EFFECTIVENESS OF USING ENGLISH SONGS FOR THE IMPROVEMETNT OF LISTENING SKILLS

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CHAPTER-ONE
INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes general background, review of related literature and objectives and significance of the study.

1.1　General Background

We all know that language is a means of communication. The purpose of teaching a language is to enable the students to communicate in that language. It is quite essential that teaching of language aimed at equipping students with the language skill they really need. As language in every day communication begins from listening, it is the pre-requisite for speaking. Why, usually, are the deaf people dumb? It is true that they could not learn to speak due to the lack of listening. Children can only speak after they listen.

Students need to be able to listen to a variety of things in a number of different ways. In the first place, they need to be able to recognize paraliguistic clues such as intention in order to understand moods and meanings. They also need to be able to listen for specific information (such as times, platform numbers, etc.) and sometimes for more general understanding (when they are listening to a story or interacting in a social conversation). A lot will depend on the particular genres they are working with.

Regarding teaching of listening, Harmer (2008, p. 135-36) has discussed the following principles of listening:

Principle 1: Encourage students to listen as often and as much as possible
The more students listen, the better they get at listening- and the better they get at understanding pronunciation and at using it appropriately themselves. Students should get a lot of exposure. Teachers should create an English environment in the class. Students cannot develop listening ability by reading or writing but the more they listen the more they become good listener. That is why students should be encouraged to listen as much as possible.

Principle 2: Help students prepare to listen

Students also need to be ready to listen. This means that they will need to look at pictures, discuss the topic, or read the questions first, for example, in order to be in a position to predict what is coming. Students should get reasons to read. If they do not know why they are going to listen, then the listening activity may not produce fruitful results. They should be made alert by giving them situations to predict what is coming next.

Principle 3: Once may not be enough

There are almost no occasions when the teacher will play an audio track only once. Students will want to hear it again to pick up the things they missed the first time- and we may well want them to have a chance to study some of the language features on the tap.

In the case of live listening, students should be encouraged to ask for repetition and clarification when they need it. In this case, students should be encouraged to ask questions to the teachers in classroom if they do not understand anything.

The first listening to a text is often used just to give students an idea of what the speakers sound like, and what the general topic is (see principle 5) so that subsequent listening are easier for them. For subsequent listening, we may stop the audio track at various points, or only play extracts from it. However, we will have to ensure that we do not go on and on working with the same audio track.

Tracks should be played many times based on the level of students. Listening to the text once cannot be enough. It just gives an overview of the text to the students. They should be given a lot of practice of listening in understanding the text in detail.

Principle 4: Encourage students to respond to the content of a listening, not just to the language.

An important part of a listening sequence is for teachers to draw out the meaning of what is being said, discern what is intended and find out what impression it makes on the students. If students have understood the message conveyed by a sentence, then they have understood the language. If they can respond to a listening text then they have understood the language. So, they should be encouraged to interact with the listening text, they will obviously understand the language gradually.

Principle 5: Different listening stages demand different listening tasks.

Because there are different things we want to do with a listening text, we need to set different tasks for different listening stages. This means that, for a first listening, the task (s) may need to be fairly straight forward and general. That way, the students' general understanding and response can be successful and the stress associated with listening can be reduced. Later listening, however, may focus in on detailed information, language use or pronunciation etc. will be the teachers' job to help students to focus it on what they are listening for.

Listening tasks should be appropriate according to the level of the students and according to the stages of listening. Listening texts itself must be appropriate and suitable for the students and listening tasks should be derived accordingly.

The teachers have to move from simple to complex. In the beginning, students can be trained just to understand isolated words but later on tasks can be formulated as per demanding students to understand connected speech.

Principle 6: Good teachers exploit listening texts to the full.

If teachers ask students to invest time and emotional energy in a listening text- and if they themselves have spent time choosing and preparing the listening sequence- then it makes sense to use the audio track or live listening experience for as many different applications as possible.

The language skills listening, speaking, reading and writing are important not only while learning a language but also in real life situation. However, in the real life situation, some language specialists focus more on reading and writing neglecting listening and speaking. American linguist William Moulton, in a report prepared for the 9th International Congress of Linguists, emphasized that language teaching methodology should be based on "speech, not writing" (Richards and Rodgers, 1995, p. 94). In Nepal, the English language learning situation is concerned with providing more written exposure which is inadequate for the learners; particularly in the field of authentic listening materials. Therefore, this study had attempted to find out the usage and effectiveness of songs as listening materials in teaching listening skill.

1.1.1 Language Skills: An Introduction

To be competent over a language, a speaker needs to have command over the language skills. Language skills refer to those skills which make communication a perfect by the use of language. Communication is possible in two modes in language; spoken and written. In spoken mode listening and speaking go side by side. We usually speak after we have listened. In day to day communication, listening causes speaking or vice versa. These two skills, listening and speaking, are the basic or primary skills of language in the sense that even an illiterate person can communicate using these two skills.

In other words, only through the spoken mode communication is possible. Reading and writing are the intellectual tasks. Only the literate person can practise them. Therefore, these two skills can be considered as the secondary skills in language learning.

Although, there are four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing listening precedes speaking. In the very beginning of language learning, speaking is impossible without listening. Therefore, listening is the main source of speaking. Likewise, reading precedes writing. Without the knowledge of reading no one can write. Moreover, the two language skills, listening and

speaking, precede reading and writing. To sum up, we can say that there is a hierarchy of language skills; Listening-Speaking-Reading-Writing.

These four language skills should be integrated while practising a language item. Students need to be able to use all the four language skills appropriately. Efficiency in only one skill does not make students good language user. They should give equal importance to all the skills of language.

a.   Listening Comprehension

Listening is a receptive skill in which listener receives something through his/her ears. Listening skill in general refers to the skill to listen and understand the message. Underwood (1989, cited in Sharma and Phyak 2008, p.198) defines listening as an "activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear". It means trying to understand the oral message people are conveying. Furthermore, Underwood (ibid.) says that 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 in particular occasions, and not simply to understand the words themselves.

In language teaching, the phrase 'listening comprehension' is often used to mean 'listening and understanding skills' or 'listening comprehension skills.' If listening comprehension is used in this sense, listening can be taken as meaning trying to understand the oral message people are conveying.

Similarly, listening is the fundamental language skill since it is the medium through which people gain a large portion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation. In the present use of mass communication, it is of vital importance that students are taught to listen effectively and critically.

According to Krashen's (1985) input theory, language input is the most essential condition of language acquisition. As an input, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Krashen further argues that

people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information they hear.

Thus, language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input. Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching. It is essential for language teachers to help students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations, precisely those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom is very crucial.

When we talk about listening skill, we must know the processes of listening. As we assume that listening as a mere simple and only the communication between the speaker and the listener, there are several processes which make the listening effective.

b.   The Process of Listening Comprehension

With a greater understanding of language quality and the development of teaching theory, there has been recognition of the process of listening comprehension as an important factor in teaching listening. Listening is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to describe. However, it is recognized by Wipf (1984) that listeners must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, understand intention and retain and interpret this within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance. Likewise, Rost (2002) interprets listening, in its broadest sense:

> A process of receiving what the speaker actually says (receptive orientation); constructing and representing meaning (constructive orientation); negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding (collaborative orientation); and, creating meaning through involvement,

imagination and empathy (transformative orientation). Listening, then, is a complex, active processes of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know.

c.   Strategies of Listening Comprehension

Listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input. According to the top-down approach, strategies are listener based (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, i.e. the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. The top-down strategies include:

-    listening for the main idea
-    predicting
-    drawing inferences
-    summarizing

According to the bottom-up approach, strategies are text based (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) in which the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include:

-    listening for specific details
-    recognizing cognates
-    recognizing word-order patterns

From above discussion, we can argue that listening comprehension tends to be an interactive, interpretive process in which listeners use prior linguistic knowledge in understanding messages. They use metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies to facilitate comprehension and to make their learning more effective. Metacognitive strategies are important because they regulate

and direct the language learning process. Studies have shown that skilled listeners use more metacognitive strategies than their less-skilled counterparts (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Similarly, the use of cognitive strategies helps students to manipulate learning materials and apply specific techniques to a listening task. And socio-affective strategies describe the techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to lower anxiety.

1.1.2 Importance of Listening Skill

If we provide wrong input in computer, the output will also be wrong. Same process applies in language leaning as well. We know that the main source of input of our mind is listening. If we listen to incorrect things or even listen correct things but interpret it incorrectly then it will be worthless or sometimes harmful. In this regard, Underwood (1989, p.1) says:

> Listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. To listening successfully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions, and not simply to understand the words themselves. A speaker saying 'You're late' for example, may be wishing to convey any one of a range of meanings: simply stating the fact that you have arrived late, or complaining because he/she has 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, and you, as the listener, must recognize and interpret the other factors which are used to convey the message to you.

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We see that our brain mechanisms process the data which are received through the ears, received data should be correct otherwise the interpretation of the data will be meaningless. In the very beginning of language learning, the learner has to listen to the same things many times to understand the spoken text. If we listen more we then speak more as well. Thus, listening is an active knowledge guided process which shapes the whole process of language learning.

Communication is not a one way process; there should be a speaker and listener. If the listener cannot understand the speaker because of his poor listening skill then the communication cannot succeed. That is why there should be good ear training for good listening. To communicate, the listener should have good listening skill as well. Likewise, to make the students competent in listening skill, the language teacher has to make his listening class effective. For this teaching materials can be helpful to make the learners active listeners and engage them in a meaningful listening action.

Listening comprehension depends upon the purpose or reason of listening. The purpose of listening will be many and varied, depending on what they need and wish to do. According to Galvin (1985 as quoted by Underwood, 1989, p. 4) there are five main reasons for listening:
- to engage in social rituals
- to exchange information
- to exert control
- to share feelings
- to enjoy yourself

Underwood (ibid, p.5) points out other listening situations for which teachers should prepare their students. These situations include:
- listening to announcement
- listening to the news, the weather forecast, etc, on the radio
- Watching the news, the weather forecast, etc on television
- listening to the radio for entertainment

- watching television for entertainment
- watching a live performance of a play
- watching a film in a cinema
- listening to records
- following a lesson
- attending a lecture
- listening on the telephone
- following instruction
- listening to someone giving a public address

The main aim of communicative language teaching is generally to enable the students to participate fully and comfortably in a conversation, both as speakers and as listeners. In this sense, classroom teaching should be objective-oriented i.e. it should not be only examination oriented. Classroom teaching should fulfill the objectives which are intended by the curriculum. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the proper classroom teaching. They have to choose suitable materials at right time to make the teaching effective. In fact, no material is absolutely effective or non-effective in itself but it depends upon the situation and subject matter of teaching to make it effective. There is no doubt on the value and usefulness of live and other recorded materials in the field of teaching listening skill.

1.1.3   Teaching Listening Skill at Secondary Level in Nepal

In Nepal, listening in teaching English was first introduced after National Education Planning (NEP, 2049 B.S.). Before the implementation of NEP-2049, language skills were not taught separately; they were taught integratedly but new curriculum pointed out the objectives of teaching each skill. The text-books were prepared according to the objectives of the curriculum. The secondary level curriculum pointed out the following objectives of teaching listening:

- Show understanding of variety of authentic listening text,

- Listen to spoken text, understand the gist and retrieve specific information from it,
- Record in note or summary from the main points of spoken message,
- Respond appropriately to spoken directions or instructions.

Listening skill is taught by using tapes recorded by both Nepali and native speakers of English. All the exercises based on the listening texts are developed to enable the students to improve their pronunciation skills and their skill in extracting information from the scripts. There are two types of listening materials; core materials, which include all the tape scripts used in the listening exercise and additional materials including poems, conversations and short dramas.

Although the curriculum attempted to cover all four skills of language, they are not equally emphasized. Listening skill is the foundation of other three language skills, but it is least emphasized in the secondary level curriculum, as only 25% marks has been allocated for listening and speaking and 75% marks for reading and writing. And for listening, only 10 marks has been allocated whereas 15 marks for speaking. Similarly, many English teachers generally underestimate the value of listening activities in teaching. So, they do not conduct listening activities sufficiently as expected to be done. But this may not the sole reason alone for not conducting listening activities but lack of listening materials may also be the reason.

1.1.4   Types of Listening Materials

Listening materials refer to those materials to which the students listen to in the classroom teaching. For being proficient in listening to the aural-oral texts are very useful. Those materials are designed and selected according to the objectives of the lesson, level and interest of the learners, availability of the materials, etc. Generally, listening materials are classified into two types: recorded materials and live materials.

i.   **Recorded Materials**

If a teacher teaches a lesson by using cassette player, it is known as recorded material. The listening materials are designed and recorded for presenting in the classroom for achieving specific purposes in listening skill. The recorded materials provide a chance for students to listen to a variety of voices.

There are different types of recorded materials in the field of language teaching. They are classified on the basis of their contents. In this regard, Cross (1992, p.250) says:

> The content of the recorded material you use will depend on the age of the learners, the nature of the course followed, the availability of speakers to make recordings and the clarity with which anglophone broadcasts can be picked up. Where professional recordings of textbook materials are not available, you can contrive home-made ones to support the course. The investment of time is not great, and the tapes can be used year after year.

Cross further classifies the recorded materials into three main categories: authentic, scripted, and semi-scripted texts.

a.   Authentic texts

These are the recordings made from the radio, live recordings of the language in the street or market place, recordings of unedited and unscripted talks or discussions, and so on. They are suitable for advanced classes for the most part, as we can have no control over the content.

b.   Scripted texts
These are recordings of fluent speakers reading exactly what is on a page, but trying to sound spontaneous. Published textbook support materials are of this

sort. They are representative of the ways in which people really speak to each other, but they can be very useful, though. They are certainly better than no listening at all.

c.   Semi-scripted texts

These are the useful compromise for learners who want the exercise some control in listening and some of them want a class to hear more or less authentic forms of listening recorded materials. So, the speakers are given guidelines or a list of points in abbreviated form and they are to express these ideas their own ways.

ii.   Using a cassette recorder

Cassette recorder is a useful instrument to teach listening. Through the use of cassette recorder, learners can listen to varieties of texts with entertainment. But the teacher has to handle it properly i.e. each teacher should have good skill to handle it. Doff (1992, p.204) argues:

> Listening to a cassette recording is much more difficult than listening to the teacher. When we listen to someone 'face to face', there are many visual clues (e.g. gestures, lip movements) which help us to listen. When we listen to a cassette these clues are missing. In a large class with bad acoustics, listening to a cassette may be very difficult indeed. Up to a point, trying to listen to something that is not clear can provide good listening practice, but if it is too difficult. It must be frustrating.

Furthermore, Doff presents the following guidelines for using recorded materials:
- Introduce the listening, and give one or two guiding questions.
- Play the cassette once without stopping, and discuss the guiding questions.

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- Play the cassette again. This time, focus on important points, pausing and asking what the person said each time. If students are unable to 'catch' the remark, rewind the cassette a little way and play it again.
- After your demonstration, discuss the technique. Emphasize that the aim is to focus on the most important remarks only, but not, of course, to go through the whole of a listening the phrase by phrase.

Apart from the above guidelines, we can use a cassette recorder according to the demand and need of the students, until they understand the text. Moreover, when a teacher uses her/his own voice for the purpose of teaching, as mentioned earlier, it is known as live materials. It develops face to face classroom interaction so that the students see many visual clues, which help them to listen effectively.

1.1.5 Importance of English Songs

So far as songs are concerned, they are taken as supplementary materials for teaching the English language. But since this thesis is based on the research work to find out the effectiveness of English songs to improve listening skills. One of the important advantages of songs is that they help learners to know how words are arranged, pronounced and stressed. Every young learner enjoy listening songs. English songs play important role to improve listening habit. Sometimes other listening materials may be boring but as songs are composed with music they are really interesting.

Furthermore, songs are both pleasant and relaxing after intensive language work and an excellent way of helping learners with rhythm, stress and pronunciation. According to Cross (1992, p. 164), "Songs exaggerate the rhythmic nature of the language. This is especially important for English, which is a syllable timed language with stressed syllable being spoken at roughly equal time intervals, even in everyday speech." When the students recite or sing they are obliged to use the persodies correctly in order to reproduce the swing of the piece. Once the song has been learned, it is in their

mind for the rest of their lives, with all the rhythms, grammatical niceties and vocabulary. In the same way songs also give insights into target culture. Songs can create a happy and relaxed environment. They have enormous linguistic value as authentic folk poetry and speech. Song can also be useful as a means for teacher to increase rapport their students. Using songs is a collaborative activity. Everything we see, everything we do is associated with sound we are hearing and which is echoing in our minds. The Importance of song can also be observed by the following points:

a.   Songs help learners to learn better living and also give then aesthetic pleasure.

b.   Learners improved their rhythms and fluency.

c.   They help to understand the English culture.

d.   Songs are often extremely popular among the young so, teacher can make use of these facts to get his pupils to improve their listening skills.

e.   They are also useful for pupils to learn how different words are pronounced and stressed in songs than normal speech.

1.1.5.1 Functions of Songs

Being a combination of music and language, songs have innumerable virtues that deserve our attention. Their richness in culture and themes, their idiomatic and poetic expressions, their therapeutic functions and so on makes them an impeccable tool for language teaching.

a.   A kaleidoscope of culture

Kramsch (2000) says,"Language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality." Language and music are interwoven in songs to communicate cultural reality in a very unique way. English songs endow the English native speakers with an opportunity to put across their own culture. Likewise, Black Americans' call for equality and respect, the legends of the American West, celebration of western festivals and people's attitudes toward love, friendship and marriage all find expression in the lines and rhythmic melodies of the

songs.

b.   Expressiveness

Songs are highly expressive. Some convey love and emotions; some tell a memorable and moving story; some embody one's dreams and ideals; and some reminisce about the golden past. Songs are abundant in themes and expressions which will echo in the learner's heart. "Acquisition of automatic language skills depends on rich, meaningful, repeated exposure to comprehensible input without awareness" (Bolitho et al., 2003, p.253).

c.   Recitability

Lyrics are characterized by the use of rhythms, conversational speech and poetic expressions. For example, the following Vincent sings of an artist's loneliness, inner contradiction and of the tranquil and perpetual starry night in the very poetic and rhymed lines.

> *Flying man, flying man*
> *Up in the sky,*
> *Where are you going to*
> *Flying so high?*
> *Over the mountains*
> *And over the sea,*
> *Flying men, flying man*
> *Won't you take me?*

[Source: Dakin (1967) *Song and rhymes for teaching English*]

Learners are likely to be attracted by these beautiful and poetic, or colloquial and lucid lyrics, which will be easily recited and long remembered. Singing a song by heart is more delightful and meaningful than rote learning. Many people cannot help recalling the songs learned in their early years, even when they only vaguely remember the old melodies and some fragments of the lyrics.

d.   Therapeutic functions

In general, the foremost function of songs is to provide relaxation and recreation. It is quite common that when people are tired, they will sit back and listen to a piece of music or they may hang out with friends to sing in Karaoke, clubs or bars. Music has the power to soothe people's emotions, refresh their minds and to unlock their creativity. Gaston (1968) has pointed out that music has several therapeutic functions, such as promoting self-esteem through increased self-satisfaction in musical performance and using the unique potential of rhythm to energize and bring order.

1.1.5.2 English Songs for Learning English

Before discussing how English songs help in learning English, I want to bring a context. Many Nepalese listen to Hindi songs and they can sing them well. They also understand them. And if we say that listening to Hindi songs is helping them to understand the Hindi language no one will disagree. Same things can be applied in the case of the English language.

Many of us have experienced with amazement how quick we are at learning songs. It is also a common experience to forget nearly everything we learn in another language except the few songs that we learnt. For a variety of reasons song sticks in our minds and becomes part of us, and lend themselves easily to exploitation in the classroom. Similarly, to sing with vocalization is significantly easier then speech. But what is even more amazing is that it also seems easier to sing language than to speak it. While explaining how songs help learning language, Murphy, (2009, p. 7) says,

> It seems our brains have a natural propensity to repeat what we hear in our environment in order to make sense of it. Songs may strongly activate the repetition mechanism of the language acquisition device. It certainly seems to do so with children, who learn songs almost effortlessly.

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The use of song in the classroom can stimulate very positive association to the study of language, which otherwise may only be seen as a laborious task, entailing exams, frustration, and corrections.

a.   Psychological implications

Stern (1983) says, "The concept of learning, as it is understood today, has been greatly influenced by the psychological study of the learning process…" (p.18). This section demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating English songs into ELT from the theory of human brain.

i.   Multiple intelligence (MI) and listening to English songs

The theory of MI proposed and elaborated by Gardner (1993), points out that there are a number of distinct intelligence possessed by each individual in varying degrees. In accordance with MI, human intelligence is categorized into at least nine primary types: verbal/linguistic intelligence, mathematical/logical intelligence, visual/spatial intelligence, body/kinesthetic intelligence, musical/rhythmic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalist intelligence and existential intelligence, all of which are not isolated and irrelevant, but interdependent on and complementary with each other. Therefore, it is inappropriate to explore only one type of intelligence in EFL learning. Verbal/linguistic intelligence, musical/rhythmic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, body/kinesthetic intelligence and even more may contribute to developing and complementing a learner's linguistic competence and enhance his ability of learning a foreign language. Listening to English songs is of great value to tap the learner's linguistic potentials through enchanting melodies, varying rhythms and image-evoking lyrics, which appeal to multidimensional development of human intelligence.

ii.   Hemisphere functioning in language learning

Studies on psycholinguistics reveal that songs can activate language acquisition and learning in both left and right hemispheres of the human brain (Carroll, 2000; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 2000; Williams and Burden, 1997). Through

psychologists' persistent study on ear and hemisphere functioning differences, it was found that right ear, which leads to left hemisphere (LH), takes conspicuous advantages over left ear for speech stimuli, so "the LH does seem to possess an innate and highly specialized linguistic mechanism" which assumes the major responsibility of analytic processing of language (Carroll, 2000, p.349). However, the right hemisphere's important function in language processing cannot be ignored. Left ear, which leads to right hemisphere, is keener to nonverbal sound such as melodies and emotional colors of the message. Songs enter the human brain—from left ear to right hemisphere—in a rather different way from our speech and thus can stimulate language learning in the right hemisphere, whose involvement in language processing become more active in eliciting the overall meaning and processing formulaic speech (Ellis, 1985). "Formulaic speech consists of expressions which are learned as unanalysable wholes and employed on particular occasions" (Lyons, 1968, p.177).

b.   Stimulation of affective learning by songs

Using English songs in EFL classrooms can successfully bring about affective learning through providing a harmonious classroom atmosphere, reducing students' anxiety, fostering their interests and motivating them to learn the target language. Students often regard English songs as part of entertainment rather than a work and thus find learning English through songs amusing and relaxed.

i.   The affective filter hypothesis

In 1982, Dulay suggested that the use of filter depends upon affective factors such as the learner's motivation, attitude and emotions (Ellis, 1985, p.297). And later Krashen (1985) developed the Affective Filter Hypothesis based on Dulay's point of view. Krashen argued that affective learning will occur when the affective filter is weak. When the learner is in such an affective state as highly motivated, self-confident and at ease, the filter will be weak and allow

in plenty of input, which means a positive attitude toward learning and the optimum state of language learning are present. On the contrary, the filter will become stronger when the learner is haunted with low motivation, lack of self-confidence and high anxiety. In that case, the learner is not ready for language acquisition or learning. The Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that an ideal teacher should be capable of providing a classroom atmosphere conducive to motivating, encouraging his students and lessening their anxiety if there's any. Songs can be useful to lower the affective filter as they increase the motivation and interest and reduce the anxiety, hesitation, and fear of the learner.

ii. Anxiety

Anxiety, associated with negative feelings, such as upset, tension, frustration, self-doubt and fear, would impede language learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Students beyond puberty are more apt to be affected by anxiety in learning a foreign language. Therefore, to minimize the amount of anxiety in foreign language learners becomes crucial to successful language learning.

iii. Arousal of motivation by English songs

Motivation is a vital element in effective learning. Williams and Burden (1997, p.129) deciphered motivation as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals)". Motivation can be triggered by either internal causes like the learner's interest, enthusiasm and desire or by such external influences as peer pressure.

Many English songs, especially pop songs are quite popular among the Chinese young people, such as *Jingle Bells, Yesterday Once More, Right Here Waiting*, *My Heart Will Go on* and *Big World*. For one thing, these English songs employ the themes that appeal to young people, like holiday celebration, memories of childhood, love and friendship; and for another, many students

desire to learn these English songs, because they want to model themselves on the Hollywood stars and singers or improve their status among the peers. The greater their desire is, the faster they learn. When they are learning fast and continuously making progress, they will be more confident, highly motivated and devoted to the learning task.

c.   Songs and language awareness

Language awareness is "a means of helping learners to help themselves." The result of raising language awareness "will not just be language use, but also language use which is more sensitive to issues of culture, identity and equity" (Bolitho et al., p.254). Songs serve as the very source of such target language use that helps to promote students' language awareness in learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, Bolitho et al. say that language awareness is a "mental attribute which develops through paying motivated attention to language in use, and which enables language learners to gradually gain insights into how languages work" (p.251).

As for the students who are earnest to learn or sing English songs, listening to English songs can prompt them to ask questions about the language. They have to grab the skills of speaking the English language before they can sing the songs on their own. Hence, they are encouraged to probe how every sound is pronounced and how all the sounds are chained together, thereby attaining growing insights into the way the English language functions to convey meaning. In this process, the difficulties that learners have encountered in singing English songs will enable them to notice the gap between their actual performance in the target language and the proficiency of the native singers. In this regard Bolitho et al. (2003) say, This noticing can give "salience to a feature, so that it becomes more noticeable in future input, and thereby contributes to the learner's psychological readiness to acquire that feature" (p.252).

In addition, although most students regard listening to as well as learning

English songs as entertainment, they are also learning tools implicitly and unconsciously, which is a much more pleasant and efficient way to promote language awareness than mechanically memorizing tedious course-books of vocabulary and grammar. "Language awareness is not taught by the teacher or by the course-book; it is developed by the learner. Language awareness is an internal, gradual, realization of the realities of language use" (ibid, p.252).

1.2   Review of Related Literature

Songs occupy important place in teaching listening skill particularly in teaching young learners because they love songs. Songs also help to motivate, create interest and break monotony of classroom. In the Department of English Education, T.U., there are some studies conducted related to listening skills and songs, but no study on the role of songs to improve listening skill is carried out so far.

Timilsina (2000) carried out a research on "The effectiveness of recorded materials over conventional techniques in teaching listening comprehension". He conducted an experimental research in Jhapa district with 9th Grade students. The primary data were collected by conducting of test. The pre-test was administered before the actual classroom teaching and post test was administered after teaching listening skill. A written pre-test was administered for all the students and then they were divided into two groups i.e., experimental and control group. The first group was taught by using recorded materials and the second group was taught by using the usual teaching materials and methods. Finally, a written post-test was administered to both groups and then, the result of both tests was compared. The finding was that the recorded materials were not very effective in teaching listening at this level. The voice of the teacher was much more effective.

Sapkota (2006) carried out a research on "The Effectiveness of Live Presentations and Recorded Materials in Teaching Listening Comprehension". He conducted an experimental research in Jhapa District with 8th Grade

students to find out the effectiveness of live presentation and recorded materials in teaching listening comprehension. He selected six listening exercises from the first six units from the textbook of Grade 8. The test items were objective type and short answer questions. He divided the students into two groups i.e. control group (A) and experimental group (B). Control group (A) was taught by using live presentation and the experimental group (B) was taught by using recorded materials. The same questions were asked for the pre-test and post test. The comparison of the result of the two tests showed that live presentation are more effective for teaching listening comprehension than recorded materials.

Similarly, Chaudhary (2007) conducted a research on 'The Effectiveness of Teaching Vocabulary through Songs and Rhymes" to find out the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary through songs and rhymes. He conducted his research in Shree Himal Janata Lower Secondary School, Rautahat. His respondents were students studying in Grade 5. He divided his respondents into two groups and taught side by side. Group 'B' was taught through songs and rhymes technique and group 'A' was taught without using songs and rhymes technique. Each group was taught six days a week. After a month, experiment post test was administered using the same test used in pre-test. Finally the performance of the groups were compared and analyzed. The research has clearly showed that teaching vocabulary through songs and rhymes is more effective than teaching with usual classroom technique i.e. without using songs and rhymes.

Joshi (2008) also carried out a research on "Problems in Teaching and Learning Listening Skills" to find out the problems of teaching and learning listening skill in Grade 10. He collected his data from five high school English teachers and 40 students of Grade 10 of Dadeldhura district. He selected his respondents using random sampling procedure. He used the questionnaire for the teachers and students and checklist for class observation. He has found several problems. Among them, 'no use of music was also a problem further he has

suggested that use of music and songs could also be beneficial while teaching listening.

Although some researches were conducted in the area of visual aids and other materials used in teaching listening in the classroom no research has yet been carried out on how English songs can contribute to improve listening skill of the secondary students.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

i.   To find out the effectiveness of using English songs for the improvement of listening skill.
ii.   To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4   Significance of the Study

The use of English songs is increasing every day. Most of the teenagers listen to English songs. But it is not well known that why they listen to English songs instead of Nepali? Do they understand English songs? Are they getting any benefit from listening to them? Why can't we use English songs while teaching English? These questions are unanswerable to the readers of Nepal. Since this study has tried to answer these questions, it will be beneficial for the researchers, teachers, course designers, textbook writers, students, and others who are related to teaching and learning English. It will be significant to determine whether or not English songs are capable of strengthening the listening skills of students in the context of Nepal.

CHAPTER - TWO
METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology of the study. I have adopted the following methodological framework to accomplish the study.

2.1   Sources of Data

I collected data from both types of sources - primary and secondary.

2.1.1   Primary Sources of Data

The students of Sharadha Higher Secondary School, Ramechhap were the primary sources of information for my study.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

As secondary sources of data, I consulted: Harmer (2008), Murphey (2009), Ur (2009). Reports, articles, research studies, internet related to the topic and theses of the Department of English Education were also used as secondary sources of data.

2.2   Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for my study was 40 students from roll no. 1 to 40 studying at Grade 10 in Sharada Higher Secondary School, Ramechhap. They were divided into experimental and control groups after pre-test according to their roll no. i.e. the students of odd number into experimental and the students of even number into control group.

2.3   Tools of Data Collection

I used test-items to elicit data from the informants. The test- items include: True-false, Completion and Multiple choice items.

2.4   Process of Data Collection

I went through the following procedures to collect the data for my study:

a.   First of all, I selected a listening text based on the secondary level curriculum and also constructed three types of questions (i.e. True-False, Completion and Multiple Choice) based on it.

b.   After that, I collected some English songs from different websites and selected ten songs that suited the Grade 10 students.

c.   I went to the school and talked to the administration about my study.

d.   After seeking consent, I contacted the students, asked them if they were interested to participate in my class.

e.   After their agreement, I administered pre-test using the listening text.

f.   I divided the students into two groups i.e. experimental and control group.

g.   As the students were divided into two groups, the experimental group were taught using song but the control group were taught without using English songs.

h.   At last I administered a post-test for both groups and compared the achievement of both groups in pre-test and post-test and tried to analyze the effectiveness of English songs for the improvement of listening skills.

2.5   Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

a.   This study was limited to 40 students of Sharadha Higher Secondary School, Ramechhap.

b.   Only Grade 10 students were the population of my study.

c.   Students were taught only for 20 days.

c.   Only 10 songs were played during the whole period of experiment.

e.   Songs were not given for listening before pre-test.

CHAPTER - THREE
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the informants. The research was carried out with the aim of finding the effectiveness of using English songs to improve the listening skills of secondary level students. The students were divided into two groups i.e. experimental and control group and two sets of test were administered (i.e. pre-test and post-test) were three types of questions were included (i.e. True-false, Completion and Multiple Choice items). As the research was carried out in Sharadha Higher Secondary School, Ramechhap district, some of the English teachers were also provided with the opportunity to observe the researcher's class to elicit their responses. The analysis and interpretation of obtained data have been presented in following sub-headings.

3.1   Holistic Analysis of the Pre-test and Pos- test Result

In this section the overall achievement of the groups in the pre-test and post-test is presented and analyzed.

Table No. 1
The Pre -test and Post-test Result

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
Experimental	144	65.45	177	80.45	33	15
Control	147	66.81	157	71.36	10	4.54
Total	291	66.13	334	75.9	43	9.77

The above table shows the achievement of both experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test as well as overall achievement in both the pre-test and post test. If we compare the overall achievement of the pre-test and post-test, the achievement in the post-test is higher than in the pre-test. The overall score of the students in the post test is 75.9% where as in the pre-test it is 66.13%. The students, in the post-test increased their score by 9.77%.

According to the table the experimental group scored 66.45% and 80.45% marks in the pre-test and post-test respectively. This shows that the achievement of the experimental group has increased by 15% marks in the post-test whereas the control group scored 66.81% marks in the pre-test which seems slightly higher than the control group but in the post-test it scored 71.36%. The control group could increase only 4.54% marks. By this it is clear that the experimental group exceeded the control group by 9% marks. The better improvement of the experimental group than control group in the post-test proves the usefulness of English song to improve listening skill.

3.2 Analysis of the Pre-test Achievement

In this section holistic and item-wise analyses of the students' achievement in the pre-test have been presented.

3.2.1 Holistic Analysis

The students were given a set of test items before they listened to and practised with the English songs. The achievement of students in the pre-test is presented in the table below:

Table No. 2

The Pre-test Achievement Score

Full Marks for each Group	Experimental Group		Control Group		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
220	144	65.45	147	66.81	3	1.36

The above table shows the students' achievement in the pre-test. It indicates that the control and experimental groups are no more different according to their marks obtained in the pre-test. The control group achieved 66.81% marks out of 220 marks and the experimental group scored 65.45% marks out of 220 marks. Both groups are found equal in the beginning of the experiment.

3.2.2 Item-wise Analysis of the Pre-test Achievement

To make the comparison more effective, the item-wise comparison has also been done. The following table shows the item-wise comparison of the pre-test achievement:

Table No. 3

The Pre-test Achievement in Each Test-item

Test-item	Experimental Group		Control Group		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
True-False	42	70	43	71.66	1	1.66
Completion	64	64	66	66	2	2
Multiple choice	38	63.33	38	63.66	0	0
Total	144	65.45	147	66	3	1.36

The above table deals with the score achieved by both groups in different test-items in pre-test. According to the table, the score of the control group in True-False test-item is slightly higher than of the experimental group. Similarly, on completion test-item the control group scored highest marks (66%) than the control group which scored 64% marks. We can see that in both true-false and completion test-item the control group scored higher marks than the experimental group but in multiple choice test-item both groups have scored equal marks i.e. 63.33%. Again if we compare the score in terms of test-item both groups have achieved highest marks in true false test-item and lowest marks in multiple choice test-item.

3.3   Analysis of the Post-test Achievement

This section shows holistic and item-wise analyses of students' achievement in the post-test. The achievement of the students after 20 days teaching is going to be presented and analyzed now.

3.3.1 Holistic Analysis

After the pre-test was administered to 40 students, the experimental group was taught with the English songs for 20 days whereas the control group were not given any practices related to English songs and their activities remained as usual. After the experimental group practised for 20 days, I administered the post-test. Now, too, both the groups i.e. experimental and control group were given the same questionnaire that they have already filled in the pre-test by listening to the tape recorder. When I got their answer sheets filled, I collected and the data were tabulated and analyzed. The table below shows the achievement of the students in the post-test:

Table No. 4

The Post-test Achievement Score

Full Marks for each Group	Experimental Group		Control Group		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
220	177	80.45	157	71.36	20	9.0

The above table shows the score achieved by the students in the post-test. According to the table, the experimental group scored the highest marks i.e. 80.45% where as the control group scored 71.36% marks. Here it can be clearly seen that the experimental group has exceeded the control group by 9% marks. It also shows that the control group has not increased its achievement much since they remained as usual and were not practised with English songs. Here, it can be said that the effect of listening English songs made the experimental group more efficient in listening than the control group.

3.3.2 Item-wise Analysis of the Post-test Achievement

To make the comparison more effective and vivid the item-wise comparison has been done. The following table shows the item-wise comparison of the post-test achievement:

Table No. 5

The Post-test Achievement in Each Test-item

Test items	Experimental Group		Control Group		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
True-false	55	91	45	75	10	16
Completion	68	68	67	67	1	1
Multiple choice	54	90	45	75	9	15
Total	177	80.45	157	71.36	30	13.63

The above table shows the score achieved by the students in post-test in different test items. In all test-items the experimental group has exceeded the control group. The table clearly shows that in the true-false test-item the experimental group has scored the highest marks i.e. 91% whereas the control group has achieved 75% marks. Here experimental group has exceeded the control group by 16% marks. Similarly, in 'completion test-item', the experimental group has achieved the highest marks i.e. 68% marks and the control group remained with 62% marks. In the same way, in 'multiple choice questions' items the experimental group has scored 90% marks whereas the control group achieved only75% marks. The students of the control group scored less marks than the experimental group in all the test items in the post-test.

3.4 Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Terms of Test-items

In this section holistic and item-wise comparison of the pre-test and post-test score of both groups is holistically and item-wisely presented in terms of test-items.

3.4.1 Holistic Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Achievement in Different Test-items

In this section the overall achievement of the students in the pre-test and pos-test in different test items is presented.

Table No. 6

Overall Achievement in Test- items

Test-Item	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
True-false	85	70.83	100	83	15	12.50
Completion	130	65	135	67	5	2.5
Multiple choice	76	63.33	99	82.5	23	19.16
Total	291	66.13	334	75.9	43	9.77

The above table shows the overall achievement of the students in different test items in the pre-test and post-test. The students scored 75.9% marks in the post-test whereas they scored only 66.13% marks in the pre-test. .The above table also shows that the students scored highest percentage in the true-false test-item i.e. 70.83% in the pre-test whereas in the post-test the score was 83%. Likewise, in the post-test the students scored 67% whereas in the pre-test the score was only 65% in the completion test-item. In regard to multiple choice questions, in the post-test, the students scored 82.5% whereas in the pre-test they scored only 63.33%. From the table we can find that in all the test-items the students have achieved higher marks in the post-test than in the pre-test.

3.4. 2 Achievement in the Multiple Choice

In this section the achievement in the test-item multiple choice of both groups in the pre-test and post-test is presented and analyzed.

Table No. 7

Achievement in the Multiple Choice Item

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
Experimental	38	63.33	54	90	16	26
Control	38	63.33	45	75	7	11.66

The above table shows the score in the pre-test and the post-test achieved by both groups in multiple choice test-item. According to the table the

experimental group has scored 63.33% marks in the pre-test and 90% in the post test. It means it has increased its score by 26% in the post-test. On the contrary the control group could increase its score only by 11.66%. It scored 63.33% in the pre-test and 75% marks in the post-test. The data clarifies the better performance of the experimental group after practising listening English song.

3.4.3 Achievement in the True-false

 This section presents the achievement in the test-item true-false of both groups in the pre-test and the post-test.

Table No. 8

Achievement in the True-false Item

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
Experimental	42	70	55	91	13	21.66
Control	43	71.66	45	75	2	3.33

The above table deals with the achievement of both groups in the pre-test and post-test in the true-false test-item. In the table we can see that the control group in the pre-test scored 71.66% marks which is 1.66% higher than of the experimental group. But in the post-test the experimental group exceeded the control group by 16% marks. In the post-test the experimental group scored 91% marks where as the control group scored only 75% marks. The control group could increase only 3.33% marks where as the experimental group increased 21.66% marks in the post-test.

3.4.4 Achievement in the Completion

In this section the achievement in the test-item completion of both groups in the pre-test and the post-test is presented.

Table No. 9

Achievement in the Completion Item

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	
	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
Experimental	64	64	68	68	4	4
Control	66	66	67	67	1	1

The above table displays the achievement of the students in the pre-test and post-test in the test-item completion. It shows that the experimental group has obtained 64% marks in the pre-test and 68% in the post-test with the increment of 4%. On the contrary, the control group has obtained 66% in the pre-test and 67% in the post-test with the increment of only 1%. The increment of the experimental group in the post-test is higher (4%) than of the control group (1%). It reveals the fact that the experimental group has achieved more progress in listening skills than the control group.

CHAPTER - FOUR
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the findings of the study and some recommendations have been presented on the basis of interpretation and analysis of the data.

4.1   Findings

The major findings of the study which were derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected are as follows:

i.   After analyzing the pre-test and post-test result, it was found that the achievement of the students in the post test was better than in the pre-test. The students scored 75.9% marks in the post-test and 66.13% in the pre-test. This better performance of the students after practicing with the English songs proves that the English songs can help the learners to improve their listening skill.

ii.   The important finding of this study is that in the pre-test the score achieved by the control group was slightly higher than the experimental group as control group scored 66.81% and the experimental group stored 65.45% marks. On the contrary in the post-test the experimental group scored 80.45% where as the control group could score only 71.36% marks. In the post test the experimental group increased its score by 15% where as the control group could increased only by 4.54%. The experimental group exceeded the control group by 9%.

iii.   It was found that in the pre-test, both the experimental and control groups scored almost equal marks i.e. 65.45% and 66.81% respectively.

iv.   Most of the students in the pre-test scored the highest marks in the True-False item i.e. 83% and the lowest in the multiple choice test-item i.e. 67%

v.   In the post-test, the experimental group was found to be more efficient in comprehending the text as they scored 80.45% marks and the control group scored only 71.36%.

vi. In the post-test, the students scored more marks in the true-false test item i.e. 91.66% and the lowest in completion test-item 67.5%.

vii. While comparing the scores in the pre-test and post-test achievement, it was found that the post-test score was higher than the pre-test. The students in the post-test scored the highest marks i.e. 75.9% and in the pre-test they scored 61.13% marks. No doubt this improvement of experimental group was possible due to the use of English song in classroom. In addition to these findings, during the experiment, I found the experimental group (i.e. the group taught by using songs) more interested and enthusiastic in teaching learning activities than the control group. The experimental group was found to be more curious to learn than control group. Similarly, one interesting change I found in the students during and after the session was they tried to speak like native speakers. They showed great interest to improve their pronunciation too.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations have been proposed:

i. As this research shows the experimental group performed relatively better in comprehending the meaning than the control group, this implies that songs are fruitful to improve listening skill. Therefore, songs should be used while teaching English to improve listening skills.

ii. To use English songs at school level effectively, the teacher should be trained and provided with sufficient teaching materials.

iii. The syllabus and textbook designers should put some English songs but they should be appropriate to the level and interest of the learners. They should encourage teachers to use songs. Though it may be difficult to present songs for each language items in textbook and syllabus, it is essential to included songs in right place for teaching listening.

iv. Since the research was limited only to 40 students of a government-aided school, it cannot be, however, claimed that the findings of this

study are applicable to all schools of Nepal. In order to test the validity of research findings, it is desirable to carry out further research in this area involving more and more number of schools and students.

v. While teaching English by using songs, the teacher may face various problems if songs are not chosen aptly. So, songs should be chosen according to the level of the learners otherwise they may lose their interest. Here are some practical suggestion for classroom activities while using songs:

a. Sometimes teachers need to present the song themselves as students may not understand the song through tape or they may wish to listen to teachers' voice.

b. Teachers should practise the song number of times before hand so that he can sing it with rhythm and expression in the class.

c. Students may need help from teacher to pronounce difficult words and to sing the song with appropriate stress and intonation. So, the teacher should be well prepared for pronunciation and stress.

d. The teachers should encourage the students to listen to English songs, movies, and conversations in English.

e. The teachers while teaching English textbook should encourage students to practice with listening tests.

f. Students who listen to English songs only for pleasure should learn to grab the words from the songs and try to understand its meaning.

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