

# **Challenges in Reading Comprehension Faced by IELTS Students**

**A thesis submitted to the department of the English Education  
in partial fulfillment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by  
Laxmi Basnet**

**To**

**Department of English Education  
Faculty of Education Tribhuvan University  
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**2021**

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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: 04/08/2021

.....

**Laxmi Basnet**

## **RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE**

This is to certify that **Mrs. Laxmi Basnet** has prepared this thesis entitled **Challenges of Reading Comprehension Faced by IELTS Students** under my guidance and supervision.

I recommend this thesis for acceptance.

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Date: 08/09/2021

# **DEDICATION**

To

my beloved parents

whose affection, love, encouragement and prays of days and nights helped me get this  
success and honour along with incessant support of respected

teachers.

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First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express my humble gratitude to my thesis supervisor, **Dr. Purna Bahadur Kadel, Reader**, Department of English Education for his proper guidance, constant supervision and constructive feedback to shape the research work in this frame. He was always there with his constant support and inspiration during the time I was about to give up. Without his constructive feedback and guidance, I could not have created such a piece of work. Likewise, I would like to express my humble gratitude to **Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey**, Reader and Head, Department of English Education and **Mr. Jagadish Poudel**, Lecturer, Department of English Education for their insightful comments during the viva of proposal. Similarly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to **Pro. Dr. Chandreshwar Mishra** the external supervisor, Department of English Education for his suggestions, insightful feedback and encouragement during the viva of this thesis. This study is an output of the continuous encouragement of my respected thesis supervisor, professors, dear friends, seniors and participant teachers who provided me untiring support and proper guidance during this process. I therefore would like to thank to each individuals for their regular inspiration.

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**Laxmi Basnet**



## ABSTRACT

This study entitled **Challenges in Reading Comprehension Faced by IELTS Students** was an attempt to explore the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students and to provide some pedagogical implications of the study. I used narrative inquiry as the research design to carry out this study. The population of the research included all the IELTS students from Kathmandu valley. Four IELTS students who have already taken IELTS examinations were selected as the sample for the study by using non- random purposive sampling procedure. I conducted open ended in-depth interview to elicit the required data. The data were analyzed by using thematic approach. From the results and discussion of the data, it was found that the participants feel difficulty in comprehending the reading text due to lack of sufficient time, complex vocabulary, difficult to find key ideas, complex grammatical structure, stress of exam and boring texts.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study which includes of background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms. Similarly, second chapter incorporates about the review of theoretical as well as empirical literature and its implication for the study. Moreover, it also includes the conceptual framework. Likewise, the third chapter includes with the methods and procedures of the study which covers design and method of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, research tools, sources of data, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. In the same way, the fourth chapter consists the analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, the fifth chapter incorporates the findings and conclusion of the study followed by some policy related, practice related, and further research related recommendation based on the study. The references and the appendices are also included at the end of the study.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

M.Ed	:	Master of Education
Mr.	:	Mister
Ms.	:	Miss
No.	:	Number
P.	:	Page
Dr.	:	Doctor
T.U.	:	Tribhuvan University
UK	:	United Kingdom
USA	:	the United State of America
Regd No.	:	Registration Number
IELTS	:	International English Language Testing System
ELTS	:	English language Testing Service
ESOL	:	English to Speakers of other Language
TOEFL	:	Test of English as a Foreign Language

# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

This study entitled “**Challenges in Reading Comprehension Faced by IELTS Students**” is concerned with to explore the challenges of reading comprehension. This introductory chapter contains background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, research questions rationale of the study, delimitation of the study and operational definition of the key terms.

### Background of the Study

Reading opens the gate of knowledge. Reading, generally means understanding or making sense of given text. It is a receptive skill and it is in third in its order. It is not only the receptive skill but also an active skill, reading constantly guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions. It helps to recognize and comprehend the knowledge and information contained in text. Reading has been defined in different ways. According to Grellet, (1982, p. 1) “Reading as understanding involves extracting the required information from the text as effectively as possible”. William (1991, p. 2) defines reading as “a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written”.

According to Richards & Smith (1999, p. 306) “Reading is a process of perceiving a written text in order to understand its content”. Reading can be described as a process which involves recognizing graphs, symbols, vocalizing, them and getting the message that the writer has expressed by means of those symbols of these three activities. Recognizing graphic symbol is the basic thing in reading. One cannot even to read, unless one cannot correctly recognize the words in print or writing. Vocalizing graphic symbol is also an important aspect of reading to be dealt at early stage. The third activity, i.e. getting the message of the writer is the most important aspect of reading, for the most usual authentic reason for reading is that the readers want to get facts, ideas, attitudes and feelings that the writer has expressed through his writing.

Reading is the third language skill in natural order. It is the total understanding of a message in a text. In the same way, Nuttall (1996, p. 11) says that “Reading is an

interactive process-as conversation is –because both reader and writer depend on one another”. Reading can also be described as a means of language acquisition of communication, and of sharing information and ideas.

From all these definitions, we can conclude that, reading is one of the language skills. It is a receptive language skill through which a reader receives information from the written text. In fact, reading helps to recognize and comprehend the knowledge and information contained in a text. It involves recognition of printed letters, words, clause and sentences with meaning.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is designed to assess the language ability of candidates who want to study or work where English is the language of communication. IELTS is jointly managed by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examination (Cambridge ESOL), British Council and IDP: IELTS Australia. IELTS conforms to the higher international standards of language assessment. It tests the proficiency level of the students in English for higher studies or studying in abroad. The candidates are tested in terms of four language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. IELTS students face difficulty in reading in terms of getting key ideas, quickly identifying key ideas, note taking\ completion note, understanding specialist vocabulary, complex grammatical structure, boring paragraphs, stress of exam, etc.

(Cambridge English, IELTS Australia)

### **Statement of the Problems**

At present, many students from Nepal are interested for abroad study, the most developed countries like: the USA, Australia, the UK, the New Zealand, Denmark, and Canada. To continue their study and achieve the goals from different colleges and universities in different subjects or fields, they must have certain level of English proficiency. IELTS tests the proficiency level in English of the candidates in an international level. Therefore, so many candidates take IELTS Examination each year in Nepal.

Reading text problem may fall into multiple categories among them, learners may have difficulties for example words that have similar lexical forms; some words seem

to be phonetically in terms of sound and at the level of morphology. Another type of difficulties that can be found among EFL readers is the existence of various meaning within the same word, i.e. words that have more than one meaning. According to Singh (2014) “Reading quickly to find information, reading quickly to get overall meaning and understanding specialist vocabulary are ranked as the top challenges in academic reading practice”. Not having enough time is the biggest problem for most people taking the reading test. Every students follow the different types of reading techniques and strategies while taking IELTS test. However, they get various types of challenges like: tough grammatical structure, not given enough time etc.

In the context of Nepal, in many institutions mostly in Kathmandu valley IELTS course is being provided to test IELTS, all skills of language are being tested along with comprehension test. It is a highly valid and standard test of four language skills. Among language skills, reading skill is taken as complex than others. I also could not escape with reading comprehension problem. So, I wanted to conduct this research which is different than others research work.

I have included IELTS students and their challenges to reading comprehension. In this research, I wanted to explore the challenges of reading comprehension faced by IELTS students. I was very curious to know that what types of challenges are faced by IELTS students, how they face the challenges of reading comprehension. And it is one of the least researched areas within the education field. Even, there is no any proper research which has been carried in Department of English education. Most of researcher just focused on IELTS techniques, perception towards IELTS, writing, listening, speaking techniques and strategies area but they missed about issues, problems and challenges. So I wanted to explore challenges in reading comprehension.

### **Rationale of the Study**

This study is focused on what types of reading challenges appear while students taking examination. The result of the research are expected to beneficial those candidates who take IELTS and directly and indirectly involved in IELTS course. Because they could be aware about reading challenges and prepare for it. It is also beneficial for IELTS experts, language practitioners and language trainers for reading

skill. Similarly IELTS instructors are also beneficial, they can also the finding to diagnose the common challenges that the students face in the classroom as well as the real test. This work is also useful as reference material for the research beginners. Likewise, it would be beneficial to curriculum designers as well as text book writers as they could include the materials of ample exposure for teacher in their interest. All the students, IELTS instructors, linguists, researchers and other people as well who are interested in English language would be benefited from this study.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of this study were as follows:

- a) To explore the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students.
- b) To provide some pedagogical implications of the study.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following questions:

- a) What are the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students?
- b) What would be the pedagogical implication of this study?

### **Delimitation of the Study**

It is very difficult to include a large area in this kind of small research due to the limited time and resources. Thus, this study had the following delimitations.

- The research was delimited to the 4 IELTS students in Kathmandu Valley.
- Only 4IELTS students who had already taken IELTS examination were selected as sample of this study.
- The study was delimited to narrative inquiry research design.
- Only purposive sampling procedure was used to select sample.
- In-depth interview/narrative interview was employed as a method of data collection.



- The name of the respondent students and institutes were pseudonymously used.

### **Operational Definitions of the Key Terms**

The definition of the specific terms used in the study for the investigation are said to be operational definitions. Some of such specific terms' definitions are as follows:

**IELTS:** International English Language Testing System. To assess the English proficiency of non-native speaker of the language who intend to study in institution where English is the language of instruction.

**IELTS's Students:** Those students who have already taken IELTS examination from British Council for abroad study in Kathmandu valley.

**Reading:** To understand the meaning of symbols, signs, gestures by looking at them and incorporating them mentally.

**Comprehension:** refers to the act or the fact of grasping the meaning, or understanding.

**Challenges:** In this research, challenges refers to the challenges to reading comprehension tackled by IELTS students while taking IELTS examination.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Review of Literature**

This chapter includes the review of related theoretical literature and empirical literature with their relation and implication for the study and conceptual framework.

#### **Review of Theoretical Literature**

Under this review of theoretical literature, I have incorporated challenges in reading comprehension, strategies of reading comprehension, stage of reading skill, skills involved in reading, types of reading, history of the ielts program,, ielts syllabus, ielts reading band score and ielts exams in Nepal.

#### **Issues of Reading Comprehension**

Reading skills refers to the ability to understand written text. Having strong reading comprehension skill is also necessary for passing achievement tests and for being able to read effectively for one's career. Reading allows the reader to make sense of what the text is about. Strategic reading methods can help students achieve not only their academic needs, but more importantly their life goals.

Reading has been defined in many ways. Ur (1996,p.138) states "Reading means reading and understanding". Reading helps to recognize and comprehend the knowledge and information contained in text. Reading is not only the receptive skill, but also an active skills reading constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions.

Learners apply various types of reading techniques to overcome reading issues and problems like: global reading techniques, problem solving reading techniques, supportive reading techniques. However, students have to face different types of problems, challenges and issues while taking reading test. Not having enough time is the biggest problem for most people taking the reading test.

According to Alghail & Mahfoodh (2016, p. 376) Challenges in reading comprehension.

- a. Identifying supporting ideas\ examples
- b. Reading carefully to understand a text.
- c. Identifying key ideas.
- d. Understanding key ideas. (understanding organization of a text)
- e. Taking brief, relevant notes.
- f. Using own words in note taking.
- g. Reading quickly to get overall meaning.
- h. Reading quickly to find information.
- i. Working out meaning of difficult words.
- j. Understanding specialist vocabulary.

### **Strategies of Reading comprehension**

According to Singh (2014, p. 82) Strategies to overcoming the challenges in academic Reading practices

- a. Read the assigned materials more items.  
Assigned means designated or set something aside for a specific purpose. Assigned materials include all documentation, reports, tests, summaries, presentations. Read different items of assigned materials related to own field help to the students to overcome the reading challenges.
- b. Read extensively in your discipline area.  
Read extensively means, read in a way that covers or affects a large area. The students should read deeply and cover a large area of their discipline area.
- c. Refer to your first language text\ material for reference.  
It is a strategy of reading comprehension to overcome the reading challenges. If the students cannot understand second language or the language in which questions is asked then they can refer their first language for easy to understand and overcome the reading challenges.

- d. Use dictionary.

Use dictionary is another most fruitful strategy of reading comprehension to overcome the reading challenges. In the reading comprehension text most of the students feel difficult to understand tough vocabulary. So, students have to use dictionary as much as possible. Using dictionary habit is really support to overcome the reading challenges.

- e. Read articles with a focus on mastering English speakers' language use.

It is also effective strategy of reading comprehension text to overcome the reading challenges. English speaker's language is more accurate, systematic and used more tough vocabulary and grammatical structure than native speakers. So, read articles with a focus on mastering English speakers' language use enhance reading ability of students.

### **Stage of Reading Skill**

According to Brown (1994, p. 94) a good reader can follow the following steps.

#### **1. Before Reading**

Before reading is the main stage and a good reader should follow it. Before reading students think and predict about the background of the content. They are briefly mentioned below:

**a) Set a propose for reading**

A good reader thinks if she will be reading to find out what happens in a story or to learn specific information.

**b) Preview the Text**

A good students can understand about the text looking at the titles, pictures captions under pictures heading bold faced prints and other graphics.

**c) Activate Background knowledge**

Before reading students should think about what they already known about the content what they will read.

**d) Predict**

Looking titles, pictures and length of the text reader can think what might happen in the story, what words may be used, what information the text might contain.

**2) During Reading**

It is the crucial stage of reading while reading students read the text meticulously. Good readers follow the following steps during reading.

**a) Cross-check**

While reading students check one cue with another. Ask oneself, “Does this word look right? Does this sound right? Does this sentence make sense?”

**b) Re-Read**

During reading when problems occur in the text, students return to the beginning of a sentence or paragraph and read again.

**c) Predict and Confirm**

To be clearer about the text ask oneself, “What word do I expect to see? What do I think will happen next? Did that make sense? And, am I finding the questions about this topic?”

**d) Skip, Read on, and Go Back**

While reading sometimes students can skip an unfamiliar word and read on to the end of the sentence or paragraph, thinking about what would make sense. Then, using the context, go back and reread to try to determine the word.

**e) Connect Background knowledge to the information in the Text**

To get more information and to make it more strength students should think about what they already known about the subject and the kind of materials they are reading. A good reader thinks about how information similar to what they already known about the topic, event or person.

**f) Think about Explicit and Implicit Information**

A good reader think about what information is given directly. They think also about what they know from reading that is not directly stated in words such as how a character's actions so feeling or why things may have happened based on the clues.

**g) Stop and Review**

If students are reading a longer text, they stop and think and what has happened in the story so far or what information has been given.

**3) After Reading**

To make clear concept about the text that students have to read, this stage is mandatory. For this purpose students can follow the following steps.

**a) Retell and Summarize**

After reading the text tell someone or write what happen in the story, including character, plot and important events. If students read nonfiction pieces, they review what information was presented.

**b) Use Graphic Summary**

To show what was included in the text. Students can use a story map, biography wheel and vein diagram.

**c) Draw Conclusion**

What predictions students made before reading and during reading they should think about it. A good reader relates information to what they already knew about the topic. Were our questions answered? Do students have more questions about the subject?

**d) Reread**

A good reader should re-read the sections of the text understand it better.

**e) Discuss and Respond**

What students have read they should talk with someone about it. During discussion ask each other questions; look back at the book to defend our opinions.

Three stages of reading skill were found i.e. before reading, while reading and after reading. A good readers use all types of stage of reading skill while reading the text and passage. It is important to remember that none of these skills of reading is considered 'the best'. All types of reading skill should preferably be used in combination with each other. The students should be able to use all the skill.

### **Skills Involved in Reading**

Reading is not a single; rather it involves varieties of sub skills. Various scholars have given different sub skills of reading. According to Grellet, (1981,p.4-5) the main skills of reading are:

- ) Understanding explicit stated information
- ) Recognizing the script of the language
- ) Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
- ) Understanding information when not explicitly stated
- ) Understanding conceptual meaning
- ) Understanding the communicative value of sentences and utterances
- ) Understanding relation within sentence
- ) Understanding relation between the partial of the text through lexical cohesion devices
- ) Understanding cohesion between past of texts through grammatical cohesion devices
- ) Interpreting the text by going outside it
- ) Recognizing indicators in discusses
- ) Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse
- ) Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
- ) Extracting salient points to summarizes
- ) Selecting extracting of relevant points from the text
- ) Basic reference skills
- ) Trans coding information of diagrammatic display.

Moreover, Harmer, (2001,p.201) mentions five sub skills of reading.

- ) Identifying the topic

- ) Predicting and guessing
- ) Reading for general understanding
- ) Reading for specific information
- ) Interpreting the text

In fact, reading comprises several sub skills. We do not mean that it is just a process of vocalizations of printed symbols, but it involves the skills like decoding, deducing, deciphering, comprehending understanding, extracting and responding required information from the written text.

### **Types of Reading**

There are different types of reading. Reading can be categorized on the basis of different factors like, speed, noise, attention, purpose and the learner's level. According to Cross (1992, p. 261) the main types of reading identified as below.

#### **1) Silent Reading**

Silent reading means reading something without producing noise and vocalization. It is appropriate at highest advanced level and is considered as the best kind of reading. It is done to comprehend, the written text as reading is basically done to comprehend to message of the text. It involves looking at sentences and understanding the message conveyed, on other words making sense of a written text. It does not normally involve saying the words we read not even silent inside our read".

#### **2) Reading Aloud**

Loud reading is also known as oral reading is concerned more with pronunciation and articulator practice them with comprehension and inner thought. Reading aloud is as useful for the students of early stage because they cannot pretend to reading in this reading. Students are asked to read aloud to check their pronunciation, speech, tone, pitch etc. poetry, rhymes and dialogues are useful texts for this activity.



**3) Rapid Reading**

Rapid reading is also known as faster reading. In rapid reading students read the text quickly and to achieve greater degree of understanding.

**4) Skimming**

It is also quick reading where the eyes run through the text very carefully to find out the gist or theme of the text. It requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. It is the rapid survey of the text to grasp the central idea. Bhattarai (1986,p.129) said, "Skimming is making a rapid survey of texts, passages, articles and books to find out what it mainly consists of. It helps the learner to find out specific information in a book".

**5) Scanning**

Scanning is also one of the specific reading technique in which readers read the text to find out particular piece of information. While scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do even follow the linearity of the passage. Cross (1992,p.260) suggests the following activities for practicing scanning.

- ) Finding words for old knowledge
- ) Locate grammar features
- ) Finding a specified advertisement
- ) Comparing dates
- ) Shopping lists
- ) Make word sets and
- ) Newspaper headlines

**6) Extensive Reading**

It is done for emotional gratification\pleasure. Students read without the aid of a teacher i.e. this reading is self-reading. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding. It involves reading silently and quickly to derive the whole meaning without necessarily understanding each individual word or structure.

## 7) **Intensive Reading**

Intensive reading is also known as detailed reading. In intensive reading we are required to understand everything we read and we are able to answer the comprehensive questions. This technique is used especially for the study of words, phrases, sentences patterns and other related aspects of the language.

Cross (1992,p.262) suggest the following activities for practicing intensive reading.

- ) Match noun verbs
- ) Split sentences
- ) Combine sentences
- ) Make summaries
- ) Re-order sentences
- ) Re-order paragraphs
- ) Fill the gaps
- ) Complete table and graphs
- ) Take sides
- ) Read and choice
- ) Select a summary
- ) Compare versions
- ) Identified facts
- ) Focus on form and style

## **History of the IELTS Program**

The English language Testing Service (ELTS) as IELTS was launched in 1980 by Cambridge English Language Assessment (then known as VCLES) and the British Council. It had an innovative format, which reflected changes in language learning and teaching, including the growth in ‘communicative’ language learning and ‘English for specific purpose’. Test takes were ‘intended to reflect the use of language in the ‘real world’.

During the 1980, test taker numbers were low (4,000 in 1981 rising to 10,000 in 1985) and there were practical difficulties administering the test. As a result, the ELTS Revision Project was set up to oversee the redesign of the test. In order to have

international participation in the redesign, the international Development Program of Australia University and Colleges (IDP), now known as IDP: IELTS Australia, joined Cambridge English Language Assessment and the British Council to form the International IELTS partnership which delivers to test to this day. This international partnership was reflected in the new name for the test: The international English Language Testing System (IELTS).

IELTS started in 1889. Test takers took two non-specialized modules, Listening and Speaking, and two specialized modules, Reading and Writing. Test takers numbers rose by approximately 15% per year and by 1995 there were 43,000 test takers in 210 test centers around the world.

IELTS was revised again in 1995, with three main changes:

There was ONE Academic Reading Module and ONE Academic Writing module (previously there had been a choice of three field-specific Reading and Writing Module)

The thematic link between Reading and Writing task was removed to avoid confusing the assessment of reading and writing ability.

The General Training Reading and Writing modules were brought into line with the Academic Reading and Writing modules (something, length of response, reporting of scores).

(Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International-english-language-testing-system>)

### **IELTS Syllabus**

The IELTS is widely recognized as reliable means of assessing the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication. IELTS consists of four components. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking. There is a choice of Reading and Writing tests according to whether a candidate is taking the Academic or General Training module.

<b>Academic</b>	<b>General Training</b>
For candidates wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and for those seeking professional registration.	For candidates wishing to migrate to an English-speaking country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK), and those wishing to train or study at below degree level.

The test components are taken in the following order.

### Listening

4 sections, 40 items approximately 30 minutes

Academic Reading    or    General Training Reading

3 sections, 40 items                      3 sections, 40 items

60 minutes                                      60 minutes

Academic Writing                      General Training writing

2 tasks                                      or    2 tasks

60 minutes                                      60 minutes

### Speaking

11 to 14 minutes

Total test Time

2 hours 44 minutes

Source: IELTS Book8: CUP

For general training reading, the test consists of three sections with 40 questions. The texts are taken from notices, advertisements, leaflets, newspapers, instruction manuals, books and magazines. The first section contains texts relevant to basic linguistic survival in English with tasks mainly concerned with providing factual information. The second focuses on the work context and involves texts of more complex language. The third section involves reading an extended text, with a more complex structure, but instructive rather than argumentative texts.

Here my main concern is reading challenges for academic reading. For academic reading, the test consists of three sections with 40 questions. There are three texts,

which are taken from journals, books, magazines and newspapers. The test is on topics of general interest. At least one test contains detailed logical argument.

A variety of question types is used: including multiple choice, identification information (True or False and Not Given), identifying writer's views/claims (Yes, No, Not given), matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, short answer questions.

### **IELTS Reading Score**

IELTS Reading text has 40 questions with each correct answer given one more. The score you get out of 40 is then converted into band score. The scores are reported in both whole and half bands.

### **Academic Reading Module**

<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Band Score</b>
39-40	9
37-38	8.5
35-36	8
33-34	7.5
30-32	7
27-29	6.5
23-26	6
19-22	5.5
15-18	5
13-14	4.5
10-12	4
8-9	3.5
6-7	3
4-5	2.5
<b>Total: 40</b>	<b>Band Score: 9</b>

## General Training reading module

Correct Answer	Band Scores
40	9
39	8.5
37-38	8
36	7.5
34-35	7
32-33	6.5
30-31	6
27-29	5.5
23-26	5
19-22	4.5
15-18	4
12-14	3.5
9-11	3
6-8	2.5
<b>Total: 40</b>	<b>Band Scores: 9</b>

(Retrieved From: <https://www.ieltsachieve.com/ielts-reading>)

## IELTS Exams in Nepal

Many students from Nepal are interested for abroad study, the most developed countries like: the USA, Australia, UK, New Zealand Denmark and Canada. To continue their study and achieve the goals from different colleges and universities on different subjects and fields, they should have a certain level of English. IELTS tests the proficiency level in English of the candidates in an international level. Therefore, so many candidates take IELTS examination in Nepal each year. IELTS examinations are jointly conducted by British Council, IDP IELTS Australia and University of Cambridge, ESOL Examinations.

Currently, IELTS test in Nepal are being conducted in the main five cities namely Kathmandu, Pokhara, Chitwan, Bhairahawa and Biratnagar. Every month, 3-4 tests are set-up in Nepal.

## **Review of Empirical Literature**

A number of research works have been carried out under the Department of English Education in the faculty of education, T.U, and in other institutions related to the issues of this study. The research works have been reviewed as follows:

Adhikari (2013) Carried out research on “the techniques used by IELTS instructors while teaching writing skill”. The objectives of this research was to explore techniques for teaching skills in IELTS classes specially the writing one, which were merely suggestive to the instructors, learners as well as any concerned personalities of IELTS for the language proficiency and skill development. He used survey research design. He selected 10 IELTS instructors from 10 different institutes as a sample. The sample was selected by using non-random sampling procedure. He found that the techniques used while teaching writing skill in IELTS were different from instructor to instructor even though in some condition they followed a symmetrical path of instructing, which are standard techniques of teaching.

Jethara (2015) Carried out a research study on “Reading strategies used by TOEFL students”. The purpose of his study was to find out reading strategies used by TOEFL students face while reading the texts. He used survey research design. Sample of this research were forty students of different institutions which were providing TOEFL course in Kathmandu. The sample was selected by using purposive non-random sampling procedure. The study found that students only got information about the text but did not emphasize structure of language and language use in it. And they skip difficult words instead of using dictionary and reference materials. Before reading the text everybody guess the main idea or information but do not check/compare prediction with the real information after reading it.

Rana (2016) Completed a research “Perception on IELTS by Nepalese candidates”. This study aimed to describe the overall perception on IELTS by Nepalese candidates in terms of formats, modules, components/ sub-tests and types of questions. He used survey research design. Population of this research was all the candidates who had already taken IELT examination in Nepal. Altogether 30 IELTS students were selected from different institutes and consultancies in the Kathmandu valley. The sample was selected by using purposive non-random sampling procedure. As the

finding showed that there are some specific areas of difficulties in terms of format, modules, components/sub test and types of question in IELTS for the candidates. Most of the candidates for IELTS were found taking the test for abroad study rather for migration or employment. Reading was the most difficult component/sub test among all four skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Even other difficulty areas are plotted on the basis of question types, checking parameters and skills.

Khadka (2017) Carried out research on “Reading Techniques used by IELTS students”. The objectives of the study was to find out reading techniques used by IELTS students, to explore the problems IELTS students face while reading the text. Her research design was survey research design. Population of her study were eight different institutions of Kathmandu valley and forty students was selected as a sample. She used purposive non-random sampling procedure. The finding on her study was: the students used three techniques; global reading techniques, problem solving reading techniques and supportive reading techniques for reading improvement. Most of the students used problem solving techniques and most of the students found the techniques beneficial. They responded that problem solving strategies helped to enhance their reading development.

Adhikari (2017) Conducted research on “listening proficiency of bachelor level students based on TOEFL Test”. The study aimed to find out the proficiency of bachelor level students in the listening skill in terms of identifying the topic and main idea, listening for details, determining attitude and purpose making inferences and predications, categorizing information and summarizing topics. The research design was survey design. Altogether 30 bachelor level students were selected as a sample. The sample was selected by using purposive non-random sampling procedure. The study showed that a good majority of them made inferences and predictions and very few of them summarized the text after listening. The overall proficiency of them was below the average. The students felt difficulty in the exercise related to the listening conversation in comparison to listening to lecture class.



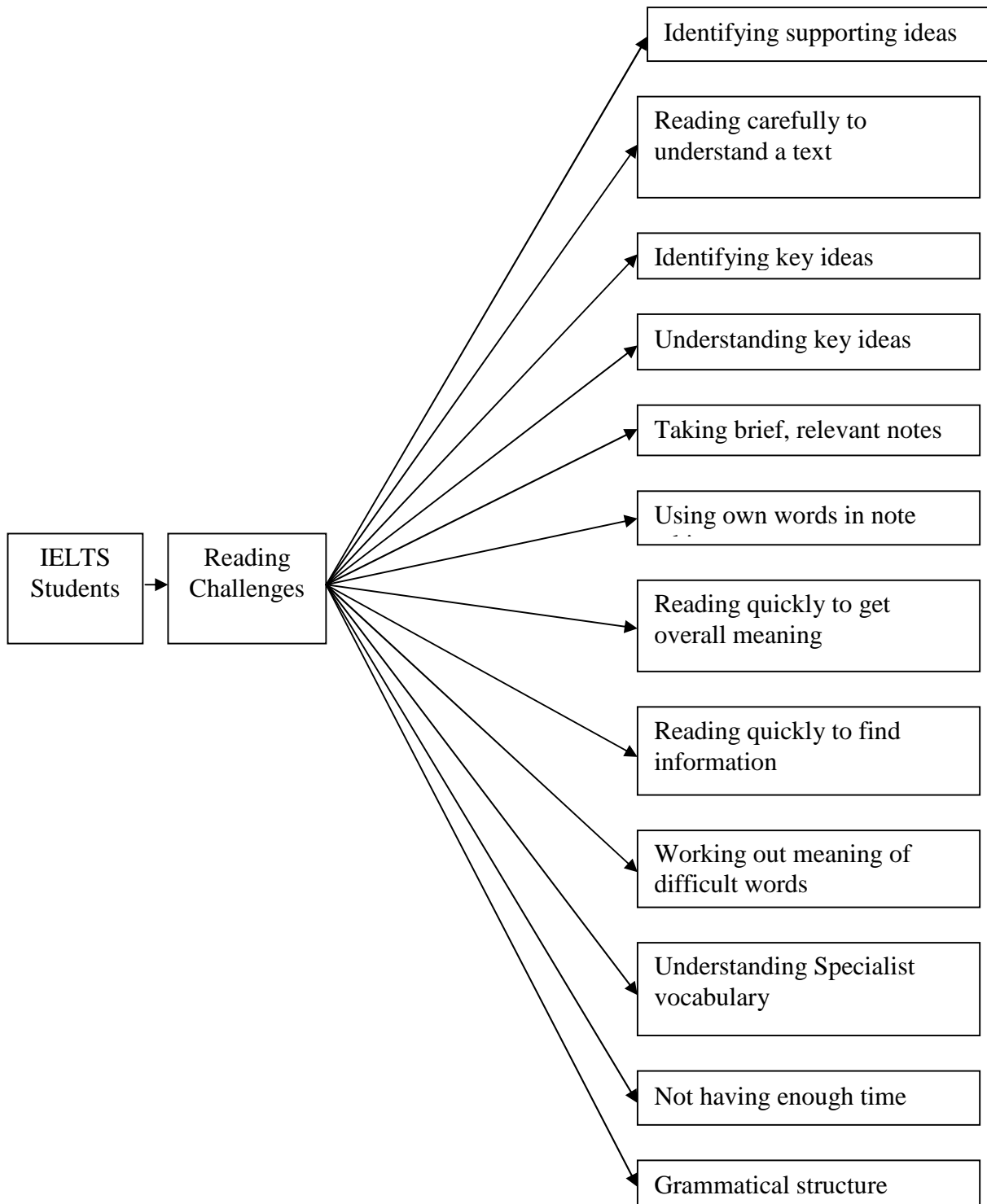
## **Implications of the Review for the study**

I have got lots of ideas of objectives, research questions, methodological procedures and other things too in order to complete my research in this form. Above reviewed literature (theoretical and empirical) is similar and handful for the study. This review of the study obtained information from varieties of books, theses and journal articles and soon. These entire sources help me to build the ideas related to research problems, challenges, methodology and contextualize the finding and provide an opportunity for critical analysis. I have consult the books of Brown (1994), Harmer (2001), Cambridge English IELTS (2013), IELTS Hand book and other books too in order to develop my theoretical insight of my study as well.

I have reviewed Adhikari (2013) has carried out study on “The techniques used by IELTS instructors while teaching writing skill”, and Jethara (2015) has conducted research entitled “Reading strategies used by TOEFL students”. Likewise, Rana (2016) has completed a research on “Perception on IELTS by Nepalese candidates”. Khadka (2017) “Reading techniques used by IELTS students”, Similarly, Adhikari (2017) has conducted a research entitled “Listening proficiency of Bachelor level students based on TOEFL test”. These five different studies reviewed were conducted regarding the International English Language Testing System area. These studies are to some extent related to my study. These studies are similar each other and my study is different from them in the sense that there is no any proper research which conduct in an internationally valid and standard test through the issues of reading comprehension in the Department of English education. Above review helped me in writing the theoretical literature about the language testing system and reading skill. It also helped me to broaden the horizon of my knowledge of research problem. It can enable us to contextualize our finding in relation to the existing body of our knowledge. It provided with theoretical background for my study which helped to develop my theoretical ideas and broaden related to reading challenges, reading strategies, reading skill and IELTS.

## Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a visual representation of the task. The sole aim of conceptual framework is to exhibit the connection between and among the various variables of the study. To carry out this research, I had consulted different document concerned with the study and literature review. On the basis of all the reviewed documents, designed the following conceptual framework to proceed my study.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Research Methodology**

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, selected, process and analyze information about a topic. In a research paper the methodology selection allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

I adopted the following methodology to carry out the research.

#### **Design and Method of the Study**

The research design refers to the overall strategy that researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring researcher effectively address the research problem.

Design of the study is a plan, structure and strategy of the investigation so conceived as to obtain answer to reach question or problem. Kathari (2000,p.39) Says, "A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collecting and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure". A research design is procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer the question validity, objectivity, accurately and economically. Decisions regarding what where, when, how much, by what means concerning an inquiry or a research study constitute a research design. I adopted Narrative inquiry research design in order to complete the study.

Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research. Narrative inquiry or narrative analysis emerged as a discipline from within the broader field of qualitative research in the early 20th century. Narrative uses field texts, such as stories, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos (and other artifacts), and life experience, as the unit of analysis to research and understand the way people create meaning in their lives as narratives. It focuses on the organization of human knowledge more than merely the collection and processing of data. It also implies that knowledge.

Schwandt (2007), “Narrative inquiry is the interdisciplinary study of the activities involved in generating and analyzing stories of life experiences (e.g., life histories, narrative interviews, journals, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies) and reporting that kind of research”. (p.255, as cited in Ojha & Bhandari, 2017). Narrative inquiry is the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through story telling. Narrative inquiry is appropriate to many social science fields. The entire field of study is often used in disciplines such as literacy theory, history, anthropology drama, art, film, theology, philosophy, psychology, linguistic education, politics, nutrition, medicine and even aspects of evolutionary biological science. Sapkota (2017,p.170) States, “Narrative inquiry is a research methodology that is growing in acceptance and practice in such discipline as nursing, medicine, and law, and especially organizational studies, therapy in health fields, social work, counseling, psychotherapy, and teaching”.

Ojha & Bhandari (2017,p.257) “The purpose of narrative inquiry is to reflect an individual’s life experience with the help of the stories s/he shares, the individuals are inquired about ‘what’ happened in their life. They also share ‘how’ and ‘why’ it happened. The researcher aims to generalize the perception and experience of the individuals with the other people in similar situation”. So I became more interested and then selected this narrative research design according to my purpose.

### **Population, Sample, and Sampling Strategies of the Study.**

The population of this study was IELTS students of Kathmandu Valley. The sample of this study included 4 IELTS students who had already taken IELTS examination. I employed narrative interviews to 4 IELTS students. The sample of the study was selected through non-random purposive sampling procedure.

### **Source of Data**

Both primary and secondary source of data were used for this study.

### **Primary Source of Data**

The primary data was collected from the 4 IELTS students who had already taken IELTS examination. And, the primary data was obtained from in-depth narrative interviews.

### **Secondary Source of Data**

The secondary information was derived from different printed and electronic materials like, books, articles and documents relating to the present study.

### **Research Tools**

I employed in-depth narrative interview with IELTS students as a tool of data collection.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Initially, I prepared effective IELTS students narrative guideline on the basis of objectives of the study. Then, the selected institutes and the concerned authorities were asked for permission to carry out the research and explained the purpose of my study. Afterwards, 4 IELTS students were selected as the informants purposively. Selected respondents were requested for their genuine narrations. Then, the selected respondent students were asked for their stories of different kinds of challenges in reading comprehension text according to their experiences. At the same time, their narratives were recorded by using my mobile phone and also noted some worthwhile information in my diary. After that recorded narratives were transcribed without losing their intensions. At the end, their narratives and stories were coded and decoded into several themes and analyzed them thematically to derive the findings.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis involved transcribing and translating and typing them up. Data was analyzed through narratives. I began a detailed analysis with a coding and process. Similarly, I developed themes by incorporating data directly addressing my research questions, and objectives and these themes were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively using in a thematic approach.

## **Ethical Consideration**

Research involves human being as participants. Ethical consideration refers to the values that a researcher has to follow during the research process. I followed the different codes of conducts while doing the research work. For example: getting permissions from concerned people, maintain privacy of respondents and preservation of data and maintaining validity. I employed the following safeguards:

First, I made sure that their participation in the study was altogether voluntary. Then, the participants were assured that the information they gave me would be strictly confidential and their anonymity would be maintained. They were verbally articulated the purpose of the research given a complete picture of how the data would be used and it was anticipated to derive from and would sure they were comprehended entirely about what I said. Afterwards, my research was visualized to carried out so as to complete a requirement for drawing up my, master's thesis. Finally, the interviewees were assured that their interests, wishes, and rights would be ensured regarding the reporting of data. The participants were assured that the data that they gave would not be used for any others purpose.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Results and Discussion**

This section contains analysis and interpretation of the collected qualitative data. The data obtained through the narratives were coded with the themes and analyzed descriptively on the basis of my research questions. Four respondents were named as A, B, C and D to maintain anonymity and secrecy their identities.

#### **Analysis of data and Interpretation of the Results**

I commenced collecting information from my respondent students through their narratives that include the challenges of reading comprehension text they faced in IELTS examination. The background and information of each respondent elicited their narratives were presented in appendix. The results drawn from those IELTS students' narratives were interpreted thematically.

So as to elicit the intended hands-on data. I established rapport with the selected students. In this chapter, I presented the details of the students' lived experience regarding the challenges they faced in IELTS reading text. For this purpose, I collected the data via in-depth interviews\students' narratives by selecting four students through purposive non-random sampling procedures. The selected students were the ones who had already taken IELTS examination from British Council. The data was collected for the serenity of the first objective.

The data obtained from the students' narratives were transcribed by using the conventional 'listen and note' technique. Having coded the data specific themes were generated. I have presented themes in the analysis below. The headings are followed by verbatim of the respondents and their analysis and interpretation. The data were analyzed and interpreted in-terms of different themes.

#### **Time Allocation**

This theme is generated from the student's narratives which exhibit that IELTS students could not complete all forty questions within given time. Regarding this students' respondent A said:

*At initial phase, I felt difficulty in terms of time. I had to finish forty questions within one hour. So, not given enough time became one of major challenge for me in the examination and mock test too.*

From this extracted of student A's response. It can be coincided that he says in the interview that he used to read different kinds of articles, newspapers and books which helped to him to find out the correct answer of all types of questions, but he was not able to attempt all questions on time. In the similar vein, student B stated:

*Ummm..... I think reading comprehension text of IELTS and reading text of colleges\school's courses are somehow similar. Though, when I was taking my mock test and final test I felt difficulty because of insufficient time. And I am good at reading skill but I could not get good marks because of time allocation. So, insufficient time became challenge for me.*

From student B's response as well, it is further cleared that time allocation have also became one of the major challenge for her. Even if she was good at reading skill. She used to practice herself as much as she could. She could not able to get high\good mark in the examination. From this it can be interpreted that because of the time allocation she could not get success as she thought. Furthermore student C regarding the same factor articulated:

*Actually, we did three tasks..... we have to complete forty questions within one hour that's why time allocation was one of the major challenge that I faced during reading comprehension text. Though I practiced more and more. I used to follow an authentic materials.*

I found student C's response is similar to students A and B's response. She said that in spite of her hard work she could not complete all questions on time properly. Moreover, I also talked to another student in matter of something who stated:



*I faced various kinds of challenges during comprehension text.  
However, limitation of time was one of major challenge for me.  
Because model of questions of IELTS reading text is totally different  
than which I read and solved questions at my school or college.*

Student D is also in the similar idea that he faced challenge in terms of time because he could not attend all questions on time. Even he could not able to get best mark as he thought.

From the discussion above it is true to say that all the students participating at the interview were being felt difficulty by the time allocation. All of the students said that they did not include all questions on time and they could not able to get good mark as they think because the insufficient time became major challenge for them. Therefore, if they want to secure good marks at reading skill in IELTS examination, they should be diligent and practice more.

### **Complex Vocabulary**

This them is extracted from the IELTS students' narratives. This shows the idea that the IELTS students felt difficulty in terms of using tough words in reading comprehension text in IELTS course. All the respondents said that they found difficult words which they never read even heard. Regarding this, student A said:

*Umm..... Though I belong in science faculty and I used to read  
different kinds of articles, journals, story books, novels etc but I felt  
difficult in terms of vocabulary. Even i could not understand reading  
text easily at initial phase. I do have good vocabulary power but I did  
not know the synonyms of all vocabulary that's why uses of tough  
vocabulary became another challenge for me.*

This excerpts show that the student A faced challenge in using of difficult vocabulary because he says that he used to read different kinds of reading materials and books, stories, novels etc. In the similar vein, student B stated:

*Actually.... My schooling background was good. I mean I read school level education on English medium until I have been studying in private institution. I thought that i am good at vocabulary power because i used to read English materials only. I used to speak in English. But when I joined IELTS class I felt that I know nothing and I said what a poor at vocabulary power I am? I would solve question haphazardly I could not get success at first. Even I also could not secure with good marks in the examination as I thought.*

From student B's response, it is clear that she could not get success with good marks due to the tough vocabulary. But her schooling was good. Further with the same regards student C added:

*Yes..... I did not have wide range of vocabulary and that hinder me during reading comprehension text in IELTS examination.*

From student C's response as well, uses of tough vocabulary became challenge for her because she says lack of vocabulary power she could not get good marks, but she practiced more and labor hard to have secure with excellent marks. Moreover, I also talked to another student in matter of same thing who stated:

*Ah..... I think use of tough vocabulary is one of the major challenge for me. Because of tough vocabulary, I couldn't understand what is question or what does question mean and I could not get correct answer too.*

Student D is also the similar idea that he was feeling difficult in the reading comprehension text. Though he came from boarding school and knew many vocabularies. He could not find main points and get right answer on time.

To conclude all the students' response mentioned and discussed above, it can be said that all the students who had already taken IELTS examination from British Council

were being faced challenge in terms of difficult vocabulary, therefore they should be diligent by themselves.

### **Key Ideas**

To find out the key ideas is one of the task of reading comprehension text in IELTS course. IELTS students have to get key ideas by reading each paragraph and whole passage. However, the students' respondents chosen for the interview were found that they faced difficult to find out key ideas. Due to which, they were found to be failed to get expected band score. Regarding this student, A said:

*Yeah I felt difficult to find out key ideas. You know, reading course of IELTS is more difficult than others. I tried my best as I could. I was habituated in school\college's course and I followed some ideas that's why it appeared as one of the challenge for me.*

From student A's response, it can be revealed that he used some skills which he had used in school\colleges. Those skills did not help him find out key ideas. In this regard, student B shared:

*Actually..... I faced different kinds of problems in terms of key ideas at initial phase like; not include all questions, no read all paragraphs, even I was not regular in the class and I had not speed reading skill. Reading text of IELTS course is needed to read fast and understand the paragraph, meaning at the same time. I couldn't do at the beginning. But I can do and I do not feel difficult.*

From analyzing the student B's response we can conclude that she also faced problems in terms of key ideas. As she said, she faced the problems at beginning. She does not feel difficult now. In this respect, student C articulated:

*Ahh..... I did not have fast reading skill and then those passage which I got within reading comprehension text was longer that's why I*

*couldn't find key ideas. I also could not complete the answer within one hour. So that It was another challenge for me.*

From her response, we can say that she also found to be worried because of slow reading skill. She could not able to find key ideas. Similarly student D also articulated:

*Well, ahh..... We had learnt lots of strategies to overcome the reading challenges. But I was not able to find out key ideas because I don't have good skill\knowledge of scanning and skimming. And there was not enough time too. We have to finish all questions on time. .... so..... It became challenging for me.*

This utterance of student D also expresses the similar idea that she also faced key ideas as a challenge. He says that in spite of having various strategies he felt difficult because he had not good at scanning and skimming skill\knowledge.

From the above mentioned analysis based on data excerpts, it can be interpreted that all the students were found that they faced challenge in terms of key ideas. They said that having various strategies and getting regular classes they faced problems because of different syllabus, question pattern and time. Thus, it is clear that if the students were going to take IELTS course they would have knowledge\skills of flow reading skill, scanning and skimming.

### **Grammatical Structure**

Grammar is a backbone of an English language. It is as essential as human need their backbone. Without grammar language does not give meaning and we cannot understand language too. So, grammatical structure is one of the essential aspects of language. All language learners should understand the grammatical structure. But the English language learners who took IELTS examination faced challenge in terms of grammatical structure. Regarding this student, A said:

*In fact, I from boarding school and my schooling was good. You know... that ... grammatical structure is very important for us.*

*However, I was not able understand easily because way of reading comprehension text is used differently than other course.*

The utterance made of student A highlights the fact that the using of reading text in IELTS course and other reading text. He says that he did not understand text easily though he belonged boarding\English medium school. In the similar vein, student B articulated:

*Yes, I agree with your question. At the initial phase I faced grammatical problems like; I did not understand questions and text, how to find the correct answer. Slowly, I improved my weakness. I used to read more, I did practice more and then I did not face such kinds of problems in the final examination.*

From student B's utterance above, it can be conferred that she also faced problems because of grammatical structure. She says that lack of practice and lack of reading habit she faced such kind of problems. Later, she did not face difficult due to grammatical structure. Furthermore, in the same regards, student C shared:

*I did not have enough grammatical knowledge and for questions or term questions like complete the passage, complete the sentence like that and then key words hindered me during doing reading comprehension text.*

From the student C's narrative it can be revealed that she also faced grammatical challenges. She says that she had not good grammatical knowledge at all that's why it hindered to her in the examination. Regarding the same theme, student D also commented:

*Yeah ..... grammar is very significant thing for every language. But I am not good at English because I am multilingual and my mother tongue is not English. So, I faced many problems even I could not get good score.*

This response of student D also expressed the similar that lack of grammatical knowledge which hinders their band score.

From the abovementioned analysis and interpretation, it can be interpreted that all the students were being faced with grammatical challenges. They said that lack of grammatical knowledge they could not get expected marks in the exam and it hinders to their band score.

### **Stress of Exam**

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes people feel frustrated, angry or nervous. Regarding this theme the students' narratives express the idea that they were found that they faced the challenge in terms of stress of exam. All of the students said that they became nervous because of exam. Regarding this, student A said:

*Umm ..... at first before even fixing the quite expensive I have little pressure to secure good points at first, ..... even while going through classes I was little overwhelmed by the strategy you have to consider while doing regarding and writing section. But after a few test I feel comfortable about my reading speed and finding keywords.*

Based on student A's narratives, It can be said that he had little pressure to secure good point at initial phase. He felt difficult to use of strategy for reading and writing section. After practicing more mock test he did not feel stress. Further in the same regards, student D articulated:

*Yeah, I think it is challenge for IELTS students because they have much pressure, firstly we became nervous for the answer and left the questions while giving the exam. We have to do within limit time while we did one passage within twenty minutes and that's not enough time.*

From the narrative of student D who stated that he faced challenge of stress of exam because of much pressure and limited time. He says that, he has to finish one passage within twenty minutes.

Regarding this theme student B and C stated that they didn't feel stress of exam during examination.

To conclude the narrative of student A and student D above, it is coincided that the students of IELTS feel nervous and stress of exam. They have been facing challenges to solve passage because they are asked many passages and there is not enough time.

### **Boring Paragraph**

This theme is extracted from the IELTS students' narratives. This shows the idea that students faced challenges because of boring paragraphs. Among the four participants two students B and D said that they found difficult while doing reading comprehension text. Regarding this, student B said:

*Yes, ..... I faced various types of challenges while doing whole IELTS course not only reading skill. To talk about reading comprehension text, I felt bore because there are so many paragraphs in a single passage. And we IELTS students have to read same paragraphs twice, thrice and more for searching the correct answer. Although, limited time has been given to us, we have to do many paragraphs. That's why it is boring to us. Because of it may not complete all questions and might not be given correct answer too.*

This excerpt shows that the student B faced challenge due to boring paragraphs. He says that she has to read time and again the same paragraph for one question. In the similar vein, student D started:

*Umm ..... I felt difficult to find correct answer. Then I used to paragraphs time and again as possible as but I completed paragraphs I forget initial lines of paragraph because of long paragraphs. And I have to read same paragraph for different kinds of questions.*

Student D is also the similar idea that he was feeling difficult in the reading comprehension text. He says that he could not remember about the all paragraphs because the paragraphs are so many, long and boring.

From the discussion above it is true to say that student B and D participating at the interview were felt difficult by the boring and long paragraphs. Both students said that they had to read same paragraph for different kinds of questions time and again. They think that the long and many paragraphs became challenging and they also felt bored to do reading comprehension text.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **Conclusions and Implications**

In this chapter, I have presented the conclusion of the research work and the recommendations on the basis of analysis and interpretation of data. The conclusion and the recommendations have been drawn in below:

#### **Conclusions**

This present study has critically examined the Challenges of reading Comprehension faced by IELTS students. The result of this study confirms the challenges of reading comprehension while taking IELTS examination. After collecting and analyzing students' stories. It was found that challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students were: time allocation, tough vocabulary, key ideas, grammatical structure, stress of exam, boring paragraph.

Being based upon the findings and analysis of this study time allocation was one of the core challenge for them. Because of time limitation they could not get good band score. Even they could not complete all questions because they had to complete forty questions within one hour. The respondents revealed that despite of taking IELTS class regularly and read lots of related materials, they faced problems due to tough vocabulary and grammatical structure. The students got nervous due to stress of exam so that they could not give their best. In this study, participants explicitly mentioned that they felt difficult to find out key ideas. Because there are many passages and paragraphs even in a single passage. And they had to read same text twice or thrice for different types of questions so boring paragraph was another major challenge for them.

Finally, it can be concluded that IELTS students should have to do Meaningful practice and read an authentic materials as much as possible. And an authorized organization should seriously think about it. And thus, it is vital to take all the challenges into account so as to bring about paradigm shift in the career of students and stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of my research, the following recommendations have been made to be applicable at policy level and practice level.

### **Policy related**

On the basis of research findings and conclusion, I have made some recommendations which will be supportive for the policy makers regarding the things that they need to take into account to reduce the challenges of reading comprehension text in IELTS course in applicable at policy level are mentioned to the points as follows:

- ) The finding shows that time management was the core challenge in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students. Therefore, policy needs to be changed to increase the time allocated for the reading test in IELTS.
- ) The finding also reveals that IELTS students feel difficulty in understanding the reading text due to complex vocabulary and grammatical structure. So, the policy makers can think to simplify the vocabulary and grammatical structures they used in the reading text.
- ) As one of the finding shows that IELTS students feel difficulty in finding the key idea of the reading text. Therefore, the policy makers can make the policy to include the comprehensible text where students can guess the main idea with their appropriate effort.
- ) Finding shows that IELTS students feel stress during the IELTS exam. The policy makers can make some policy to reduce the stress during the exam.

### **Practice related**

As my study was based on finding out the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students, the findings of the study will be highly significant for the IELTS instructor, IELTS Examiner and question designer. The major implications of the study in this level are:

- ) By analyzing their lived experiences, it was found that IELTS students feel difficulty in time management. The IELTS Instructors need to provide the techniques to manage the time to solve the reading texts in time.
- ) The finding of the study shows that IELTS students feel stress during the exam. Therefore, the examiners should provide the comfortable environment during the exam in order to reduce the stress.
- ) The findings also show that IELTS students feel difficulty in comprehending the reading text. So, the question designer can select such reading text which can be understood with the appropriate effort.
- ) After analyzing the data, I have found that IELTS students felt that reading texts are boring. The IELTS examiner need to consider this issue to include the text that are interesting to read.

#### **Further research related**

IELTS has become the center of attraction to most of the youths these days. So, it can be the area of interest to many researcher, IELTS instructor and IELTS examiners. This study was limited to find out the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students. There might be many more areas for further investigation and exploration. While doing thesis, I came across many ideas and topics to be investigated in this area. However, I have pointed out some areas as follows:

- ) This study was limited to IELTS students of Kathmandu valley. It would be more interesting to explore the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students out of valley.
- ) This study was limited to four participants' in-depth story. More participants can be included for data collection so that data will be more validated.
- ) This study does not focus on the challenges of listening, speaking and writing skills faced by IELTS students. So, prospective researchers can explore these issues.

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## APPENDIX-A

### Narrative Guidelines

Dear informants,

These narrative guidelines have been prepared to draw data or information for the research work entitled “Challenges in Reading Comprehension Faced by IELTS students” under the supervision of Dr. **Purn Bahadur Kadel**, the lecturer at the central Department of English Education, Faculty of Education, T.U. Kirtipur. This research study attempts to explore the challenges in reading comprehension of IELTS.

Therefore, your kind cooperation in responding all the questions will be extremely valuable to fulfill the objectives and to address the research questions of the study.

Please feel free to express yourselves. I assure you that any information that you provide will be kept a top confidential.

Thank you for your valuable time!

Researcher

Laxmi Basnet

M.ed Fourth Semester, T.U, Kirtipur

## APPENDIX-B

This interview questionnaire has been prepared to collect the data or information for the research work entitled, "Challenges in Reading Comprehension faced by IELTS Students", under the supervision of Dr. Purna Bhadur Kadel, Lecturer, Department of English education, T.U. Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal. I hope that the informants will co-operate by providing invaluable information to accomplish my research.

Questions:

- ) Personal background, Reading skill, IELTS.
- ) concept of IELTS and experience after taking examination
- ) During IELTS preparation
- ) Different between academic course and IELTS course
- ) Using of books, articles, or searching on google
- ) Reading comprehension
- ) Insufficient time and manage time during examination
- ) Band score and stress of exam
- ) IELTS Instructors and Mock Test
- ) Impact of Boarding school and Government school
- ) Reading strategies; scanning and skimming
- ) Difficulties to find out main points
- ) Using tough vocabularies
- ) So many paragraphs in a single passage
- ) Repetition of same paragraphs in each question forms
- ) Grammatical structure in reading comprehension of IELTS course

## APPENDIX-C

### Some General Interview guideline questions

- ) Personal background: activities, IELTS classes
- ) What kinds of difficulty you faced?
- ) What are the major challenges you faced in reading comprehension text?
- ) How often did you collaborate with your instructor?
- ) After, collaboration did you feel easy to learn the content?
- ) How much time did you spend for preparing IELTS?
- ) Did you go to the IELTS class regular?
- ) What do you think is reading comprehension text is more difficult rest of the other three language skills: listening, speaking and writing?
- ) Did you take IELTS Examination as a stress?
- ) Why did you take the IELTS examination as a stress?
- ) Do you think, stress of exam is the challenge for IELTS students?
- ) If you are provided enough time did you get good score and what will be the band score of IELTS test?
- ) How does lack of time effect in the IELTS students' learning?
- ) How does Mock Test help you in the IELTS students' learning?
- ) Did you feel difficult while doing reading comprehension text in terms of vocabulary?
- ) Did you feel difficult to understand meaning of all reading paragraphs?
- ) What do you think, is grammatical structure of IELTS course is more difficult than academic course?
- ) How is it as a challenge for you and IELTS students?
- ) If you don't have knowledge of vocabulary is it possible to learn the IELTS? If not why?
- ) How did you overcome it?
- ) While doing the reading comprehension text could you do self-reflect the text well?
- ) Did you take the instructions only from your IELTS instructor or use other materials and medium?



- ) For IELTS course lots of reference books, materials are available, are these materials effective for you and IELTS students?
- ) As I know so many passages are in the reading comprehension of IELTS course, what do you think is it difficult to solve all question within given time?
- ) Do you think lots of passages and paragraphs are boring for IELTS students?

## APPENDIX-D

This interview has been conducted to collect the viable insight for the research work entitled "Challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students" under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Purna Kadel, lecturer, Department of English Education, T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu. I do hope the informants will cooperate by providing invaluable information to accomplish my research.

### Sample Interview Transcript

I: Welcome to interview before taking the interview, I would like to introduce myself. I am Laxmi Basnet, student of master's level (M.Ed) at Tribhuvan University. I am writing thesis so for the purpose of thesis; I came here to take the interview with you. My research topic is Challenges in Reading Comprehension faced by IELTS students. The objective of this research is to explore the challenges in reading comprehension faced by IELTS students. Now would you like to introduce yourself?

R: Thank you. I am Orchana Ghimire. I'm from Tahachal, Kathmandu. I'm the student of English education and I have been completed master degree from Tribhuvan University.

I: Did you go to the IELTS class regular?

R: Yes, I took.

I: What are the major challenges you faced in reading comprehension text?

R: Actually, we did three tasks and we have to complete forty questions within an hour that's why time allocation was one of the major challenges that I faced during reading comprehension text and then another challenge was lack of vocabulary power. I didn't have knowledge how do range of vocabulary.

I: If you are provided enough time did you get good score and what will be the band score of IELTS?

R: Yes. I got expected score and band score will be about 7\7.5.

I: How much time did you spend for preparing IELTS?

R: Two months.

I: Did you feel difficult in terms of vocabulary while doing reading comprehension text?

R: yes. I did not have wide range of vocabulary that hindered me during examination.

I: If you do not have knowledge of vocabulary is it possible to learn the IELTS?

R: No it is not possible because tough vocabularies are used in the reading comprehension text of IELTS course.

I: Which reading strategies do you mostly prefer to find the main points\key ideas from the reading text? And could you find it easily or not?

R: Umm...it was another challenge for me. I had not have habit of skimming and scanning. I had a habit of reading whole text and then understand each line and then only answering the questions. But it did not help me during the IELTS examination because we have to complete 40 questions within one hour and then I did choose a habit of scanning and skimming that was another major challenge for me too.

I: What do you think, is grammatical structure of IELTS course is more difficult than academic course?

R: Yes. I think so. I did not have enough grammatical knowledge. Lack of grammatical knowledge I felt difficult to do all types of questions like; complete the passage, complete the sentence, match the headings and find out main points/key words and then it hindered me during reading comprehension text. That's why it was also another reading comprehension challenge for me.

I: As I know so many passages are in the reading comprehension of IELTS course, what do you think is it difficult to solve all questions within given time?

R: yes, of course. It's difficult to solve all questions within given time because of insufficient time and many paragraphs. But it can be solved if learners do practice more.

I: What do you think so many passages and paragraphs are boring for IELTS students?

R: yes. The passages are longer and then we should have faster speed of reading skill. If we read the passage slowly then we cannot complete three passages\forty questions within one hour. Even one passage has many paragraphs so it might be boring for IELTS student. I also felt bore and took it as a challenge too.

I: What types of questions are asked in IELTS examination especially in reading comprehension text?

R: Actually, we get match the following, sentence completion, match the heading, true\false and fill in the blanks such type of questions are asked.

I: Is there anything except you just said the challenges which you faced?

R: Ahh.. flow reading , I do not have fast reading skill and then those passage which I got within reading comprehension text where passages are longer and longer that's why I could not complete the answer of forty questions answer within given time that was challenge.

I: I have collected some challenges of reading comprehension text in IELTS examination like; identifying key ideas, understanding key ideas, taking brief relevant notes and using own words in notes, reading quickly to get overall meaning, working out meaning of difficult words, understanding specialist vocabulary and not having enough time, did you felt like these types of challenges?

R: Yes, of course. I accept those challenges we do just told before.

I: What do you think is reading comprehension text more difficult than other three language skills namely; listening, speaking and writing?

R: Ah... I do not think that reading comprehension text is more difficult rest of the other three language skills. I think it is because all tests are equally important and all are equally difficult. And then reading comprehension text is not more difficult than other because other tests are as difficult as that and reading comprehension text can be easier if students have skills and knowledge of vocabulary and if they can find, if they

have wider range of vocabulary and idea of locating the information then they can find the answer easily. The students get questions and answers are within the passage just they should have quick to find out those answers and within listening test that if students miss answer the listening text then he/she is not given chance to hear the audio again and then within the writing test also students have to write and students get to the questions and they have to write answer within one hour that is also difficult one and then within speaking test students test students have to the answer questions asked by foreigner test taker with how they can interruption that's also difficult that's why reading test is not more difficult than of other because they have to try to locate their mind to the information and if we try to locate our mind towards information then we can find the right answer and we can get ideas, answer is also given to the students they just have to find the right one. I think so.

I: Did you take IELTS Examination as a stress?

R: Yes. Because of stress I could not give correct answer and though I knew correct answer but I didn't give tick mark on correct answer so it was challenge for me.

I: How did you overcome the challenges?

R: Ahmm... I developed the skills of each type of questions within reading comprehension text. I tried to know what type of questions will be given in the examination. And I also developed my speed of reading skill and scanning and skimming skills. Scanning and skimming skills help to locate the information instead reading the whole text and understand them. I also developed my vocabulary power as vocabulary one of the key reason why students don't get the best score that's why I read the common words that are used in passages and practicing reading passages that also helped me a lot face the challenges. And I also developed my grammar I was grammatically weak and some questions are summary completion, sentence completion, which required grammatically correct sentence that's why I also developed grammar. Lastly, meaningful practice makes man perfect so I practiced a lot and I practiced reading comprehension text before examination that also helped me a lot.