

CHAPTER: -ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with the background of the study. It defines listening and discusses different components that it is composed of and the factors that influence listening comprehension. Then it reviews the related literature before the objectives of the study are listed. Finally, this chapter will discuss the significance of the study.

1.1 General Background

Speech ~~faculty~~ is the special gift to human ~~begins-beings~~ which makes them superior to any other animals ~~of-on~~ the earth. This speech ~~faculty is-enables them to acquire a called-~~ language. It has four different but inter-related skills- listening speaking, reading and writing. Of these four skills listening is ~~prominent-primary~~ skill because the great voyage of language acquisition begins with listening. Only after sufficient amount of listening, a child can develop speaking, reading and writing skills. However, if a child is congenitally deaf, it ~~is-will be~~ impossible for him/her to acquire any language no matter how much exposure he/she is given. But in the case of mother-tongue the skills listening and speaking need not be learnt formally whereas reading and writing call for conscious learning. These four skills are classified into two types such as productive skill and receptive skills. Speaking and writing are incorporated under productive skill in the sense that these skills call for the delivery (production) of required information to the listeners or readers. They are also known as active skills because the speakers and writers are required to be physically and mentally active to transfer the message from the mental storehouse or repertoire whereas listening and reading skills are categorized as receptive skills in the sense that these skills call for decoding acoustic as well as visible input in our mental repertoire. They are also called passive skills

because the listeners and readers need not be physically active but they should be mentally aware of receiving incoming input.

For Underwood (1989, P. 1) "Listening is an activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning for something we hear." It implies that listening is an active process in which the listener has to be engaged in the activity of constructing message from incoming comprehensible input.

~~Stephen~~ Krashen ([cited in Underwood, 1989, p. 102](#)) has identified listening as a valuable source of what he calls "Comprehensible input." He maintains that students need both to acquire a language and to learn a language. For him, learning is a conscious process of studying and understanding bits of language steps by step, while acquisition is a sub-conscious process which occurs naturally under certain condition. By comprehensible input, he means a flow of language which contains elements already known plus which have yet to be mastered.

1.1.1 Listening Skill ~~in Particular and in General~~

~~a. Listening Skill in Particular~~

Listening is a very individual and personal process. Listeners make different inferences and they have different interpretation of the texts, they hear. Of course when the task is simple and unambiguous, all competent listeners are likely to come to the same conclusion and there is usually a common interpretation between the listeners listening to the same text. However, if we examine the comprehension in detail we often find considerable difference between listeners' interpretations of the same ambiguous text.

~~b. Listening Skill in General~~

Listening is not a single skill rather it is a network of several sub-skill. Several scholars have spilt listening skills into several sub-skills. Harmer (2008) talks about the following sub-skills of listening:

-Identifying the topic Topic: Listening comprehension mainly depends on identifying topics or text. It is the first and foremost subskill for listening.

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Without prior knowledge of the text even a good listener fail to grasp the required information. So Krashen maintains that listening is the vital source of language acquisition. He calls it "comprehensible input." By comprehensible input, he means a flow of language which contains elements already known plus which have yet to be mastered.

-Predicting and guessing: While teaching or testing listening, the students are asked to guess what they are going to listen. The main purpose of this is to familiarize them to the topic thereby activating their prior knowledge with a view to obtain new information.

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-Getting general picture and understanding: If the students get a general idea of what they are going to listen, they will be able to grasp and process the incoming acoustic signal without difficulty. For example a mathematician speaking on advanced algebra may not be readily understood by a non-specialist.

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-Extracting specific information: According to Underwood (1989, p. 3) once the listener has constructed a meaning from the utterance which may or may not be the meaning that was intended by the speaker, he/she might transfer the information to the long-term memory for the later use. He generally stores the message in the reduced form. When recalling something from the long-term memory he only remember the gist of what has been heard, rather than the exact words spoken.

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-Extracting detailed information: Sometimes, a listener wants to pick up a certain gist what has been heard. He does not concentrate to the exact words spoken which on the other times he has to derived detail information from the text. In such situation, he wants to get the things repeated.

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-Recognizing function and discourse pattern: To listen successfully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways. A speaker saying "you're late" for example, may be wishing to convey any one of a range of meaning: complaining because he/she had to wait, or expressing surprise because he/she did not expect you to arrive late. What the speaker means lies only partly in the words spoken. The listener must recognize and interpret the meaning from the discourse pattern.

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-Deducing meaning from the context: The meaning of an utterance largely depends on the content. For example when a father saw his young son smoking cigar, he might say 'good boy' I am longing for this day to see'. This utterance does not mean in positive. Instead it is the expression of anger. Similarly 'what's this?' is an enquiry about an object. But when a father returning home from office, found his son watching T.V. and a towel was lying on a floor, he might ask 'what's this?' In that context this utterance does not mean an inquiry about an object but a suggestion for his son to keep the things tidy or an expression of anger. So, a listener should be able to deduce the meaning from the context.

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As we know, listening is not a single skill but a complex tapestry of several components. Hence, John Munby (1979, p. 1) identifies the following sub-skills or components involved in listening:

a. Discrimination of sound in isolated word

Discrimination of sound in isolation word A listener should be able to distinguish various sound in isolation. For example /p/ and /b/ are two different consonant sounds. Even though both of them are bilabial plosive, they differ from each other in term of voicing. /p/ is voiceless plosive whereas /b/ is voiced plosive. /k/ is voiceless and /g/ is voiced. /t/ and /d/ are alveolar stops. /p/ and /t/ are aspirated when they occur in the initial position. When /p/ is aspirated, it sounds similar to /f/ sound but there is a vast difference between

these two sounds i.e. /p/ is bilabial so aspirated /p/ sound or [p^h] is the allophone of /p/ sound whereas /f/ sound is labio-dental sound. In Nepali /f/ is bilabial sound. Hence, a Nepali speaker who is learning English as foreign language must possess the knowledge of discrimination of sound in isolation. Otherwise, he can not be able to get appropriate message when these sounds occur in connected speech.

b. Discriminating sounds in connected speech

Since the discrimination of sound ~~in~~ isolation helps a listener to comprehend the meaning of an individual word or sentence in connected speech. Unless he/she can distinguish sounds in connected speech, he/she can not be a good listener. So this sub-skill is essential in listening-~~skill~~.

c. Discriminating stress pattern within word

Discrimination of stress pattern in word is another sub-skill for listening-~~skill~~.

Stress pattern plays vital role to carry the meaning of a word. Most of the disyllabic English words differ in meaning depending upon the stress pattern. Let us take the example of a disyllabic English word “present”. If this word is stressed in first syllable, it is a noun which refers to “~~reward~~gift”. When the same word is stressed in the second syllable it is verb which means ‘to attend’.

d. Recognizing variation of stress in connected speech

Variation of stress in connected speech plays a crucial role to bring variation in meaning of the discourse.

Let us take an example:

“Mr. John likes herbal tea.”

Mr. ~~JOHN~~John likes herbal tea, when Mr. John is stressed its meaning is certainly different from “Mr. John ~~LIKES~~likes herbal tea.” Similarly “Mr. John likes ~~HERBAL~~herbal tea.” It means Mr. John dislikes coffee or other kind of ~~tea~~beverage. He only likes herbal tea and so on.

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e. Understanding intonation pattern and interpreting attitudinal meaning through variation of tone

Intonation pattern is another prominent sub-skill for listening-~~skill~~. Although there are distinct variations and certain rules in the formation of different types of sentences such as assertive, interrogative, imperative, optative and exclamatory sentences. However, we should know that English is a crazy language. It does not always follow those rules. An assertive sentence can serve the purpose of an interrogative sentence depending on the intonation pattern.

For example, you’ve already eaten all the food? With rising tone is radically a question.

f. Interpreting attitudinal meaning through variation in pitch, height, range and pause.

These above mentioned supra-segmental features are inevitable sub-skills for listening. The pronunciations of some words are almost identical. The attitudinal meaning can be differentiated through juncture for example “Sixty ~~tea~~-cups” and “Six tea cups”.

1.1.2 Listening Comprehension

Generally listening comprehension refers to the ability to understand the message, we hear. For Buck (2010: p. 1) “listening comprehension is a process, a very complex process, and if we want to measure it, we must first understand how that process works.”

Listening comprehension is not simply understanding the meaning of the individual words and utterances but the meaning of the discourse as a whole. Haycraft (1978, p. 76) “our aim of listening comprehension programme must be to train students to understand and respond quickly to the sort of language they are likely to encounter in normal use in the sort of situations they are likely to find themselves in.”

From the above definition listening comprehension refers to the ability to understand and interpret the spoken message. It is not only a process of decoding language rather it is a very complex process in which the listener takes the incoming data, the acoustic signals, and interpret that, using a wide variety of information and knowledge for a communicative purpose. It is an inferential and an ongoing process of constructing and modifying an interpretation of what the text is about, based on whatever information seems relevant at that time.

Although we may appear to be inactive while listening, we must actually engage in the activity of constructing a message in order to describe as a

listener. While hearing is thought as a passive condition, listening is always an active process.

Underwood (1989, p. 2) maintains that there are three distinct stages in the listening comprehension or in the aural reception of an utterance. At the first stage, the sounds go into a sensory store, often called the echoic memory, and are organized into meaningful units according to the knowledge of the language, the listener already has. The listener might have trouble by the arrival of new information in the echoic memory before he/she has had sufficient opportunity to deal with that already had because the sounds remain in the echoic memory for a very short time.

The second stage is the processing of the information by the short term memory. This is again a very brief stage which lasts no more than a few seconds. At this stage words or group of words are checked and compared with the information already held in the long-term memory and the meaning is extracted from them.

The speed of processing is important even at this stage. If a new information comes to the short-term memory before previous information has been processed, the listener's short term memory becomes over-loaded with confusion and he/she fails to extract the message.

At the final stage, the meaning constructed by the short-term memory is sent and stored in long-term memory for later use. The listener often stores the meaning in the long-term memory in a reduced form.

Initially, listening skill was not incorporated in the curriculum. The main argument to justify the exclusion of listening from the language curriculum was that listening cannot be taught. It was claimed that people could only be offered practice which might help them apply already developed listening skill in language learning. This argument is unacceptable if we believe 'to teach' means 'to facilitate' learning and the role of the teacher is a facilitator. The teacher can

do a lot things to develop listening comprehension of the learners. The lists of role that a teacher can perform are as follows: (Underwood, 1989, p. 21).

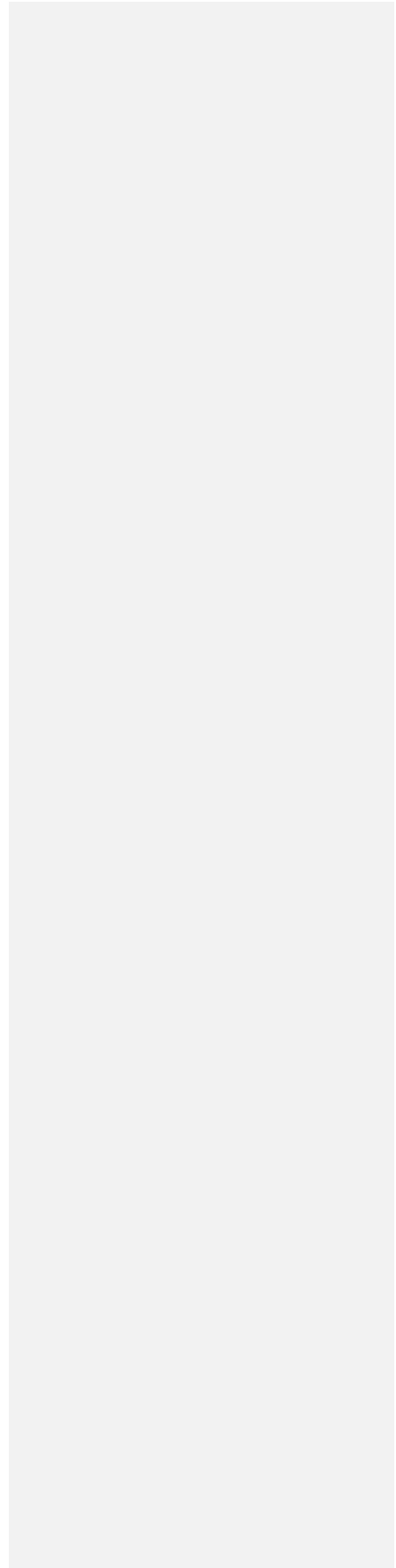
- a. Exposing students to a range of listening experiences: This can be done by using a lot of different listening texts such as stories, conversations, descriptive talks and radio announcement which incorporate a variety of language i.e. formal or informal, spoken by native speakers or foreigner, delivered slowly or quickly.
- b. Making listening purposeful: We can make listening purposeful by providing tasks which are as realistic as possible so that the students can relate what they are doing in the lesson to things what happen in real life.
- c. Helping students understand what listening entails: We should spend a little time explaining about how they listen in their native language.
- d. Building up student's confidence: Success breeds success. If students feel they are succeeding will be encouraged to go on trying. We must encourage the students not to worry if they do not understand every word.

We should not discourage them by putting too much emphasis on the quality of the presentation of the response. For example, full-sentence responses should not be sought when short ones even a word would suffice. Listening comprehension can occur even when they miss some of the words.

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1.1.3.1 Problems in Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a complex process. The people who learn English as a second and foreign language often feel difficulty to get meaning in their first attempt. In the context of Nepal, learners get limited exposure to the authentic materials, nor have they any opportunity to take part in real life conversation Sharma and Phyak (2006, p.198).

The following are main problems for listening comprehension which are cited from Underwood (1989, p.16).

a. Lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak

A Nepali speaker who is learning English as a foreign language often feels difficulty ies to comprehend the message that he hears due speed. When the native speakers speak fluently without halting, then a listener of foreign language does not get enough time for processing the incoming input. Since language is learnt in two ways sub-consciously as well as consciously. A native speaker acquire a language sub-consciously which he can use spontaneously whereas a foreign language learner learns a language consciously. So he needs a lot of time to process a piece of information.

b. Not being able to get things repeated

In the initial stage, a text should be repeated several times to develop the listening comprehension of the learners so that they become accustomed. When they listen to radio commentary, news and other information, they are not repeated. So, listeners often feel problem to understand the message.

c. Limited vocabulary repertoire of the listeners

The students get limited exposure to authentic language and native speakers. That is why, they have limited vocabulary repertoire due to limited comprehensible input. The main sources are only the teachers and textbooks for a limited time within artificial situation. The students do not get sufficient

amount of exposure to the target language. They neither use the language at home nor in the neighbourhood. They only get the opportunity to use the language in their English class which is a very short period for learning a language.

d. Lack of concentration

Sometimes, the listeners fail to get meaning of the text that they hear due to lack of concentration. They can not pay proper attention to the text for various reasons such as fatigue, noise, anxieties, restlessness and so on.

e. Difficulty to interpret

Due to lack of knowledge of supra-segmental features, sound variation, variation of intonation pattern, the listeners fail to interpret the meaning.

f. Inherent difficulty of listening text

Some texts are naturally simple. So the listeners are able to grasp the expected message whereas some texts contain jargons, technical terms which cause inherent difficulty to understand.

1.1.3.2 Reasons of Listening

There are a number of situations in which we feel it necessary to listen. There are many reasons why a learner has to listen. Galvin (1985, p. 4) gives the following five reasons:

a. To exchange social rituals

Language is a medium of transaction cultural resources from one society to another. Thus we have to listen in order to exchange our cultural resources.

b. To exchange information

We must perceive the meaning to exchange our ideas and information. For this we have to listen

c. To exert control

In order to control our subordinates, we should listen to their views.

d. To share feeling

Language is vital tool to share our feeling and emotion. Listening is prominent skill of language. So, we need to listen others' views.

e. To enjoy yourself

We listen to music, songs to get pleasure and amusement.

1.1.4 Listening sSituation

Ur (1996, p. 2) asserts that a learner is supposed to encounter a lot of situations in which listening takes place such as conversation, radio-news, sport commentary, interview instruction and so on.

The various listening situations are as follow:

-) Listening conversation
-) Listening to announcement
-) Listening to the news and weather forecast
-) Listening to the radio for entertainment
-) Watching a film in a cinema
-) Listening to records
-) Following a lesson
-) Attending a lecture
-) Listening on the telephone
-) Following instruction
-) Listening to public address

1.1.5 Types of Hlistening

Harmer (2008, p. 303) maintains that listening is classified into two types.

They are:

~~a. Extensive listening~~

~~b. Intensive listening~~

- a. Extensive listening: It refers to listen something for pleasure. This type of listening is not intended for receiving message. The listeners do not have to focus on the message but they are involved in the entertainment. For example, listening to music.
- b. Intensive listening: This type of listening on the other hand, is meant for obtaining genuine information. In this type of listening a listener has to concentrate his attention otherwise he will receive inadequate message. For example, listening to a lecture

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1.1.6 Bottom up and ~~£~~Top ~~d~~Down ~~¥~~Views on Listening

Nunan (2002, p. 239) opines when people start thinking ~~above~~-~~about~~ language processing, they often assume that the process takes place in a definite order.

This order starts ~~form~~-~~from~~ the lowest level and moves toward the highest level. They assume that the acoustic input ~~is~~ first decoded into phonemes (the lowest sound segment that can carry meaning) and then it is used to identify individual words. The processing continues up to the next higher stage i.e. syntactic level. This is called bottom up view of listening.

The alternative, top down view suggests that the listener actively construct the original meaning of the speaker using incoming sound as clues. In this reconstruction process the listener uses prior knowledge of the context within which the listening takes place to make meaning.

1.1.7 Techniques of Testing Listening

~~Testing is as old as teaching itself. Khaniya (2005, p. 1) from the time when teaching began, the teacher has always been keen to know the extent to which his teaching has been effective in making the learner understand what has been taught.~~

~~So~~ We can definitely say that testing is an integral and essential part of teaching. They are interrelated to each other. Teaching and testing can hardly be separated in classroom situation.

Teaching listening refers to give the students enough exposure to acoustic signals or audio-visual input with a view to develop their ability to understand and interpret the meaning of the spoken message in discourse as a whole.

As far as teaching listening is concerned, there are two approaches viz. bottom up and top down views.

The first approach is associated with teaching minimal unit of sound segments e.g. phoneme in the beginning and moving forward gradually toward syntactic level. The next approach is just the opposite.

On the other hand, testing listening refers to measure the ability of the students how far they are able to understand and interpret the spoken message.

It is very difficult to test listening separately ~~from~~ speaking, since the two skills are naturally exercised together in oral interaction. Nevertheless, there are occasions such as listening to the radio, listening to the lectures or listening to the railway station announcements when no speaking is called for.

While conducting listening comprehension test it is helpful if the speaker can be seen by the listeners. In spite of the excellent quality of the tape recorder, a disembodied voice is much more difficult for the foreign ~~test taker~~ testees to follow. If the quality is poor the test will be unreliable, especially when discrete features such as phoneme discrimination, stress and intonations are tested.

Heaten (1985) talks about the following ~~test~~ s:

Phoneme discrimination test: Listening test can be conducted in various ways. One of them is phoneme discrimination test. In such test, the students are asked to distinguish similar vowel and consonant phonemes. The teacher pronounces 3 or 4 identical vowel or consonant sounds and a different one. The students should choose the different one. For example: [about, ago, ahead action]. The student differentiate / / sound from /æ/ sound.

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Test of stress and intonation: The teacher pronounces a particular word with a stress on a particular syllable and the students are asked to recognize where the stress falls. For example e-du-ca-tion [first/second/third syllable].

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Similarly the students are asked to find out whether a particular sentence is uttered with rising or falling tone.

For example: Have you any oil? (rising tone/falling tone)

Statements and dialogue: In this test a cassette containing a conversation or dialogue between two or more people is played. The students should listen the text and find out which are true and false statements.

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For example: -Text: (cited from Rai et al., 2002).

A- I am Rameshwar. I am from Balrampur. I like to play cricket. I am 5 feet 11 inches tall. People call me Lambu.

B – My name is Rupa. I am from Palpa. I like to sing a song and watch T.V. I am 3 feet 5 inches tall. My friends call me Sani.

Listen and do:

Write T for true and F for false statements.

- i. Rameshwar is from Prakashpur.
- ii. He likes to play volleyball.
- iii. Rupa is from Palpa.

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iv. She likes to sing a song.

Testing comprehension through visual materials: In this test, the students are asked to watch a T.V. program and the questions related to the programme are asked.

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Understanding talks and lectures: A speech is delivered and the questions related to the speech are asked.

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There are different techniques of testing listening. Some of the common techniques are multiple choice, short answer, note taking and partial dictation.

Following instructions, etc. To conduct listening test, we may use recorded authentic text or live presentation as well as audio-visual materials.

Underwood (1989, p. 30) included ~~3~~three stages for teaching ~~listin~~listening. They are pre listening, while listening and post listening stages. The same steps can be adopted for testing listening.

i. Pre-listening stage

A kind of preparatory work is generally ~~describes~~described as pre-listening stage. It is unfair to plunge students straight into the listening text when testing rather than teaching listening comprehension. It is extremely difficult for them to use the natural listening skill of matching what they hear with what they expect to hear by using their previous knowledge. So, before listening, the students should be fine tuned' so that they know what to expect.

Underwood (1989, p. 31) suggests the following lists of pre-listening activities:

- the teacher giving background information
- The students reading something relevant.
- The students looking at the picture predicting and speculating situation

- Reading through the questions (to be answered while listening)
- Following the instructions for while listening activities.
- Consideration of how the listening activity will be done.

Following Underwood's suggestions, the students are to be made alert about what they are going to listen. The main purpose of this activity is to concentrate their minds towards the text. By showing the picture, they are asked to guess what they can see in the picture. What sorts of text will follow next. What types of information they are supposed to grasp with a view to do the tasks that follow.

For example, if the students are going to listen a text about accident, a picture related to text can be attached on the blackboard and a discussion about the picture can be conducted.

The following questions will be appropriate to guide the students toward the text:

- i. What can you see in the picture?
→ The answer may be "accident"
- ii. Where might the accident occur?
→ Answers may be vary.
- iii. How many people might die?
→ Answers may be different
- iv. How might the accident occur?
→ Answers may be different.

These above-mentioned questions are sufficient to lead the students toward the target.

ii. While listening stage:

While listening activities are what students are asked to do during the time that they are listening to the text. "As far as listening comprehension is concerned,

the purpose of while listening activities is to help learners develop the skill of eliciting message from spoken language”(Underwood, 1989, p. 45).

This stage includes the following steps:

- i. Distribution of test items.
- ii. Proper instruction: The listeners are asked to write their name and class at the top of test items.
 - a. The cassette will be played for 3 times.
 - b. After the first play, they have to attempt the first question. They will get 4 minutes time to do this.
 - c. After second play, they should attempt the second question. The duration lasts for 4 minutes.
 - d. After third play, they should check and correct their answers. The time lasts for one minute only.

iii. Post listening stage:

According to Underwood (1989, p. 74) “Post listening activities embrace all the work related to a particular listening text which are done after the listening is completed. Some post listening activities are extensions of the work done during pre listening and while listening stages”.

My main purpose was concerned with the collection of relevant data for my research. So after the completion of while listening activity, I announced the time was over. I collected their answer sheets.

Finally, I thanked the respondents for their kind cooperation and taking patience in answering the questions.

1.1.8 Problems and Difficulty in Teaching and Testing Listening

People can listen in their mother-tongue with little or no effort. Even when very young, we are able to understand at least the gist of what is said to us. In spite of this, we sometimes have problems when listening in our mother-tongue. For some listeners, for example, particular accents make listening difficult.

Someone ~~form~~from the south of England may have problems understanding a speaker from the north, a New Zealander may fail to follow the speech of an American.

Various factors cause problems in teachings and testing listening.

The first and foremost factor is accent variation. American English ~~s~~s is different ~~from~~ British English due to accent variation. The same is applicable to non-native speakers of English. The same word is uttered differently by different teachers which causes great ~~conclusions~~confusions for the learners in teaching and testing listening.

Secondly, sometimes the situation creates bad conditions for listening. For example, in a very noisy room it is hard to follow what a speaker is trying convey. Likewise, lack of concentration cause great difficulty in teaching listening.

Similarly, topics influence a lot in the purpose. Familiar and interesting topics motivate the learners whereas unfamiliar topics which are full of ~~Jorgons~~Jargons and specialized terms may demotivate them.

1.1.9 Practices of Testing Listening

~~It~~ is quite difficult to say the exact date when language testing began. The flow of people to ~~a~~ foreign countries led language testing to address adults and non-academic people as well. Language testing journal published first in 1983 and establishment of international language testing association in 1990, are the examples to show the internationalization of language testing. During second world war, when the allied forces went to foreign countries, it became dire necessity for them to communicate with local people. So English language

teaching became vital need. Due to the demand of time language testing came into existence. Nevertheless language is composed of four skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing, Only reading and writing were focused initially.

Later on, the value of listening skill was realized by the scholars. The adventurous voyage of language acquisition begins with listening. A language cannot exist without spoken form whereas there are innumerable languages in the human history without written form. Nevertheless speaking and listening are major language skills, they received less priority in language teaching in our country before 2056 B.S. consequently the students of English were able to translate difficult literary texts from Nepali to English and vice-versa but they failed to ask for a cup of tea in English when situation calls for. That is why, the ministry of Education, the curriculum development center, Sanothimi Bhaktapur laid emphasis on listening and speaking since 2056 B.S. in English teaching. Then 20 out of 100 full marks was allotted for testing listening and speaking skills in S.L.C. examination. At present 10 marks out of 25 is allotted for listening skills.

1.1.10 Information Provided by Item Analysis

Re-examining each item of a test for the purpose of discovering its strength and weakness is known as item analysis. It customarily concentrates on two vital features of each test items which are as follows:

- i. Difficulty index: It is also called facility value (F.V. in short). It shows how difficult or ease is the particular item in the test.

It can be derived by using the following formula: [\(cited from Heaten, 1988, p. 179\).](#)

$$F.V. = \frac{R}{N}$$

Here R refers to number of right answers N signifies number of students taking the test (~~Heaton 1985, p. 179~~).

While examining difficulty index, the test items are divided into 3 categories.

1. Easy items: Item with F.V. above 0.75
2. Average items: Item with ~~an~~F.V. falling between 0.3 to 0.75.
3. Difficult item: Item with ~~an~~F.V. below 0.3.

ii. Discrimination index: The discrimination index of an item indicates the extent to which the items discriminates between testees separating from more able testees from the less able testees.

The ~~index-Index~~ of ~~d~~Discrimination (IOD) tells us whether those student who performed well on the whole test tended to do well or bad on each item in the test (Heaton, 1988, p. 179).

~~The index of discrimination (IOD) tells us whether those students who performed well on the whole test tended to do well or bad on each item in the test (Heaton, 1988, p. 179).~~

The following processes can be adopted to determine IOD.

- a. Arrange the scripts (answer-sheets) in rank order of total score and divide into two groups of equal size (i.e. the top half and bottom half).
- b. Count the number of those candidates in upper group answers the first item correctly, then count the number of lower group candidates answering the item correctly.
- c. Sub~~str~~act the number of correct answers in lower group ~~f~~rom the number of correct answers in the upper group.
- d. Divide this difference by the total number of candidates in one group.
- e. Proceed in this manner for each item.

Heaten (1988, p. 180) mentioned the following formula:

$$IOD = \frac{\text{Correct } U - \text{Correct } L}{n}$$

U refers to upper half

L refers to lower group

n = Number of candidates in one group

Test items were divided into three-five categories:

- a. Perfect discriminator: Items having discrimination index of +1.
- b. Good discriminators: Items having discrimination index above 0.7.
- c. Moderate discriminators: Items with a discrimination index falling between 0.2 to 0.7.
- d. Poor discriminators: Items having discrimination index below 0.2
- e. Negative discrimination: Items having discrimination index -1.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

A researcher should look back into the past in order to reconstruct and renew his/her knowledge into current practices and envision for the future to search for social reality.

Thus, ~~I am going to review~~ some of the related major works in the field of "Listening comprehension ability" which are mentioned herein below:

Chapagain (2005) carried out a research entitled "Proficiency in Listening Comprehension of Grade Nine."

The main objectives of his study ~~were was~~ to find out proficiency in listening comprehension of grade nine ~~and compare the proficiency in term of specific information.~~ ∴

~~-Identifying main idea~~

~~-Identifying details~~

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~~-Seeing beyond surface meaning~~

~~Test of six different types were used as a tool. He used both sources of data:~~

His main findings ~~were~~was: (1) average proficiency in listening comprehension of grade nine has been found 56.93%.

~~ii. Identifying details 67.49%~~

~~iii. The students of private school have shown far better performance.~~

~~iv. Male students as a whole have been found to be more proficient.~~

~~I think his findings were satisfactory according to social reality.~~

Likewise, Joshi (2008) conducted a research on problems in Teaching Learning Listening skill". His main objectives were to find out the problems of teaching and learning listening skill in grade-X.

~~To find out the causes of those problems he used both the primary and secondary sources of data. His primary source of data collection were 40 students from five high schools of Dadeldhura district. He observed 3 classes in each school. Altogether he observed 15 classes. He drew the following findings:~~

- a. Teaching materials are very essential in language teaching
- b. Weak economic condition the schools to afford teaching materials
- c. Negligence of school management and subject teachers.

~~I think that the 3rd finding of his study was genuine and based on social reality. The other findings seemed to be superficial because it does not need strong economic condition of the schools to supply teaching materials for teaching and developing listening skill. Pictures, charts cassettes players are not so expensive. Even the DEO supplies cassettes for listening texts. What requires most is the will power of the administration and subject teachers.~~

Similarly, Sharma (2010) carried out a research work on “Listening Proficiency of Grade Eight Students.” The main objective was to find out listening proficiency of 8th graders in Parbat district.

~~The tool used by him was test items. He used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. He found that the overall listening proficiency was poor in those studied schools. In my opinion his study was impressionistic and suffered from various pitfalls.~~

~~Her main finding was that most of the teachers tried to involve the students in listening practice.~~

In the same way, Bista (2011) carried out a study on “Proficiency of Grade XII students in Listening English Songs.” The main objective of his study was to find out the proficiency in listening songs. ~~Test items were used as tools for data collection.~~ His finding was neither boys nor girls were found to understand 100% English song. ~~The primary sources of his study were grade XII students studying in different higher secondary schools in Biratnagar.~~

Likewise, Khanal (2011) conducted a study on ‘Listening Comprehension Ability of Primary Teachers.’ His primary objective in the study was to find out the listening comprehension ability of primary teachers and to compare comprehension ability of private and public schools’ primary teachers. ~~Test items were used as research tool. His primary sources of data were 50 primary teachers who were teaching in both private and public schools of Bardia district.~~

His findings were: Male teachers were found better than female teachers. Female teachers of private and public schools got 52.3% and 48.33 percent respectively whereas male teachers of private and public schools got 77.5% and 72.3% respectively. ~~His findings reflect genuine picture of English language teachers’ of Nepal.~~

The same token, Awasthi (2011) conducted a study on “Role of news clips for effective listening comprehension”. The main objective of her study was to find out the role of news clips in listening comprehension. ~~Test items were used as tools for her study. Three progressive tests showed better progress in the result of the students. They could not do better in the first progressive test. I think remarkable progress is not seen. There are slight difference in the pre-test, Her findings in pre-test,~~ progress test and post test were i.e. 20%, 35% and 37.5% respectively.

In a nutshell, it can be said that even though the above mentioned research works have been carried out in the field of listening comprehension, they differ from my study in the following reasons:

- i. The previous researchers had taken small size of sampling population. For example Joshi (2008) selected only 40 students as informants. His study was limited to 5 schools. Likewise Khanal (2010) selected 50 primary teachers for his study whereas I used 100 sample and ten secondary schools. So the findings of my study would be certainly reliable in comparison to them.
- ii. None of the previous researchers carried out item analysis of their own made test items as myself. I prepared the listening text and test items myself and conducted item analysis to find out difficulty and discrimination index.
- iii. My study may have effective contribution for pedagogical purpose in comparison to others because some of them conducted listening test for primary teachers and some conducted study on proficiency of grade XII students in listening English songs. For example Khanal (2011) and Bista (2011) respectively conducted such study. I would like to raise a question: what are the advantages of these study for pedagogical purpose?

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- iv. I made use of up-to-date material i.e. laptop which extremely motivated the listeners and this attempt may yield covetable outcome in my study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The ~~proposed objectives of the proposed study were as follows: study has the following objectives:~~

- a. ~~To~~ find out the listening comprehension ability of the students of secondary level.
- b. ~~To~~ analyze the difficulty level, ~~discriminatory discrimination index power~~ of test items through item analysis.
- c. ~~To~~ suggest some pedagogical implications.

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1.4 Significance of the Study

This research focuses on the analysis of difficulty level of the test items, discrimination index of response options. It will be fruitful for all the people who are interested in teaching and learning of English language. Particularly this study will be significant and helpful for English teachers, educational administrators, question setters, the district education office of Jhapa district, educational institutes and the students of English language. This research will be equally significant for those who want to do further research in this field in future.

I hope this study will have contribution in setting multiple choice and other objective questions.

CHAPTER: TWO

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with methodology adopted during this research work. The details of the methodology are as follows:

2.1 Sources of Data

In the preparation of this dissertation both primary and secondary sources of data have been used: primary source was used for data collection and secondary source was used to facilitate the study.

2.1.1 Primary sSources of dData

The primary sources of data were secondary level students studying in different secondary and higher secondary schools of Jhapa district.

2.1.2 Secondary sSources of dData

In addition to the primary sources, I used English text books of secondary level, previous theses in the related field. Some of them are Munby (1978), Todd (1987), Heaten (1988), Underwood (1989), Ur (1996), Harmer (2003), Buck (2010) and so on. Similarly previous theses of Chapagain (2005), Sharma (2010), Awasthi (2011), Khanal (2011) and Bista (2011).

2.2 Sampling pProcedure

I selected ten government-community based secondary schools purposively for the study. Ten students from each school were selected and 100 students altogether were chosen as sample for listening test.

2.3 Tools for Data Collection

I made use of listening, test items which consists of 5-five multiple choice and 5-five true/false questions in order to elicit the required data.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

First of all, I visited the selected schools and briefly explained the purpose my visit. Then I asked the authority for permission. Thereafter I randomly selected 10-ten students for listening test. I drew attention of the testees toward the text and gave instructions to be followed during the test. I distributed question-papers. I played the cassette and asked them to attempt the first multiple choice questions within 5-five minutes. After that I replayed for second time and allowed them 5-five minutes to attempt the second question. Then I played the cassette for last time and gave them 1-one minute to check and correct their answers. After that I announced that the time was over and collected their answer sheets. Finally I expressed my gratitude to the school authority and thanked the testees for their kind cooperation.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations:

-) The study was limited to 10-ten secondary level schools.
-) The number of the students was confined to one hundred.
-) The area of the study was limited to Jhapa district.

CHAPTER: -THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter consists of the tabulation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data. For this study, I mainly collected raw-data by using listening test with the help of test items which included 5-five multiple choice questions and 5-five true-false questions. The respondents were supposed to tick the correct answers in the multiple choice questions and write T for true and F for false statements in the true-false questions. One mark was assigned for each correct answer and no mark was assigned for incorrect answer. The marks obtained by the test-takertestes were grouped in accordance with the strata in which they belong to.

Table No. 1:

Scores of Multiple Choice Question

I.N.	T.NO.R.	R.A.	F.A.	TN N NR	Remarks
1.A.	100	88	10	2	
1.B.	100	61	39	-	
1.C.	100	98	2	-	
1.D.	100	75	23	2	
1.E.	100	83	14	3	
TIN 5	500	405	88	7	

The above table shows total item numbers were 5. Total number of respondents (test-takertestee) were 500. Out of 500 test-takertestes, only 405 right answers were provided. 88 answers were false and 7 test-takertestes did not answer as a whole.

If we analyzed the responses of multiple choice questions individually, we found item number 'A' was answered by 98 test-takertestes. Out of them, 88 test-takertestes provided right answers, ten test-takertestes failed to answer correctly and two did not tick any of the four options.

Likewise, while analyzing I.N. (item number) 'B' of multiple choice questions, total number of respondents were 100 out of whom 61 provided right answer and 39 answered incorrectly.

In the same token, I.No. 'C' was responded correctly by 98 ~~test-taker~~testees, two ~~test-taker~~testees were unable to reply.

Similarly, I.No. 'D' was unanswered by two, wrongly answered by 23 and correctly answered by 75 ~~test-taker~~testees.

In the same way, I.No. 'E' was answered by 97 ~~test-taker~~testees. Out of them, 83 replied correctly and 14 were not able to tick correct alternative.

Table No. 2:

Scores of True/False Questions

I.N.	T.NO.R.	R.A.	F.A.	TN NR
2.A.	100	49	49	2
2.B.	100	47	49	4
2.C.	100	71	28	1
2.D.	100	39	56	5
2.E.	100	71	26	3
TIN 5	500	277	208	15

The above table shows that total number of respondents for item No. 2 were 500. Out of them 277 were able to write 'T' for true and F for false statements whereas 208 respondents fail to supply required answers 15 respondents left the spaces blank.

If we analyze the scores of true-false questions individually 49 ~~test-taker~~testees supplied correct answers for item No. 2 (a) whereas 49 failed to provide correct answers and 2 respondents did not indicate any response in the spaces provided at the end of each statements.

Likewise, 47 ~~test-taker~~testees provided right answers for item No. 2 (b), 49 provided false answers and 4 ~~test-taker~~testees left the statements unanswered.

Similarly, item No.-2(C) was answered correctly by 71 ~~test taker~~ testees and 28 respondents were unable to reply correctly, only 1 left unanswered.

In the same token, I.N.2(d) was answered correctly by 39 ~~test taker~~ testees, 56 gave incorrect ~~ly~~ answers and 5 ~~test taker~~ testees left unanswered.

In the same way, 71 ~~test taker~~ testees replied I.N.2(e) correctly, 26 replied incorrectly and 3 did not reply at all.

Table No. 3:

Holistic Analysis of Listening Comprehension Ability

S.N.	Full marks	Obtained marks	Frequency
1	10	10	5
2	10	9	9
3	10	8	20
4	10	7	18
5	10	6	26
6	10	5	11
7	10	4	7
8	10	3	4
Total			100

~~The above table shows out of 100 test takers 5 test takers obtained 10 marks.~~

~~The frequency of test takers is 5 who secured full marks.~~

~~9 testees obtained 9 marks out of 10.~~

~~20 test takers obtained 89 marks.~~

~~18 test takes got 7 marks~~

~~26 students secured 6 marks~~

~~11 students were able to obtain 5 marks~~

The above table shows that 34% students fall within highly advanced level because they obtained 80% to 100% marks which is distinction according to national standard of S.L.C. exam.

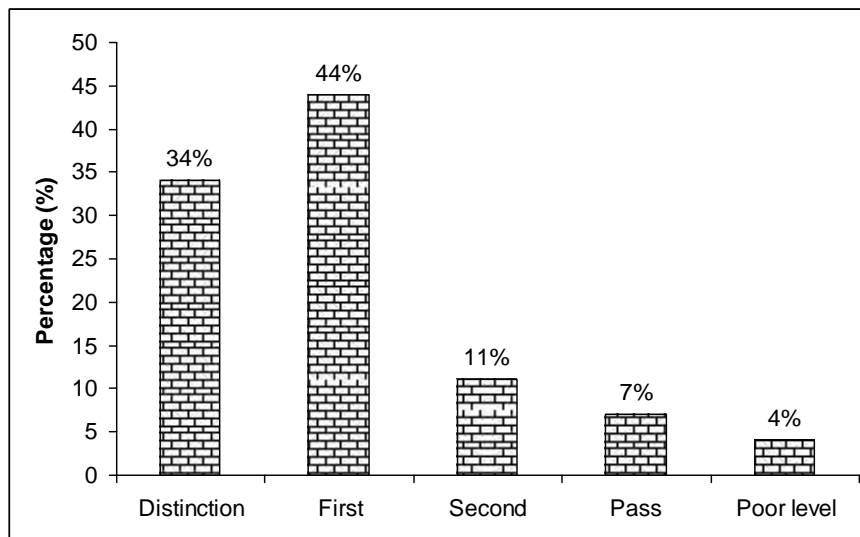
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44% students are categorized within advanced level because they secured 60% to 70% marks.

18% students fell within average level since they obtained 40% to 50% marks.

Only 4% students are categorized as poor level because they got below pass marks.

The listening comprehension ability of the students can be presented with the help of a bar-diagram herein below:



This bar diagram shows that 34% belonged to highly advanced or distinction division whereas 44% testees fell within advanced level since they got 60% to 70% marks in the listening test.

18% testees belonged to average level because 11% obtained 2nd and 7% pass division while 4% testees are categorized as poor listeners because they could not secured pass marks.

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Table No. 4

**Presentation of Listening Comprehension Ability Through Mean, Median
and Mode**

Marks (x)	Frequency (f)	fx	cf
3	4	12	4
4	7	28	11
5	11	55	22
6	26	156	48
7	18	126	66
8	20	160	86
9	9	81	95
10	5	50	100
	N = 100	∑fx = 668	

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{X}) = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

$$= \frac{668}{100} = 6.68$$

The mean score obtained by the students in listening test was 6.68 out of ten.

$$\text{Median} = \frac{N + 1}{2}^{\text{th}} \text{ score}$$

$$= \frac{100 + 1}{2}^{\text{th}} \text{ score}$$

$$= \frac{101}{2}^{\text{th}}$$

$$= 50.5^{\text{th}} \text{ score}$$

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As 50.5th score in the cumulative frequency (cf in short) denotes the median. So the median score falls on 7 was the median score in my study.

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Whereas mode is the most frequently obtained score in the data. As the above mentioned data is concerned, 6 was the mode score because it was repeated for 26 times. 26 testees obtained 6 marks.

When we analyze the frequency of the marks we can see that 3 marks was obtained by 4 students, 4 marks was obtained by 7 students, 5 marks was obtained by 11 students. 6 marks had the highest frequency. It occurred for 26 times.

18 students secured 7 marks, 20 students scored 8 marks, 9 students obtained 9 marks while only 5 students scored 10 marks in the listening test of my research.

Analysis of Comprehension

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Most of the students could comprehend numerical figure easily.

IN-B. How many people died in the accident?

a. 4 b. 6 c. 8 d. 9

IN-C The number of passengers traveling in the bus was.....

a. 45 b. 48 c. 50 d. 52

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Almost the greater number of students tick correct options of these items.

Likewise, they could comprehend the name of familiar place quite easily.

For example: Item No. A.

The accident occurred at

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a. Jhumka b. Belbary c. Itahary d. Jhapa

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Nearly all of the students were able to tick the correct option in this item.

However, the name of unfamiliar thing causes really difficult for them to comprehend.

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For example I.N. 1. (D): The bus collided with a

a. motorbike b. tempo c. lorry d. jeep

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Very few bright students could comprehend this item because 'lorry' is the name of unfamiliar vehicles for them. So the greater number of students could not choose the correct option.

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Similarly, unfamiliar lexis such as inflammation, violence posed great difficulty for the students to comprehend item No. 1.E.

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7 students obtained 4 marks whereas only 4 students secured 3 marks which is below pass marks according to national standard of S.L.C. exam. So 4 students out of 100 seems to be poor listeners whereas 5 test takers obtained the highest marks in listening comprehension.

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Table No.54:

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Item analysis of multiple choice questions in term of difficulty index

Item number	Difficult Index	Remarks
1.A	0.88	
B	0.61	
C	0.98	
D	0.75	
E	0.83	

While examining difficulty index, the test items are divided into 3 categories:

1. Easy items: item with F.V. above 0.75.
2. Average items: items with an F.V. falling between 0.3 to 0.75.
3. Difficult items: items with an F.V. below 0.3.

In accordance with the criteria mentioned above, we can analyze the table No. 4 as below:

Item No.1.A. falls under easy item because it has got F.V. 0.88 or above 0.75.

Item No. 1.B: falls under average because its F.V. is 0.61.

Item No. C Falls under easy item- since its F.V. is 0.98.

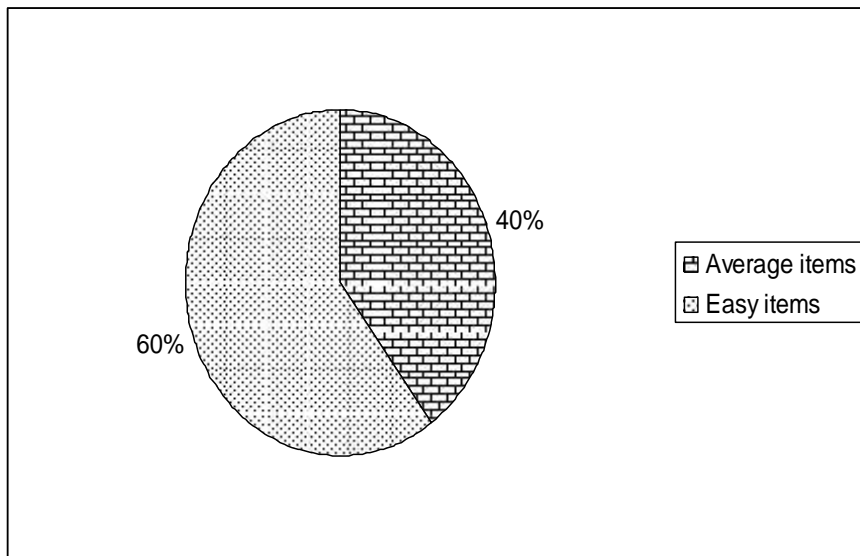
Item No. D Falls under average item as it has got F.V. 0.75.

Item No. E falls within easy item because of having F.V. 0.83.

The average facility value or average difficulty index is 0.81%

While calculating percentage of difficulty index I found 2 items i.e. item no. 1 (B) (D) out of 5 fell within average item. No difficult item was found-. That is to say 40% test items were average and 60% items were easy.

Difficult index of multiple choice questions of listening test in my research study is presented through pie-chart.



The above pie-chart indicates 40% shaded area represent average difficulty and 60% un-shaded portion represents easy items.

Table No. 56:

Item analysis in term of discrimination index

Item No.	Index of discrimination	Remarks of I.O.D
1.A	0.2	Moderate discriminator
B	0.14	Poor discriminator
C	0.04	Poor discriminator
D	0.3	Moderate discriminator
E	0.26	Moderate discriminator

While analyzing index of discrimination, test items were divided into the following five categories:

- a. Perfect discriminator: Items having I.O.D. of +1 value.
- b. Good discriminator: Items having I.O.D. above 0.7.
- c. Moderate discriminator: Items having discrimination index falling between 0.2 to 0.7.
- d. Poor discriminators: Items with a discrimination index below 0.2.
- e. Negative discriminator: Items which indicate toward wrong direction to -1.

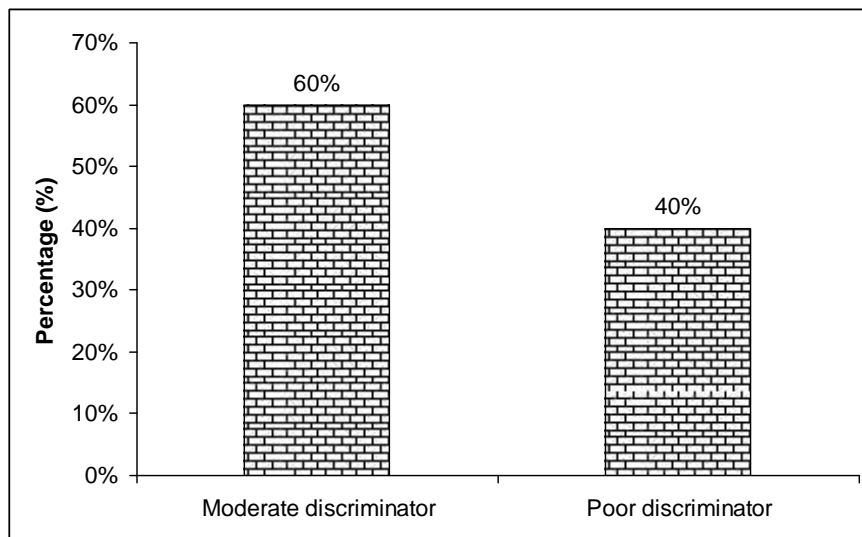
On the basis of above mentioned criteria, table no.5 is illustrated here in below:

- a. Item No. 1.A belongs to moderate discriminator because it has got discrimination index 0.2.
- b. Item No. 1.B belongs to poor discriminator because of its I.O.D value is below 0.2 i.e. it has 0.14 discrimination value.
- c. Item No. 1.C. belongs to poor discriminator because it has got 0.04 discrimination value.

- d. Item No. 1.D. belongs to moderate discriminator as its discrimination value is 0.3.
- e. Item 1.E. represents moderate discriminator because of having discrimination value 0.26.

In a nutshell, 3 items were moderate discriminators and 2 items were found to be poor discriminators. Perfect discriminators, Good discriminator and negative discriminators were not found at all.

To make the index of discrimination vivid it is presented through bar chart herein below:



The above bar-chart displays 60% moderate items were included in the listening test whereas only 40% poor discriminators were used. 0% perfect discriminators, 0% good discriminators and 0% negative discriminators were used.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter encompasses the major findings of the study on the basis of analysis and interpretation of the data and recommendations for pedagogical implications.

4.1 Findings

The main objectives of this study were to find out listening comprehension ability of the students of secondary level, to analyze the difficulty level and discrimination index of the test items. For this purpose a research study was conducted and the following findings have been listed based on the analysis and interpretation.

4.1.1 Findings of eComprehension ability of the students

- a. ~~14-34% test takers~~ testees were found to ~~have strong comprehension ability. be highly advanced in listening because they secured distinction in listening test.~~ Almost all of them came to ~~government community based aided~~ schools from English medium boarding based schools.
- b. ~~64-44% testees test taker~~ were advanced in listening comprehension because they obtained between 60% to 70% marks s obtained marks between 6 to 8 who were studying in government aided well facilitated schools.
- c. ~~18% students were found to belong to the average level in listening test who test takers~~ obtained between 40% to 50% marks. Approximately 6 of them belonged to Sanskrit based government aided school.
- d. Only 4% students ~~test takers~~ belonged to poor level. Nearly all of them were from Sanskrit based government aided secondary school where

translation of English into Nepali is widely used. Only reading and writing skills are emphasized ignoring listening and speaking skill. Almost all of the students belonged to such school were unfamiliar with listening materials. Listening test was radically a stressful experience for them.

4.1.2 Findings of **d**Difficulty **I**Level of **t**Test **i**Items

- a. The average facility value of the test items was 0.81%
- b. Only 2-40% test items fell within average level of difficulty whereas 3-60% test items seem to be fairly easy which may not be desirable-. Such items may not distinguish above average students and below average students. Too easy and too difficult items fail to discriminate between testers.

4.1.3 Findings of **d**Discriminator **i**Index of **t**Test **i**Items

- a. None of the test items were seemed to have a perfect and even a good discrimination index.
- b. None of the test items were found to discriminate in the wrong direction.
- c. 2-40% items were found to be poor discriminators.
- d. 3-60% items were identified as moderate discriminators which seemed to be fairly desirable to measure competency level of the students.
- e. Items with high facility value need not necessarily have good discrimination index.

4.2 Recommendations

The pedagogical implications have been recommended on the basis of findings of the study as follows:

- a. Students should be provided with adequate access to listening materials.

~~b. Translation from English into Nepali should be avoided. It hinders the learners' listening and speaking skills.~~

~~c. Listening is a prominent skill. It should be equally focused as reading and writing skills.~~

~~d. b.~~ An orientation to listening test taking strategies is to be given to the students in their English lesson.

~~e. c.~~ While constructing a listening test, test items should be prepared focusing on average difficulty level. The higher the F.V., the easier the test will be. So, the F.V. should be neither too high nor too low. It should be within ~~0.5~~ 0.3 to 0.7.

~~f. Only the statistically satisfactory items should be included in the final version of the test.~~

~~g. d.~~ Multiple choice items should be arranged in the order of increasing difficulty.

~~h. e.~~ Pilot test should be conducted before implementing the items in the final version of the test.

~~i. f.~~ Since perfect discriminator are quite impossible to obtain, question-setters should be aware of increasing G.D. as well as M.D.

~~j. g.~~ Poor discriminators are to be reduced as far possible since they can not distinguish good and bad students.

~~k. h.~~ Test items with N.D. should not be incorporated in the test since they indicate the scores of the examineers in the wrong direction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-I

Listening Text

The time is 4 o'clock. Here is the news summary. There has been a serious accident on the Mahendra Highway in Belabary in which at least six people have lost their lives. It happened early this morning near Itahari when a bus carrying 45 passengers collided with a heavy lorry. Rescue operation has been going on throughout the day, and a section of highway has been closed to traffic.

An important talk of three major political parties has been taking place in Baluwatar since this morning. The main agenda is the assimilation of Maoist militants in the national force.

Meanwhile, the Government has failed to control a national bus strike, and the bus drivers' union has announced that no buses will run from next Monday. The decision to go ahead with the strike was announced by a union spokesman at the end of a meeting early this afternoon during which Government representatives failed to persuade the union and the employers to agree on a new wage plan.

Now let's pay a glance at the international news. The forest fire in southern France: firemen from six different towns have been fighting all day to prevent the fire from spreading further. Latest reports say that the blaze has still not been brought under control, and that estimated three million pounds worth of damage has already been caused. Four people have died in the fire so far and 20 more have been taken to hospital with burns and other injuries. The French Government has asked the tourists to avoid the area.

Appendix-II

Listening Test

Name:

Time: 11 mins

Full marks: 10

1. Tick the best answers:

5x1=5

A. the accident occurred at

a. Jhumka b. Belbary c. Itahary d. Jhapa

B. How many people died in the accident?

a. 4 b. 6 c. 8 d. 9

C. The number of the passengers traveling in the bus was

a. 45 b. 48 c. 50 d. 52

D. The bus collided with a

a. motorbike b. tempo c. lorry d. jeep

E. The government has failed to control

a. robbery b. bus strike c. inflation d. violence

2. Write T for true and F for false statements:

5x1=5

a. The talk took place among 4 major political parties. ()

b. Rescue operation had been conducted on the accident spot. ()

c. The place where the talk was going on was Baluwatar. ()

d. The issue of negotiation was the formation of government. ()

e. The forest fire broke out in southern France

Appendix ~~Three~~III

The names of schools from which data are collected:

1. Singha Devi Secondary School Khudunabari-1, Jhapa.
2. Shanischare Higher Secondary School, Shanischare, Jhapa.
3. Kalisthan Secondary School, Sanischare.
4. Arjundhara Adarsha Sanskrit Ma.Vi., Arjundhara.
5. Janta Higher Secondary School, Khudunabari-6..
6. Trivuwan Secondary School, Budhabare-3, Hokse..
7. Buddha Adarsha ~~Higehr~~Higher Secondary School, Buddhabare-6.
8. Ganesh Secondary School, Shantinagar V.D.C.
9. ~~Badigawn~~Gadigawn Secondary School, Shantinagar V.D.C.
10. Mohan Maya Secondary School, Charpane V.D.C.