CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1　General Background

Listening is a pre-requisite for speaking. Why, usually, the deaf people are dumb is that they can not learn to speak due to the lack of listening as an input. 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 the paralinguistic clues such as intonation, in order to understand mood and meaning. 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). These all depend on the particular genres they are working with.

We generally want to be able to understand what people are saying to them in English, either face-to-face, on TV, on the radio, in theatres and cinemas, on tape, CDs or in other recorded media. But, it turns to be difficult mostly for the non-native students of English because the way people speak is often significantly different from the way they write. Furthermore, the students have got very minimum exposure to the English spoken by native speakers of English.

Listening is not only beneficial to improve listening itself but is good for our students' pronunciation, too. The more they hear and understand English spoken, the more they can absorb appropriate pitch and intonation, stress and the sound, which are typical features of spoken language by the help of which they can understand individual words and

those which blend together in connected speech. That is why, listening texts are good pronunciation models. Indeed, successful spoken communication depends not just on the students' ability to speak but also on the effectiveness of the way they listen.

The way that teachers talk to students, the manner in which they interact with them is one of the crucial skills of teacher, but that does not mean that it needs technical expertise. It does, however, require teachers to emphasize with the people they are talking to, by establishing a good rapport with them. The ones who seem to find it fairly natural to adapt their language to their audience are parents when they talk to their young children. As Harmer (2008, p. 37) says:

> Studies show that people use exaggerated tones of voice and speak with less complex grammatical structures than they would if they were talking to adults. Their vocabulary is generally more restricted, they make more frequent attempts to establish eye contact and they use other forms of physical contact. They generally do these things unconsciously.

Furthermore, Harmer (2008, pp. 135-36) discusses some principles of listening. The major ones are:

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. One of our main tasks, therefore, will be to use as much listening in class as possible, and to encourage students to listen to as

much English as they can (via the Internet, pod-cast, CDs, tapes, etc.)

Principle 2: Help students prepare to listen

Students need to be made ready to listen. This means 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. This is not just that they are in the right frame of mind (and are thinking about the topic), but also so that they are engaged with the topic and the task and really want to listen.

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 tape.

In the case of live listening, students should be encouraged to ask for repetition and clarification when they need it. 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 don't go on and on working with the same audio track.

Principle 4: Encourage students to respond to the content of a listening

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. Questions such as 'Do you agree with what they say?' and 'Did you find the listening interesting? Why?' are just as important as questions like 'What language did she use to

invite him?' However, any listening material is also useful for studying language use and a range of pronunciation issues.

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 straightforward 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 on detailed information, language use or pronunciation etc. It will be the teachers' job to help students to focus on what they are listening for.

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. Thus, after an initial listening, the teacher can play a track again for various kinds of study before using the subject matter, situation or audio script for a new activity. The listening then becomes an important event in a teaching sequence rather than just an exercise by itself.

The language skills e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing are not found only in 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: 49). In Nepal, the English language learning situation is concerned with its written exposure as listening is not practiced enough both due to the lack of sufficient listening materials and equipments which is inadequate for the learners; particularly in the field of authentic listening materials.

1.1.1 English Language Teaching

English language teaching is important because it is the most widely used language in the world, and is the language of international communication, politics, commerce, education and technology. Lederer (1990 as cited in Sthapit 1994, p. 1) says "one in every seven human being speaks English. More than half of the world's books are written in English and three quarter of international mails are in English." From this quotation, we can generalize how important the English language is.

Language teaching is not restricted within the four walls of classroom or within the boundary of a school, it goes beyond that. The main purpose of teaching English is to develop communicative competence in the learners and to enable them to communicate in the English language. The immediate aim of language learning is to increase interacting skill of the language system so that the long term aim of improving productive and receptive skills can be achieved.

Language learning is the process of internalizing language with the integration of the four skills viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Language learning means getting mastery over those skills. The ultimate goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence in the learners. Therefore, language teaching should make the learners communicatively competent.

1.1.2 English Language Teaching in Nepal

English is an international language which is taught in Nepal as a foreign language, and is usually learnt for the instrumental purpose. It is usually taught as a school subject. English in Nepal was first started in 1910 B.S. Now-a-days, it is taught as a compulsory subject from grade one to bachelor level and as a major subject from certificate/plus two to master's level at the faculty of Education and Humanities and Social Sciences but the ELT situation in Nepal is not to the mark as it is expected. The outcome of teaching and learning English has not gained the expected goal basically developing communicative competence in the language because Nepalese learners lack sufficient practice in learning the English language. There is no proper balance among all the four skills of language while they are being taught.

All the four skills of language are equally important. However, listening is a prerequisite for learning speaking skill as conscious effort is needed for the perception and comprehension of the language items to develop communicative efficiency in language. Students need to understand the listening text. They should understand how sounds are made and how stress and intonation are used.

So far as the teaching and learning trend of English in Nepal is concerned, listening and speaking skills were ignored and reading and writing were more emphasized in the past. Now-a-days it is realized that teaching of the English language means to enable the students to communicate in that language. So, all four language skills are being logically emphasized and the ways of teaching the English language have been changing day by day. Listening and speaking are emphasized as listening skill has got special consideration in school level curriculum. Evaluation of the listening skill in SLC examination was started in 2057

B.S. Despite these efforts, the students' competence is weak and they seem to be unable to gain the objectives of the listening skill because of rare practice of those skills in those classes. What is satisfactory is that all the four language skills have gained equal priority in both the policy and practice.

1.1.3 Teaching Language Skills at School

It is generally believed that the natural order for the first and/or second language learning is listening, speaking, reading and writing. A child starts to learn his first language from his/her early childhood when s/he listens to the language used by his family, friends, and relatives and comprehends it. Then, s/he starts to speak. According to Brown (1994) "a completely deaf child can never speak because she cannot listen and no listening results in no comprehension of language". (p. 56). It shows that language learning cannot be successful beyond its natural process. So the natural order of the language learning must be considered while teaching language skills.

As the purpose of learning the language is concerned, listening and reading are the receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are the productive skills among four language skills. If we divide them according to the natural order of the language learning, listening and speaking are primary skills and reading and writing are secondary. It is because every normal human can listen and speak, who may not have learnt the skills of reading and writing. Therefore, while teaching a language, all the language skills should be taught in a balanced way. The teacher should follow the natural order of the language learning as a child learns following the natural order while s/he acquires her/his mother tongue.

1.1.3.1 Teaching Listening Skill in Secondary and Higher Secondary Level

So far as the teaching and learning trend of English in Nepal is concerned, listening and speaking skills were ignored and reading and writing were more emphasized in the past. Now-a-days it is realized that teaching of the English language means to enable the students to communicate in that language. So, all four language skills are being logically emphasized and the ways of teaching the English language have been changing day by day. Listening and speaking are emphasized as listening skill has got special consideration in school level curriculum and evaluation of the listening skill in SLC examination was started in 2057 B.S. Despite these efforts, the students' competence is weak and they seem to be unable to gain the objectives of the listening skill because of rare practice of those skills in those classes. What is satisfactory is that all the four language skills have gained equal priority in both the policy and practice.

Listening skill got a narrow space just some years back in our curriculum of secondary level and it had got 8% marks in SLC before 2066 but it has got 10% now. Listening has been treated and taught separately in the present but there is no such treatment in higher secondary level yet. The curriculum of higher secondary level has not been able to address this issue till the date though the importance of this skill as the foundation of speaking skill of language has been realized.

1.1.4 Language Skills: An Introduction

Learning a new language is not an easy task. Language is a network of systems and rules. Students need to understand the system. Language is also composed of different skills, mainly, listening, speaking, reading and

writing. The first two are said to be the primary ones and second the secondary. Listening and reading are receptive language skills whereas speaking and writing are productive ones. Let's discuss these skills in brief:

(i)   Reading

Reading skill is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intension of deriving meaning and/ or constructing meaning. Written information is received by the retina, processed by the primary visual cortex and interpreted in Wernicke's area. Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication and of sharing information and ideas.

Although reading printed text is now an important way for the general population to access information, this has not always been the case. With some exceptions, only a small percentage of the population in many countries was considered to be literate before the industrial revolution. It is often said that reading opens the gate of knowledge. The people who cannot identify graphic symbols and read them are called illiterate. Literacy is the ability to read and write, illiteracy is usually caused by not having the opportunity to learn these concepts. Dyslexia refers to a difficulty with reading and writing. This term subsumes two types of disorders: developmental dyslexia is a learning disability, and alexia or acquired dyslexia refers to reading difficulties that occur following brain damage. Among the normal people, reading works as an evidence of their intellect.

(ii)   Writing

Writing skill is also one of the means to communicate or transfer message by using written symbols. Francis Bacon (cited in Sharma and Phyak 2006, p. 254.) states that "reading makes the full man, conference a ready

man and writing an exact man." It is the writing system which enables us to read the materials of thousands of years ago and enables us to know something about it. Widdowson (1978, cited in Khaniya, 2005, p. 147) defines it as "Writing is the act of making up correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper". It is the process of recording information to be read later. Writing is the productive skill which involves manipulating, structuring and communicating.

(iii) Speaking

Speaking skill is an ability to express the message verbally. It is a productive skill since a speaker produces something verbally. Generally, we come in contact with many people. These may be friends, relatives, seniors, juniors, foreigners etc. We do not need to be able to read or write to communicate with these people in our daily life. We cannot find out the reading and writing abilities of all those who are in contact with us. We exchange greetings when we meet someone on the way, interact with each other, communicate message and bid a bye. We do it all by means of speaking. We maintain a cordial relationship, friendship and improve solidarity or earn enemies, insult others, are rude to them and create hostility all by means of speaking. However, speaking is widely used and very important means of interaction in daily life.

(iv) Listening

Listening skill is a receptive skill, for a listener receives something through ears. The sounds produced orally are received by the ears. Listening skill refers to the skill to listen and understand the message. Underwood (1989, cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2006, p. 198) defined 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. Listening skill could be acquired through exposure but not really taught. Every human being starts learning language first by listening to it from the very early days of his/ her childhood. So, the amount of exposure plays a great role to develop listening skill. No one can speak until s/he listens. Listening is not so easy process as it seems to be. It involves an active cognitive processing i.e. the construction of message in mind on the basis of what has been spoken. Therefore, it is a creative and active process.

There are different types of listening. A distinction can be drawn between intensive and extensive listening. The extensive listening refers to listening which the students often exercise away from the classroom for pleasure or for some other reasons. The audio material they consume in this way- often on CDs, on MP3 players, DVDs, videos or on the internet should consist of texts that they can enjoy listening to because they more or less understand them without the intervention of a teacher or any other prescribed course materials. The main way of getting students involved in a form of extensive listening is to encourage them to go to English films and/ or English songs, as they hear them, they will, to some extent, absorb the language they hear.

1.1.5 Listening Comprehension

Beginning in the early 70's, work by Asher, Postovsky, Winitz and, later, Krashen, brought attention to the role of listening as a tool for understanding and emphasized it as a key factor in facilitating language learning. Thus, listening has emerged as an important component in the process of second language acquisition (Feyten 1991, p. 54).

According to Howatt and Dakin (1974, p.76), listening is the ability to

identify and understand what others are saying. This process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning. A good listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

Furthermore, Gordon (1985, p.42) argues that empathy is essential to listening and contends that it is more than a polite attempt to identify a speaker's perspectives. Rather more importantly, empathetic understanding expands to "egocentric pre-social behavior". Thus, the listener altruistically acknowledges concern for the speaker's welfare and interests.

According to second language acquisition theory, language input is the most essential condition of language acquisition. As an input skill, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Krashen (1985) 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 an important 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, this means 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. The new students may feel very difficult to understand the dialogues spoken by native English speaker or songs sung by them. Most of the students of Nepal complain that they enjoy the English songs but find in it complex stuffs to understand them. Harmer (2008, p. 183) has tried to deal with the issue on this topic.

1.1.5.1 What if students don't understand the audio track?

Sometimes, despite the best judgment of the teacher, listening material seems to be too difficult for students to understand. However, many times the teacher plays the track, it just may not work. Harmer (ibid) gives a number of alternatives to this scenario:

(i)   Preview interview questions

Students can be given the questions of an interview and are encouraged to role-play what might be said before listening to it. This will have great predictive power.

(ii)   Use of Jigsaw listening

Different groups can be given different audio excerpts (either on tape or CD or for some of them- as audio scripts). When the group hears each other's excerpts, they can get the whole picture by putting the 'jigsaw' pieces together. A story can even be broken into different parts in jigsaw sentences and different sentences can be given to different students and all the students can have discussion and come up with the complete story. This method resembles to that of reading, only the difference is that it is played through tape not as the printed symbols.

(iii)   One task only

Students can be given a straightforward task which does not demand too much detailed understanding. For example, we can get them to describe the speaker on the recording- the sound of the voice will suggest sex, age, status, etc. such an activity offers the possibility of success, however difficult the listening passage.

(iv)   Play the listening in chunks

The audio track can be broken into manageable chunks so that students

can understand the context of a part of it before moving on to the next one. This can make listening less stressful, and help students to predict what the next chunk will contain.

(v)   Use the audio script

There are three ways of using the audio script to help students who are having difficulty. In the first place, we can cut the script into bits. The students put the bits in the right order as they listen. Secondly, we can let the students see the first part of the audio script before they listen. They will then know what the listening text is going to be about. Finally, the students can read the audio script before, during and after they listen. The audio script can also have words or phrases blanked out.

(vi)   Use vocabulary prediction

We can give students 'key' vocabulary before they listen. They can be asked to predict what the recording will be about and, because they now know some of the words, they will probably understand more.

(vii)   Have students listen all the time

Students can be encouraged to carry listening tasks in their mobile, computer or their MP3 players. They can also listen to the news in English on the radio or internet as often as possible to try to understand just the main points. We have to remind them that the more they listen, the easier they feel to understand.

1.1.5.2 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 needing greater emphasis. Listening is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to describe. However, it is recognized

by Wipf that listeners must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, understand intention and interpret this within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance. Rost (2002, p. 23) defines listening, in its broadest sense, as:

> 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.

1.1.6 Importance of Listening Skill

We know that the main source of input of our mind is listening. If we listen to incorrect things or even listen to correct things but interpret it incorrectly then it will be worthless or sometimes harmful. Underwood (1989, p. 1) says,

> Listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. 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 to listen successfully to spoken language.

Therefore, 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 then only we can speak more. Speech comprehension or listening is an active knowledge guided process.

Underwood (1989, p. 5) points out other listening situations for which teachers should prepare their students. That include:

)   Listening to live conversations in which one takes no part; usually referred to as 'eavesdropping'.

)   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.

These situations help students to get the exposure of wide variety of spoken language but teaching listening becomes worthless if students

cannot understand those forms of spoken language that they face in their day to day life. Students should be able to understand formal as well as informal language as spoken by their seniors, friends and strangers. They should not only be restricted to the classroom and be given practices to the students-teacher dialogues. Classroom teaching should not only be exam oriented. Teachers have to choose suitable materials at the right time to make the teaching effective, and never forget the truth that listening is an important skill which triggers speaking.

Children start speaking only after a long period of listening. They can understand English news only after they listen to it many times. Similarly, they can grasp English songs only after a lot of exposure to it. A tedious lecture of teachers cannot make students proficient in listening English songs. Teachers should also focus on practice as "practice makes a man perfect" universalizes the fact.

1.1.7 Types of Listening Materials

There are different types of materials that can be used for teaching listening. Generally, they are classified into two types- recorded and live materials.

1.1.7.1 Recorded Materials

The materials that include the records of real life dialogues of native or non-native speakers that can be used in classrooms for giving students the exposure of language are called recorded materials. The recorded materials have an advantage over live ones since they provide a variety of voices in a narrow classroom to students at a single sitting. Cross (1992, p. 250) 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 recording to unedited and unscripted talks or discussions, and so on. They are suitable for advanced classes for the most part, as we can exercise 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. They are certainly better than no listening at all.

(c)   Semi-scripted Texts

These are the useful compromise for learners who want some control in exercise 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 forms and they are to express these ideas in their own ways. These types of texts are more practical than other types of recorded listening texts.

1.1.7.2 Live Materials

The face to face interaction without using any recorded materials, mostly teachers' own voice, can be recognized as live materials. Live materials have an advantage over recorded one that students can get visual clues in front of them; they can raise their queries immediately and ask for the clarification and interpretation.

1.1.8 Importance of English Songs

Music has been an important means of entertainment for human beings since ancient time. Song is an inseparable part of human life. We can learn more about the culture and traditions, customs and values etc. of the

particular community from the songs. Students can listen to the English songs and learn about the words how they are pronounced informally at home and elsewhere. A song can have a wide variety of words which can be beneficial for the students to practice their listening skill.

Teachers can play the English songs frequently in the classrooms and give a lot of practice to students to develop their listening ability. Songs can be integrated as a teaching aid while teaching language especially, listening skill. Whenever students start understanding pronunciation of words in songs, they start enjoying the English songs and they can listen to the songs themselves with pleasure. Finally, we get their pronunciation better and better day by day and their score of vocabulary doubled geometrically.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

Since listening is an important skill of language, many researches have been carried out in this field in the Department of English Education. Furthermore, numbers of studies have been carried out on the Proficiency of students in listening. Some instances of the latest research works reviewed by me as a researcher are as follows:

Aryal (2001) carried out "A Study on Listening Proficiency of Grade Ten Students". The objectives of his study were to find out the listening proficiency of the grade ten students of public school and to compare them in terms of seen and unseen texts. The primary sources of the data collection were the students of Gorkha district reading in Grade ten. After the study he concluded that there was no significant difference in the performance of students between seen and unseen texts. Similarly, Neupane (2005) also carried out A comparative study on "Proficiency of Listening Comprehension of PCL and Higher Secondary Level Students". His objectives of study were to find out the proficiency of the PCL and

HSL students' listening comprehension and to compare them. His population for the study was the second year students of PCL and HSL studying in two different streams i.e. Education and Humanities. Total sample of population were 124 students. From this study he found the HSL students to be more proficient in both streams than the students of PCL. In the same way, Chapagain (2005) conducted a research on "Proficiency in Listening Comprehension of Grade Nine Students". His objectives of the research were to find out the proficiency in listening comprehension of grade nine students and to compare them in terms of different variables. The primary sources of the data collection were the students of Ninth grade of secondary level in Kathmandu valley. The total sample of population was 120 students from 6 randomly selected secondary schools.

Khadka (2006) carried out a study on "Proficiency in Listening Comprehension: A Case Study of Bachelor Level Third Year Students". The objectives of his study were to find out the proficiency in listening comprehension of bachelor level third year students on the basis of TOFEL and to compare in terms of sex, faculties and types of text. His primary sources for the collection of data were altogether 120 students of bachelor level third year students from six different streams of T.U., 20 students from each streams. Similarly, Prasai (2007) conducted a research on "Listening Proficiency of Grade IX Students: A Comparative Study". The objectives of his research were to find out listening proficiency of grade nine students of government schools of certain locality in Kathmandu valley and to find out the difference of listening proficiency of private and government schools. The primary sources for the collection of data were grade nine students of 10 different schools (5 public and 5 private) of the eastern part of Kathmandu valley. After the research, he

found out that the average listening proficiency of ninth graders of private schools were far better than those of public schools. Koirala (2007) has carried out a study on "Listening Proficiency of Bachelors' Level Students in IELTS". Her objectives of the study were to find out the listening proficiency of Bachelor second year students on the basis of IELTS and to compare them on the basis of different variables. Primary sources of the study were the students of the faculty of Education, Management and Humanities, T.U. of B.A. second year. After the study, he found out that the average listening proficiency of Bachelor 2nd year students were found to be 5.6 and 3.5 points according to the IELTS band score. Relating it to the IELTS, they were below the proficiency requirement for academic program.

Many research studies have been conducted in listening proficiency in the Department of English Education. However, no research has been carried out so far in the Department to find out the proficiency of students in listening English songs. Thus, it is a unique and new study for the Department. It is different in a sense that it has tried to explore the listening proficiency of English songs of the grade XII students. Songs are regarded as good teaching materials but if students do not understand what the song says, there will be a serious problem in using songs as a teaching material. Thus, it is necessary to find out the students' listening proficiency of the English songs. Which the study has attempted.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

(i)   To find out the proficiency of grade XII students in listening English songs.

(ii)   To compare the proficiency of the students in terms of gender.

(iii)   To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4   Significance of the Study

English is an international language. English films and songs are seen and heard not only in Europe and America but the trend of watching and listening English movies and songs are increasing day by day all over the world. Our youngsters are not untouched with them. If we take it positively, then they can give a good deal of exposure of English language to our students. Furthermore, their level of understanding to the English songs can tell the teachers whether their teaching listening was effective or not. Even the syllabus designers can assess the quality of the text they have incorporated in the course. This study will also be useful for curriculum experts to revisit their objectives and the teaching materials they have designed.

This study will, in fact, be beneficial for the naïve researchers, linguists, teachers, course designers, textbook writers, students and others who are related to teaching and learning English language. This study will also flash out the reality whether the students are listening English songs with understanding or they are listening just for fun or just hanging with the modern technologies and whether they are listening to the lyrics or to the music and tune only. The present study will also help to find out the reality of teenagers who are found listening English songs, are they really getting something out of listening English songs? Or they are only betraying their Nepali songs.

CHAPTER – TWO

METHODOLOGY

I have adopted the following methodology to fulfill the objectives of my study:

2.1   Sources of Data

I used both types of sources of information i.e. primary and secondary to collect the data. But primary sources were the basis for the collection of my data.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

I obtained the first hand data from the students of grade XII studying in different higher secondary schools of Biratnagar. So, those were the primary sources for the collection of my data.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

Various books, especially Ellis, (1985), Gordon (1985), Larsen-Freeman (1985), Krashen (1985), Underwood (1989), Cross (1992), Doff (1992), Harmer (2008), reports articles, research studies, internet related to the topic and theses of the Department of English Education etc. were used as secondary sources of data.

2.2   Sample Population

The four institutions from Biratnagar were selected purposively. Ten students from each of those institutions were selected randomly using fishbowl draw method. Among them the number of boys and girls were 50/50%.

2.3　Tools of Data Collection

Tools for the collection of my data were the four types of songs i.e. love, rock, pop and sentimental.

2.4　Process of Data Collection

I followed the following stepwise procedures to collect the required information for my study.

(i)　　I selected four types of English songs first.

(ii)　　I prepared the test based on the songs.

(iii)　　I went to the selected institutions and sought consent from the administration to administer my test to the students.

(iv)　　I went to the class, built rapport with students and selected the required number of students by using fish bowl draw method.

(v)　　I played the songs and administered the test based on the songs.

(vi)　　Students had to fill up the space in the test after listening the songs.

(vii)　　They could get chance to listen to the songs at least for 3 times.

(viii)　I collected the test papers from the students at the end of the allotted time.

(ix)　　Finally, I thanked all the students for the participation, the teaching staff and principals for providing me their invaluable time to collect the data for my study.

2.5　Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

(i)　　The study was limited to 4 institutions in Biratnagar.

(ii)   Only 40 students were the population for my study.

(iii)   Among them 20 students were girls and 20 were boys.

(iv)   Only the students from grade XII and from major English group were selected.

(v)   The study was limited to only English songs.

(vi)   Only four types of songs (Love, rock, pop and sentimental) were used.

I categorized students' performance on the test in four scales:

Excellent   : Above 80%

Good   : 60-80%

Average   : 40-60%

Poor   : below 40%

CHAPTER - THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the purpose of finding out the proficiency of grade XII students in listening English songs. The data were collected on the basis of four types of English songs, i.e. love, rock, pop and sentimental. After collecting the data from four different higher secondary schools of Biratnagar, Morang, the answer sheets were checked and grades were assigned to each on the basis of number of blanks that students filled correctly. The students who filled correctly 80% of blanks and above were classed as 'excellent', 60-80% were classed as 'good', 40-60 % were classed as 'average' and who filled below 40% of the blanks correctly were classed as 'poor'. All the students were categorized in either of the aforementioned groups. Then, boys' and girls' listening comprehension ability were analyzed separately. Finally, the listening comprehension of grade XII students were analyzed and compared in terms of gender. I am going to analyze the data with the help of tables along with their description.

3.2   Overall Listening Comprehension of Grade XII Students

In this section, I have categorized all 40 students of grade XII of my study into four groups, viz. 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Average' and 'Poor'. I administered the test which consisted of four different English songs where some words were removed from the text which was to be filled by

the students after listening to the songs. The students classified in the four different groups have been presented in the following table:

Table No. 1

Overall Listening Comprehension

Scale	No. of students	Percentage
Excellent	5	12.5
Good	19	47.5
Average	11	27.5
Poor	5	12.5

The above table shows that 12.5% of students were found to be excellent. That means, they could fill more than 80% of the blanks of the text correctly. Most of the students were found to be good in the continuum of scale i.e. 47.5% of the students filled 30-40 blanks correctly, which means 60-80% of the blanks were filled with correct words by them and 27.5% of the students were found to be average at listening comprehension. They filled 40-60% of the blanks correctly. Remaining 12.5% of the students were poor at their listening comprehension as they could fill below 40% of the blanks.

3.3   College-wise Listening Comprehension of Students

In this section, I am going to present the listening comprehension of 40 students of the four different institutions separately. The institutions are Biratnagar City College, Siddhartha College, Srijana Higher Secondary School, Kanchanjunga Higher Secondary School.

3.3.1 Listening Comprehension of the Students of Biratnagar City College

I had selected 10 students from this college. Among them 5 were boys and 5 girls. The following table shows the listening comprehension of the students of this college.

Table No. 2

Listening Comprehension of Biratnagar City College

Scale	No. of students	Percentage
Excellent	1	10
Good	5	50
Average	3	30
Poor	1	10

In the above table, one student i.e. 10% was found to be excellent at listening comprehension. Five students i.e. 50% were found to be good at listening English songs. Three students i.e. 30% were found to be of average level in listening comprehension. Furthermore, 1 student i.e. 10% was found to be poor at it.

3.3.2 Listening Comprehension of Siddhartha College

The listening comprehension of the students of Siddhartha College has been presented in the following table:

Table No. 3

Listening Comprehension of Siddhartha College

Scale	No. of students	Percentage
Excellent	3	30
Good	4	40
Average	3	30
Poor	0	0

In the above table, 3 students i.e. 30% seemed to be excellent at listening to the English songs. Four students i.e. 40% were found to be 'good' at it and 3 students i.e. 30% were found to be average. No students were found to be poor at listening to the English songs at this college.

3.3.3 Listening Comprehension of Kanchanjunga HSS

The following table shows the listening comprehension of the students of Kanchanjunga Higher Secondary School.

Table No. 4

Listening Comprehension of Kanchanjunga HSS

Scale	No. of students	Percentage
Excellent	0	0
Good	5	50
Average	4	40
Poor	1	10

In the above table, none of the students were found to be excellent at listening comprehension at this school. Five students i.e. 50% were found to be good at it. Four students i.e.40% were found to be average and only 1 student i.e. 10% was found to be poor at listening comprehension.

3.3.4 Listening Comprehension of Srijana HSS

The following table shows the listening comprehension of the students of Srijana Higher Secondary School.

Table No. 5

Listening Comprehension of Srijana HSS

Scale	No. of students	Percentage
Excellent	1	10
Good	5	50
Average	1	10
Poor	3	30

In the above table, one student i.e. 10% seemed to be excellent at that school. That means, they could fill more than 80% of the blanks of the text correctly. Five students i.e. 50% seemed to be good at listening. One student i.e. 10% seemed to be average and 3 students i.e. 30% seemed to be poor at listening comprehension. Over ally most of the students remained in good position.

3.4 Listening Comprehension in Terms of Gender

In this section, I have presented the overall listening comprehension of 'girls' and 'boys'. Among the forty students of grade XII in totality I selected, 20 were girls and 20 boys. Based on the four English songs, I tried to check their listening comprehension ability. First of all, I am going to present listening comprehension of all those students in terms of gender irrespective of the colleges they represent.

Table No. 6

Gender-wise Listening Comprehension

Scale	Girls	Percentage	Boys	Percentage
Excellent	1	5	4	20
Good	8	40	11	55
Average	8	40	3	15
Poor	3	15	2	10

In the above table, one girl i.e. 5% was found to be excellent at listening comprehension. Four boys i.e. 20% were found to be excellent at it. Most of the girls fell on the scale good and average. Eight girls i.e. 40% were good and equal number of girls remained in average. Remaining 3 girls i.e. 15% were below the basic level.

Most of the boys (more than 50%) were found to be good at listening comprehension. Out of 20 boys, 11 boys i.e. 55% were good. Only 3 boys i.e. 15% were found to be average and the rest 2 boys were found to be poor at it. According to the aforementioned data, boys seemed to be better than girls at listening comprehension.

3.4.1 Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of Biratnagar City College

I had selected 10 students from each of the colleges and the representation of boys & girls was equally selected from this college to check the listening comprehension of the students of grade XII. The following table shows the listening comprehension of the students of City College in terms of gender.

<div align="center">

Table No. 7

Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of BCC

</div>

Scale	Girls		Boys	
	No. of Students	**Percentage**	**No. of Students**	**Percentage**
Excellent	0	0	1	20
Good	2	40	3	60
Average	2	40	1	20
Poor	1	20	0	0

In the above table, among 5 boys of that college, 1 boy i.e. 20% seemed to be excellent but no girls seemed to be excellent at listening to the English songs. Three boys i.e. 60% seemed to be good at it and 2 girls i.e. 40% seemed to be good. One boy i.e. 20% seemed to be of average level and 2 girls seemed to be of average. One girl i.e. 20% seemed to be poor but no boys were left to remain in this level. As a whole boys seemed to be better at listening to the English songs at this college, too.

3.4.2 Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of Siddhartha College

From this college too, Equal number of students had been taken as the sample for my study. The following table shows the listening comprehension of those boys & girls of Siddartha College.

<div align="center">

Table No. 8

Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of SC

</div>

Scale	Girls		Boys	
	No. of Students	**Percentage**	**No. of Students**	**Percentage**
Excellent	1	20	2	40
Good	2	40	2	40
Average	2	40	1	20
Poor	0	0	0	0

Among those students, 2 boys i.e. 40% and 1 girl i.e. 20% seemed to be excellent at listening to the English songs. Two boys i.e. 40% and the same number of girls seemed to be good. Two girls i.e. 40% and 1 boy i.e. 20% fell on average level. Neither boys nor girls were found to be poor at that college. According to the aforementioned data, boys seemed to be better than girls.

3.4.3 Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of Kanchanjunga HSS

I had selected 5 boys and 5 girls from this school, too. The following table shows the listening comprehension ability of Kanchanjunga Higher Secondary School.

Table No. 9

Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of Kan. HSS

Scale	Girls		Boys	
	No. of Students	Percentage	No. of Students	Percentage
Excellent	0	0	0	0
Good	2	40	3	60
Average	3	60	1	20
Poor	0	0	1	20

In the above table, neither any boys nor any girls were found to be excellent at listening to the English songs at that school. Three boys i.e. 60% and 2 girls i.e. 40% seemed to be good at it. One boy i.e. 20% and 3 girls i.e. 60% seemed to be of average level. Another 1 boy i.e. 20% was poor whereas no any girls of that school were found to be poor at it.

3.4.4 Listening Comprehension of Srijana HSS

This was the last school where I had gone to administer my listening test. I had the same number of students as the sample for my study from this school, too. The following table shows the listening comprehension ability of those students of Srijana Higher Secondary School.

Table No. 10

Gender-wise Listening Comprehension of Srijana HSS

Scale	Girls		Boys	
	No. of Students	Percentage	No. of Students	Percentage
Excellent	0	0	1	20
Good	2	40	3	60
Average	1	20	0	0
Poor	2	40	1	20

In the above table, only 1 boy i.e. 20% was found to be excellent at listening to the English songs. But no any girls were found to be excellent at it at that school. Three boys i.e. 60% were found to be good and 2 girls i.e. 40% were good. Only 1 girl i.e. 20% was of average level but no any boys were found to belong to that level. The last 1 boy i.e. 20% was poor at listening comprehension whereas the last 2 girls i.e. 40% were poor at it. According to the aforementioned data, boys seemed to be better than girls at listening to the English songs.

CHAPTER - FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   Findings

On the basis of the analyses and interpretations of the data collected so far, the findings of my study have been drawn. The major findings of the study have been mentioned below:

(1)   Proficiency of grade XII students

(a)   Only 12.5% of the students were found to be proficient in getting through the maximum part of the English songs. That is why they are excellent at listening to the English songs.

(b)   Most of the students seemed to be good at it. In other words, 47.5% of the students could understand 60 to 80% part of the English songs.

(c)   Eleven students i.e. 27.5% were of average proficiency level to understand English songs.

(d)   The rest 12.5% of the students could not understand even 40% part of the English songs.

(e)   No students were found to be 100% proficient to understand the English songs. But some were excellent at it since they understood maximum part and some were poor since they did not understand the maximum part of the English songs. Most of the students fell in the middle in that they understood almost half of the songs.

(2)   Comparison of the proficiency

(a)   Boys were found to be better than girls at listening to the English songs.

(b)   Only 1 girl (i.e. 5%) out of 20 was found to be excellent at listening to the English songs whereas 4 boys (i.e. 20%) out of 20 seemed to be excellent at it.

(c)   Most of the boys fell on to be good. That is to say, 11 boys (i.e. 55%) were good at listening to the English songs whereas only 8 girls (i.e. 40%) remained in good position leaving the same number of girls in average level.

(d)   Three boys (i.e. 15%) and 2 boys (i.e.10%) were average and poor respectively to get through the English songs whereas 8 girls (i.e. 40%) and 3 girls (i.e. 15%) were found to be average and poor respectively.

(e)   Most of the girls listen to the English songs to enjoy its music but not to enjoy the lyrics.

(f)   Most of the boys understand at least more than 50% part of the songs. But most of the girls do not understand even 50% part of the songs.

(g)   Neither boys nor girls were found to understand 100% of the English songs.

4.2   Recommendations

On the basis of the aforementioned findings of the study, the following recommendations have been suggested for the betterment of the students:

(1)   General recommendations

(a)   It seems that students of grade XII do not get enough amount of exposure to English language. Teachers have to provide them enough exposure of the English language.

(b)   Students need to be involved in different types of listening and speaking activities not only in reading and writing.

(c)   The curriculum of English of grade XII should be redesigned to focus not only on reading and writing but also on listening and speaking.

(d)   Syllabus should also prescribe CDs and other communicative materials to be used by both the teachers and students.

(e)   Certain weightage or mark should be allotted to listening and speaking skills as well.

(2)   Comparative recommendations

(a)   Teachers have to encourage girls to listen to the English songs, English news, English films etc. and encourage them to communicate in English.

(b)   Girls should be involved in different group & pair works, role plays and so on.

(c)   Though boys are better than girls at listening to the English songs, their proficiency too is not satisfactory. They should be encouraged to listen to the native speakers speaking in different circumstances.

(d)   If possible, native speakers of English can be brought into the class to give the natural exposure to the students.

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http://www.google.com/songs/english

Appendix I: Test Items

Name of the student: ....

Level: ....

Campus Name (optional): ....

Gender: .... Age: .... Contact: .... Signature: ....

1. Love Songs

(i) I'm Alive by Celine Dion

Mmmmm …………..mmmmm……………

Mmmmmmmmmmmm…………………..

I get _____ to fly

Oh, oh ……... I'm alive …………..

Yeah

When you call on me

When I _____ you

Breathe

I get wings to fly

I feel that I'm _____

When you look at me

I can _____ the sky

I know that I'm alive

Mmmmm……ohhhhh…………ahhhhhhs……..

When you bless

The day

I just drift away

All my _____ die

I'm glad that I'm

Alive

You've set my heart

On fire

Filled me with love

Made me a _____ on

Clouds above

I couldn't get

Much _____

My _____ takes flight

Cause I am alive

Ohhhhh…………!

When you call on me

When you call on me

When I hear you breathe

When I hear you breathe

I get wings to fly

(fly….)

I feel that I'm alive

(I'm alive)

When you _____

For me

Raising spirits high

God knows that

That Ill be the one

Standing by

Through good and

Through

Trying _____

And it's only begun

I can't wait for the

Rest of _____ _____

When you call on me

When you call on me

When you reach for me

When you reach for me

I get wings to fly

I feel that I'm alive

Yeah

When you _____

_____ _____

I just drift away

All my worries die

I know that I'm alive

I get

Wings to fly

God knows that I'm alive

2. Sentimental Song

(ii) Against All Odds by Phil Collins

How can I just let you walk away?

Just let you leave without a _____

When I stand here taking

Every _____ with you oohhhh…………

You're the only one

Who really knew me at all?

How can you just _____ away from me

When all I can do is watch you _____

'Cause we've shared the laughter and the pain

And even shared the _____

You're the only one

Who really knew me at all?

So take a look at me now

'Cause there's just an _____ _____

There's nothing left here to remind me

Just the memory of your face

So take a look at me now

'Cause there's just an empty space

And you coming back to me, is _____ the odds

And that's what I've got to faceeeee……….

I wish I could just make you turn around

Turn around and see me _____

There's so much I need to say to you

So many _____ why

You're the only one

Who really knew me at all?

So take a look at me now

'Cause there's just an empty space

There's nothing left here to remind me

Just the _____ of your face

So take a look at me now

Cause there's just an empty space

But to wait for you is

All I can do

And that's what I've got to _____.

Take a good look at me now

'Cause l'll still be standing (standing here)

And you coming back to me is against all odds

That's the _____ I've got to take

(chance I got to take, got to takeeee……..)

Yeahhhhh………….

Take a look at _____ _____

(Take……)

3. Rock Song

(iii) It's My Life by Bon Jovi

This ain't a song for the _____hearted

No silent prayer for the _____departed

I ain't gonna be just a face in the _____

You're gonna hear my voice

When I _____ it out loud

[Chorus:]

It's my life

It's now or never

I ain't gonna _____ _____

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my life)

My heart is like an open _____

Like Frankie said

I did it my way

I just wanna live while I'm alive

It's my life

This is for the ones who stood their _____

For _____ and Gina who never _____down

Tomorrow's getting harder make no mistake

Luck ain't even lucky

Got to make your own breaks

[Chorus:]

It's my life

And it's now or never

I ain't gonna live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my life)

My heart is like an open highway

Like _____ said

I did it my way

I just want to live while I'm alive

_____it's my life

Better stand tall when they're calling you out

Don't bend, don't _____, baby, don't back down

[Chorus:]

It's my life

And it's now or never

'Cause I ain't _____ live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my life)

My _____ is like an open highway

Like Frankie said

I did it my way

I just want to live while I'm alive

[Chorus:]

It's my life

And it's now or never

'Cause I ain't gonna live forever

I just want to live while I'm alive

(It's my life)

My heart is like an open highway

Like Frankie said

I did it my way

I just want to live while I'm alive

'Cause it's my life!