings, thesis work (for example, Rayamajhi, 2016), various sites on website, and articles published (for instance, articles of Dawadi, Rana etc.) on the related field were the sources of secondary data.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Strategy

The population of the study was English language teachers of secondary level (9 and 10 grade) of Nawalparasi East district. The sample was forty secondary level English teacher. I used simple random sampling strategy for the collection of data. I tried to make such a sample population which includes English teachers from different backgrounds so that this research study would get verities of data.

Research Tools

A questionnaire which includes both open and close ended questions was the data collection tool for this study.

Data Collection Procedures

For the work of data collection, I developed a set of questionnaire for survey based on my research objectives. Then, I made correspondence with English language teachers through my accessible media. I made good relation with them and made them clear about ethical consideration. Then, I provided the questionnaire to the sample population to collect data after taking permission.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

Regarding the process of data analysis, the data were coded at first. Then the data were scrutinized in general and they were put under different headings. Sub-headings for the data analysis were developed where necessary. Descriptive analysis was made for the clear information of the collected data. The qualitative data was presented thematically. Finally, the data were analyzed, explained, and interpreted on the basis of the responses given by the teachers while collecting data.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is another most important matter in conducting research. Ensuring authenticity, addressing participants' interest, taking permission before taking data, guarantee of data protection, correct interpretation of the collected data etc. are the major ethical considerations that should be taken into consideration by the researchers.

To be ethical, this study was conducted according to the academic rules and ethics. The researcher informed the participants about the study and its objectives clearly and take permission before taking data. The participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The data received from them was used only for this study and if the data are necessary for another research, it will be provided after taking respondents' permission and data will not be shared if they are not agree to share. More importantly, this work does not include any falsification and misinterpretation of the data.

Chapter IV

Results and Discussion

This chapter includes the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data. The information collected through questionnaire were primarily divided into different themes. The themes are current practices of listening test, teachers' view on testing listening skill, effectiveness in present practices of listening test, problems on conducting listening test, and suggestions for conducting effective listening test.

Current Practices of Listening Test

Testing listening skill is one of the integral parts of testing English. English curriculum has given the clear process to run listening test. As teachers are responsible to run listening test, they have been practicing test in their school.

The sample teachers responded on various ways being asked on the different dimensions of listening test being based on their present experiences of testing listening skill. Their responses have been analyzed under the following sub- headings:

Test items. Test items refers to the specific questions asked to the students in order to evaluate their performance in the specific skill or content. A teacher use different test items in order to evaluate his/her students. In this context, test items that evaluate listening ability of students are concerned.

The collected data showed that teachers consider the listening activities mentioned in the textbook while developing test items. The responses of the teachers on 'Teachers focus on the listening activities mentioned in the textbook while developing test items' were as follows:

Table 1
Textbooks' Activities and Test Items

S.N.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Teachers' focus on textbook while developing test items.	4	22	2	9	3

The data speaks that 22 teachers were agree and 4 were strongly agree that they have been focusing the activities mentioned in the textbook while constructing testing items for testing learners' listening ability. While, 9 were disagree and 3 were strongly disagree with the given statement. Thus, from the data, it can be concluded that for many teachers listening activities given in the textbook are the resources for developing test items.

Along with this, the qualitative data from the sample teachers' responses showed that teachers use varieties of test items in the course of assessing learners' listening skill. Test items like matching, gap filling, short- question answer, and true false are used while developing test items. The teacher were asked regarding the test items they used. Regarding this question, Respondent M1 answered, "*The test items such as true/false, match the following, gap filling, short- question answer.*" Similarly, R1 stated, "*fill in the blanks, true/ false items, comprehension questions (short), and objective types of questions have been used for the test of listening skill.*"

Thus, it can be said that English teachers in secondary level have used varieties test items in the process of evaluating students' listening skill. The sample teachers said that they develop test items like true/ false items, gap filling, short questions, multiple choice items, information transfer, note making, partial dictation, transcription, and matching. Furthermore, some of them replied that they assess their students' listening comprehensions through communicative activities like giving directions and asking students' to follow the directions. More interestingly, it was said that some of the language games have been used in the process of identifying the students' listening ability.

Sound files and its sources. Sound file is an audio file that can be played using electronic devices. In testing listening skill, sound files are the audios for the students to listen and to give answer/response accordingly. As teachers are responsible to conduct listening test, they have to manage sound files themselves.

The data gathered for this research showed that teachers in secondary level use different types of sound files through different resources like you- tube, online websites, social medias and so on. Here we have some of the responses for the further clarification; respondent M1 mentioned, *“Sound files containing the audio clips of native speakers and self- made audio clips. Such files are obtained from You Tube and some other online websites.”* Similarly, respondent H1 said, *“Dialogue, description, short stories etc. are being used in the process of assessing the students’ ability in listening skill. Teachers get audios from Curriculum Development Centre (CDC).”* Furthermore, teachers use their own voice to make sound file. For this, C1 expressed, *“Ready- made audio cassette are available and teachers’ record their own sound as well.”*

Thus, what we can conclude is teachers while testing listening skill of the learners use varieties of sound files like conversation of native speakers, dialogue, monologue, descriptions, short stories etc. Many of them expressed that their own sound on different topics are also being used while testing the learners. It is found that teachers get such sound files from You Tube, internet, and libraries. More interestingly, many of them responded that they create sound files with their own voice. Furthermore, some of them get sound files from CDC too.

Tools used for listening test. Without tools it is almost impossible for the evaluation of listening skill. From the responses of the teachers in the questionnaire revealed that teachers use cassette, radio, mobile phone, and laptop as a tool to assess listening ability of the students. Respondent H3 on the question related to the tools replied, *“Cassette, audio, video, question paper.”* Likewise, respondent J1 answered, *“Microphone, MP3, tape recorder, laptop etc. are used for conducting testing listening.”*

Thus, it can be seen that tools like microphone, mobile phone, laptop, MP3, sound box, cassette, and tape recorder are the tool which are being used by the teachers for testing listening.

Practice of listening test. Listening test need to be happen on a certain period of time as it happens for the reading and writing skills. The teachers are responsible to conduct listening test on the regular basis. However, the quantitative data revealed that there is no regular practice of listening test. More than half of the sample teacher voted that there is no regular practice of listening test. Bitterly, the data showed that some of the schools do not conduct any listening test. This can be proved with the following table:

Table 2
Practice of Listening Test

S.N.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Regular practice of testing listening	4%	22.5%	5%	63.5%	5%
2	No practice of testing listening in some schools	75%	20%	5%	0%	0%

The aforementioned data revealed that more than half percentage of sample teachers were disagree that there is practice of listening test in every terminal exams. Furthermore, 95% of teachers accepted that some schools do not run any practices of listening test.

Qualitative data showed that the practice of listening test comes with the wish of the teachers. Teachers run listening skill as per their wish. That is to say, there is no uniformity in the practice of assessing listening ability. In the question of frequency of listening test respondent R1 stated, *“At least, three times a year.”* Similarly, respondent O1 mentioned, *“There is not a fixed number but the teachers have to conduct in each lesson.”* Likewise, respondent O2 stated, *“More than two times in a year usually the ending of the examination.”*

Thus, with the above mentioned data, we can came up with the idea that testing of listening skill happens mostly at the end of the terminal and final exams. It

seems that testing of listening skill comes only with terminal exams not on the regular basis and there is no uniformity among schools in conducting listening test.

Teachers' view towards Testing Listening Skill

Learning language comes with four skills; and listening is one of them. Listening is one of the fundamental and inseparable skill of teaching and testing English. Thus, it is compulsory to assess the listening ability of the learners. Testing listening skill is concerned with assessing the students' listening competencies. The purpose of listening test, according to the curriculum, is to find out whether the students have obtained the learning outcomes of listening skill.

The gathered data showed that teachers think that listening is fundamental and inseparable skill so that it is necessary to give equal importance to test and teach listening in the classroom. Furthermore, they believe four skills need to be integrated while testing. Teachers finds that curriculum has given equal importance to all four skills. However, they accepted secondary skills are highly prioritized while testing.

The following table present the secondary level English teachers' view on listening test:

Table 3

Teachers' View towards Listening Test

S.N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Listening as fundamental and inseparable skill	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
2	Less benefit from separating four skills	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%
3	Equal importance must be given for four skills while testing	42.5%	52.5%	5%	0%	0%
4	Four skills are addressed well by the curriculum	45%	55%	0%	0%	0%
5	High prioritization on Reading and Writing while testing	7.5%	45%	7.5%	22.5%	17.5%

The aforementioned data revealed that, almost all secondary level English teachers think that listening skill is one of the important skill in ELT classes. Similarly, for many teachers, all four skills should be integrated while testing so that we could get full benefit. In addition to this, 52.5% of the sample teachers agreed and 42.5% of them strongly agreed that equal importance for all four skills must be given while testing English. While, 5% of them remained undecided about it. Thus, it can be said that, almost all the teachers give emphasis on providing equal importance for all four skills while conducting exam for English subject. Furthermore, the sample teachers highly accepted that all four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing are well addressed by the English curriculum. However, the 7.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 45% of them agreed that their practice of conducting the examination of English has highly prioritized reading and writing while testing.

Similarly, the data provided by the respondents showed that testing listening skill is important in the sense that it is primary skill and it is key for the effective communication. Furthermore, it helps to develop receptive skills of the students. In the question related to the importance of testing listening skill respondent A1 mentioned, *“Testing listening skill is important because it’s one of the basic skills of language and inseparable skill of communication.”* Similarly, respondent K2 said, *“Because it is a primary skill, without proper listening capacity people cannot understand other’s speech and unable to reply.”* Likewise, B1 expressed, *“To know either the students have mastered listening skill well or not or listening skill is strong or not and to improve their English language.”*

Thus, the data can be concluded with the assumption that the teachers take testing of listening skill is inseparable part in ELT classroom. Teachers opine that listening skill is the primary skill without which rest of the skills cannot be developed well. Moreover, they believe that in order to find out the accuracy and fluency which show the students’ capacity of grammar as well as vocabulary, testing listening skill of the learners is important. For the development of the students’ listening competency, it is necessary to test their listening skill. In addition to this, according to teachers, testing listening skill helps to improve classroom activities and the students learning process.

Effectiveness on Present Practice of Listening Test

If the practice of testing listening follows the process given in the curriculum and fulfill the purpose of testing listening skill, it is effective practice of listening test. We cannot get full benefit of testing unless we conduct effective assessing system.

From the teachers' responses, it can be understood that the practice of listening test at secondary level at present is less effective. It is not being practiced as it needs to be practiced. The gathered data showed that the processes mentioned in the curriculum are not addressed while conducting listening test. Along with this, the scoring system is not effective. That is to say, teachers provide scores to the students as per their wish. Teachers' responses on the questionnaire prove these information.

Table 4

Effectiveness of Listening Test

S. N.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Process mentioned in curriculum is addressed	5%	15%	15%	40%	25%
2	All students get high score ignoring real ability	32.5%	37.5%	10%	20%	0%
3	Score matches competencies students mastered	10%	20%	15%	35%	20%
4	Present listening test can identify whether the objectives are fulfilled	5%	27.5%	5%	55%	7.5%
5	Different aspects of listening skill are focused	5%	15%	20%	42.5%	17.5%

The data presented in the table depicts that sixty percent of the respondents (40% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed) did not believe that practice of listening test go along with the system prescribed by the English curriculum. Only thirty percent of them accepted that teachers are following English curriculum while

evaluating listening skill. This data clarifies that most of the teachers are not agree to accept that present practice of testing listening supports recommendations of curriculum regarding test items, time, types and number of sound file, and criteria for scoring. Thus, it can be said that the practice beyond the prescriptions given by the authentic curriculum could not be effective. In addition to this, more than half of the sample the teachers voted that almost all the students get high score as possible in listening test even though they are not able to achieve such marks. Moreover, the data in the above table depicts that 35% Of the respondents disagreed and 20% of them strongly disagreed that competencies mastered by the learners matches marks that have achieved. However, 20% agreed, 10% strongly agreed, and 15% remained undecided about it. What can be concluded here from the above discussion is more than half of the teachers did not think that students are achieving the marks according to their ability.

Furthermore, the aforementioned data revealed that teachers of English at secondary level hardly believe that the practice of testing listening at schools is able to identify whether the objectives of the curriculum for listening skill is fulfilled as 55% of the respondents disagreed and 7.5% of them strongly disagreed on the given statement. In addition to this, most of the respondents opined that present practice of testing listening lacks its concentration to address different aspects of listening skill like perception, listening comprehension, discourse knowledge and so on. As per the data, 17.5% and 42.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that listening test has focused various aspects of listening skill.

Thus, it can be seen that the current practice of evaluating students' listening capacity has lost its some of the qualities. To be the effective testing of listening, one must have to address the processes given by the curriculum regarding test items, sound files, time, and criteria for scoring. Moreover, the testing process should fulfill the objectives of the curriculum and must focus various aspects of listening skill. But, the responses given by the sample teachers showed that the processes mentioned in the curriculum is less addressed.

Besides, in the question 'It is highly blamed that testing listening is being neglected even though it is clearly addressed by the curriculum. What do you think?' most of the teachers replied accepting the ignorance of testing listening. Respondent

A3 stated, *“To some extent, it is believed that the listening skill is being neglected even though it is clearly addressed by curriculum. I firmly believe that it should not be neglected.”*

Similarly, H1 said, *“Yes, it is right because of technical problem. Teachers are not interested and management also don’t pay attention.”*

These responses given by the teachers shows that testing listening has been neglected and if we do so neglected practice could not be effective practice.

Problems in Conducting Listening Test

Conducting listening test in the schools by the teachers themselves is a challenging task. To address the process given by the curriculum and to conduct effective and valid test is a great challenge to the teachers.

The gathered data for this study showed that teachers have to encounter with different problems conducting listening test. The problems are related with the management, teachers’ negligence, teacher training, and monitoring. Some of the relevant responses of the sample teacher on being asked about the problems in running listening test were; respondent H1 stated, *“Lack of training to teachers, weak managerial system, and teachers’ negligence about it are some of the problems.”* Similarly, respondent O3 answered, *“Less focused on listening in examination, unwillingness of teachers, hesitation of students, and less practice result.”* Likewise, respondent R1 expressed, *“Students’ reluctance to practice in it, less exposure to listening content, and inappropriate assessment system... are some of the problems with conducting listening test.”*

From the responses obtained from the respondents, it can be said that there are varieties of problems with practicing listening test. Almost all the respondents expressed that lack of sufficient materials is one of the key problem on conducting listening test. Furthermore, they opined that lack of training to the teachers to conduct listening test, poor management system, unwillingness of teachers towards it, and hesitation of students to be participated in testing exam are some of the problems. More importantly, teachers’ negligence has become another problem in the course

running listening exam. It shows teachers themselves are one of the cause for the poor practice of listening test.

Suggestions for Effective Listening Test

Every problems has its solutions. Good suggestions give direction to overcome the challenges. Sample teachers suggested various ways to overcome the problems related with the practice of listening test so that it could be more effective and valid. Some of the opinions given by the teachers on being asked about making assessment of listening skill more effective and valid were as follows; respondent M1 viewed, *“Carrying out such listening activities regularly, motivating students, and using the available resources as much as possible.”* Similarly, respondent X1 mentioned, *“Listening skill should have equal mark similar to other skills and there should be regular monitoring.”* Furthermore, respondent X3 expressed, *“To make practice of listening more effective and valid, at we must have to follow curriculum, teacher need to be trained and faithful to their work. It is very important to teach listening skill so that we can test it effectively as it go on its regular basis.”*

Thus, the responses of the respondents revealed that we can make current practice of listening test more valid and effective. Teachers believed that if the teachers are given training to conduct listening test it could be smoother. Furthermore, they opined that teachers can run effective test for assessing listening skill if they are provided the necessary materials. As teachers are the central base for the evaluation, they need to be honest on their duty. That is to say teachers should regularly test their students’ listening ability. More importantly, teachers must follow the recommendation given by the English curriculum while practicing testing listening skill so that it could test what curriculum intended to test. One of the respondent opined that equal mark should be given to listening skill so that it can attract teachers and students to be participated on testing listening in effective way. Respondents also believed that to make testing smooth, it is very important to make teaching smooth. That is to say, if teachers teach listening skill as other skills in the classroom, they are automatically motivated to assess listening ability and they cannot neglect testing listening ability while testing other skills.

Chapter V

Summary of the Findings, Conclusion and Implications

This chapter includes summary of the findings, conclusion of the study and implications being based on the analysis of gathered data.

Summary of the Findings

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data, the followings summary of the findings have been drawn:

1. ELT teachers use varieties of test items like true/ false items, gap filling, short questions, multiple choice items, information transfer, note making, partial dictation, transcription, and matching. Furthermore, it was found that teachers consider listening activities mentioned in the textbook while developing test items.
2. The ELT teachers in the context of Nepal use varieties of sound files like conversation, short stories, monologue, and so on while testing listening. They get such sound files from internet, You- Tube, and CDC. The tools like mobile phone, cassette, laptop etc. are being used for conducting listening test.
3. ELT teachers in Nepal have been conducting listening test on their own wish. Some of them test once in a year while some of them test for twice or thrice in a year. Unfortunately, it was also found that some of the schools do not run any activities for assessing listening ability of the learners.
4. Teachers in secondary schools in Nepal take testing listening as an inseparable part of ELT classroom. They believe that equal importance must be given for all four skills while testing. Similarly, the teachers also opine that we cannot get full benefit unless we integrate all four skills while testing. Furthermore, they have found that present English curriculum has addressed the four skills well.
5. Teachers in secondary schools while running listening test are not addressing the processes given by the English curriculum. Number of sound files, time, types, test items, and criteria for scoring recommended by the curriculum is

highly ignored. Students are getting high scores as possible ignoring their real competencies. Thus, the current practice of assessing listening skill seems to be less effective.

6. Insufficient materials, unwillingness of teachers, poor management system, lack of monitoring, lack of teacher training related to listening test, and isolating teaching listening skill are some of the problems faced by the teachers for the testing listening.
7. Motivating and monitoring teachers, following the processes mentioned in the curriculum, providing teacher training, and providing sufficient materials are some of the ways for making testing listening more effective.

Thus, this thesis paper found out teachers' views regarding testing listening and present practice of listening test and its quality. Furthermore, it found out the challenges faced by the teachers and the ways to overcome to face such challenges to make testing smoother.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore current practices of listening test and teachers' view on the quality of listening test. The data from sample teachers revealed that teachers conduct listening test constructing varieties of test items like gap filling, matching and using different sound files and tools like mobile phone, laptop. And, the number of listening test depends on the teachers' wish. It shows some strengths (using available tools, constructing varieties of test items, and considering textbook while developing test items) and some weakness (neglecting testing listening skill, ignoring the processes mentioned in the curriculum, and so on) of present practice of testing listening. Thus, it is necessary to lessen weaknesses by strengthening the positive aspects of current practices of listening test. The responses from the respondents showed that current practice of listening test lacks its effectiveness. Accepting listening test as less effective by the teachers themselves is great problem in the field of language testing. As teachers are most responsible to conduct listening test, they must be aware of making testing process regular, effective and valid. For this, teachers need to follow the process mentioned in the curriculum first. Then, they have to be co- operative to make assessing listening ability more effective.

Implications

This study entitled 'Practices of Listening Test at Secondary Level' attempts to discover teachers' opinion on listening test, present practices, their view on the quality of listening test, challenges, and ways to make more effective listening test. Thus, based on the outcomes of the study, the following are the implications:

Policy related. Teaching and testing listening skill is managed by present English curriculum in systematic and effective way. However, there is less concentration on helping teachers to implement in the ELT classes what is mentioned in the curriculum. That is to say, the policy related to providing trainings to the teachers to teach and test all four skills must be developed. Furthermore, the policy of evaluating teachers whether they have followed the curriculum while testing should be made so that teachers could be aware and do their job sincerely. Moreover, the concerned authority should make the provision of managing teaching and testing materials for listening skill.

Practice related. All the ELT practitioners need to be conscious on making listening test smoother. All the policies go in vain if good practices are not being happened. Thus, for the effective practice the following recommendations can be made:

- I. First of all, all the teachers should be honest and active to test and teach listening skill on regular basis.
- II. More importantly, teachers should be familiar with the recommendations given by the English curriculum so that they could run listening test as it is suggested by the curriculum.
- III. School administration should provide essential materials for testing listening skill. Along with they should be conscious on whether the practice of listening test is being happened.
- IV. Teacher trainers should provide such trainings which help teachers to run listening test in effective way.
- V. Teachers should be made aware of teaching and testing listening skill via seminars, workshops, trainings and so on.

- VI. Students should be provided ample opportunities to listen authentic listening materials and practice with them.

Future research related. This study has provided lots of information in the field of testing listening. However, this is not complete study in this field. Thus, there are lots of subjects to be studied for the new study. Researchers can study the students' attitude towards listening test. Furthermore, they can go with the reliability of present listening test. This is done with one of the primary skills. So, new study could be done in the next primary skill. That is to say, new study could be done with the teachers' attitude towards testing speaking skill.

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Appendices

Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire has been prepared to carry out the research entitled “Practices of Listening Test at Secondary Level”. The research is being carried out under the supervision of **Mr. Bhim Prasad Wasthi, Reader**, Central Campus Kirtipur, Kathmandu. The researcher expects your kind co- operation, and promise not to exploit the information besides the research purpose.

Researcher

Madan Chapagain

Name (Optional):

Name of school:

Teaching Grade:

Qualification (Optional):

Please, I would like to request you to be real and practical to fill this questionnaire.

Consider this,

Strongly Agree: SA

Agree: A

Undecided: U

Disagree: D

Strongly Disagree: SD

S. N.	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Listening is one of the fundamental and inseparable skill of teaching and testing English.					
2	Currently, all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are addressed well by English curriculum.					
3	Reading and writing are highly prioritized while testing.					
4	Equal importance for all skills must be given while testing.					
5	We cannot get full benefit if we separate the four skills while testing English.					
6	Students are being evaluated according to the competencies of listening skill given by English curriculum.					
7	Students in listening test are being evaluated according to their level.					
8	Practice of testing listening is being done according to the system prescribed by the English curriculum of secondary level.					
9	Listening test has focused on the different aspects of listening skill like perception, listening comprehension, discourse knowledge and so on.					
10	The designed test items can measure students' psychological construct like attitude towards listening skill, intelligence in listening skill, and so on.					
11	Present practice of assessing listening skill is able to identify whether the objectives of secondary English curriculum for listening skill is fulfilled.					
12	Present practice of listening test is able to examine the students' listening ability effectively.					
13	Test items, time, types and number of sound files, and criteria for scoring recommended by English curriculum is highly addressed.					
14	Teachers focus on the listening activities mentioned in the textbook while developing test items.					
15	Students can easily understand the spoken English according to their level.					
16	Students have mastered all the listening competencies which are taught and tested.					
17	The test items cover all the contents given in the textbook.					
18	Some of the schools do not even run any listening test.					
19	Almost all students get high score as possible in listening test ignoring their real competencies.					

20	The score secured by students in listening test matches their real competencies they have mastered.					
21	The materials like microphones, cassette, recorder etc. needed for listening test are available.					
22	There is practice of regular testing of (in every terminal exams) competencies of listening skill.					
23	Teaching listening skill in isolation is the cause of ignorance of testing listening.					
24	Some of the teachers are not aware of arrangement of teaching and testing of listening skill by the English curriculum.					

Please give your views on the given questions briefly and accurately.

A. Why do you think that testing listening skill is important?

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B. What types of test items have been used to assess students listening skill?

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C. What types of sound files (audio for test) are being used? Where do teachers get audio from?

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D. What are the tools are used for conducting testing listening?

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E. For how many times does the test of listening skill happen in your school?

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F. It is highly blamed that testing listening is being neglected even though it is clearly addressed by curriculum. What do you think?

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G. What are the problems for testing listening skills in the context of Nepal?

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H. How could assessment of listening skills be effective and valid?

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Thank You.