

CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

Language distinguishes human beings from other creatures in the world. Human beings use language as a means of communication. It is a dynamic, open system that allows humans to communicate their thought, feelings, desires, emotions, experiences and ideas. All the normal human beings begin to acquire at least one language during their babyhood and become linguistically adult when they are five or six years of age. Linguists and philosophers define language variously. However, all those definitions are more or less similar to the definition "Language is a voluntary, vocal system of human communication".

1.1 General Background

Learning a language means learning its four major skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four language skills consist of two broad skills, i.e receptive and productive. Listening and reading come under receptive skill and speaking and writing come under productive skill. According to Harmer (1997: 25) "Speaking and writing involve language production, and are therefore often referred to as productive skills. Listening and reading on the other hand involve receiving messages and are therefore often referred to as receptive skills." In other category, these skills are grouped under primary and secondary skills. Listening and speaking are said to be the primary skills, whereas reading and writing are the secondary skills. It is because reading and writing are the skills that are developed later on and optional as well.

The four language skills are integrated not only while teaching and learning, but also in real life situation for various purposes. In order to be the competent language user,

one must have equal competency in all the four skills of language. Although this is the reality, some language teaching specialists and linguists focus on some particular language skills than others. For instance, the American linguist William Moulton, in a report prepared for the 9th international congress of Linguists, proclaimed that "the linguistic principal that language teaching methodology should be based on speech not writing....." (Richards and Rogers, 1995; 49). A second language is basically and entirely learnt to use in real life situation in order to communicate and to grasp the information by listening or reading authentic and not authentic text. On the other hand it is learnt to express feelings, thoughts, emotions, ideas etc. that are intended to in terms of speaking and writing. It can therefore, be summed up that unless all four language skills are equally and adequately learnt, no one can use them in real life situation.

1.1.1 Listening

Listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. To listen successfully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what the speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions and not simply to understand the words themselves. The listener should be able to understand the situational use of language to get the appropriate meaning of the spoken utterances. What speaker means lies only partly in the words spoken and the listener must recognize and interpret the other factors which is used to convey the message.

Listening is usually defined as a receptive skill comprising both a physical process and an interpretive, analytical process. However, this definition is often expanded to include critical listening skills (higher order skills such as analysis and synthesis and

non verbal listening) comprehending the meaning of tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and other non-verbal cues).

A clear distinction must be made between listening and hearing. The term hearing is used to refer to the listener's ability to recognize language elements in the stream of sound while listening is used to refer to the ability to understand how a particular sentence relates to what else has been said and its function in the communication.

Although we may appear to be inactive while listening, we must actually engage in the activity of constructing a message in order to be described as a listener. 'Hearing' can be thought as passive condition, listening is always an active process. A good listener learns a language so it is very important to give special emphasis to teach and test listening skill.

1.1.2 Listening Comprehension

The ability to listen well involves the ability to recognize the sounds and combinations of sounds and the ability to make sense of these combinations of sounds. In the process of listening, the listeners have to be able to recognize and discriminate the contrasting sounds and combination of sounds first. This aspect of listening is what we call listening perception. But this is not the only thing involved in listening. The sounds and sound combinations are used not for their own sake, but for the sake of expressing meaning. So the next thing involved in listening is to work out this meaning from the stretch of language we hear. This aspect of listening is called listening comprehension.

Listening comprehension refers to an ability to understand and interpret the spoken message. It is not simply a process of decoding language rather it is a very complex

process in which the listener takes the incoming data, the acoustic signals, and interprets that, using a wide variety of information and knowledge for a particular communicative purpose. It is an inferential process, an ongoing process of constructing and modifying and interpretation of what the text is about, based on whatever information seems relevant at the time.

Listening is a very individual and personal process. Listeners make different inferences and they have different interpretation of the text they hear. Of course, when the task is very simple and unambiguous all competent listeners are likely to come to the same understanding and there is usually a common core of similar interpretation between different listeners listening to the same text however, if we examine comprehension in detail, we often find considerable difference between listeners interpretations of many texts; and the more complex and ambiguous the text, the more likely that interpretation will vary.

1.1.3 Different Types of Knowledge Used in Listening

If we consider how the language comprehension system works, it is obvious that a number of different types of knowledge are involved: both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge is of different types, but among them the most important are phonology, lexis, syntax. Semantics and discourse structure. The non-linguistic knowledge about the topic, about the context and general knowledge about the world and how it works.

There has been much debate about how this knowledge is applied to the incoming sound; but two most important views as mentioned by Buck (2001) are: the bottom-

up-view and top-down-view. These terms refer to the order in which the different types of knowledge are applied during comprehension.

The Bottom-up vs. Top-down Views

Listening comprehension is a bottom-up process in the sense that when people start thinking about language processing, they often assume that the process takes place in a definite order, starting with the lowest level of detail and moving up to the highest level. So they often assume that the acoustic input is first decoded into phonemes, the smallest sound segments that can carry meanings and then this is used to identify individual words. Then the processing continues on to the next higher stage, the syntactic level, followed by an analysis of the semantic content to arrive at a literal understanding of the basic linguistic meaning. Finally, the listener interprets that literal meaning in terms of the communicative situation to understand what the speaker means. In other words, the bottom-up-view sees language comprehension as a process of passing through a number of consecutive stages or levels and the output of each stage becomes the input for the next higher stage.

According to top-down-view, the various types of knowledge involved in understanding language are not applied in any fixed order. They can be used in any order or even simultaneously and they are capable of interacting and influencing each other. This is sometimes referred to as interactive process.

1.1.4 Speaking

Speaking is one of the basic skills of language. It is extremely essential skills for communication. Speaking involves more than the ability to produce the sounds of

language. The learner should be able to pronounce the individual sounds, words as well as use the language in connected speech for communication.

Speaking is a productive skill and very complex activity in the sense that it is difficult to describe how utterances are processed and how they come out while speaking (Khaniya, 2005: 122). Speaking takes place in a situation where the speaker is under pressure to produce his utterances without having much time to organize what and how they want to say oral interaction is very complex.

Speaking is the productive skill in oral mode. Learning to speak in a foreign language seems obviously the most important skill because those who can communicate in that language are obviously referred to as the speakers of that language. Speaking can be defined as the ability to express fluently in a foreign language. Speaking is specially difficult in Foreign language because it requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction which is more than the grammatical and semantic rules of that particular language. The ability to speak in a foreign language consists of the articulation and production of sounds and sound sequences, production of stress and intonation patterns, grammar, vocabulary, communicative competence, connected speech, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic components and social and cultural factors. A major objective of the most of the language teaching programmes is to prepare the learners for meaningful interaction, making them able to use and understand natural speech forms- ur (1996:120) identifies four characteristics of successful speaking activity: Learners talk a lot, participation is even, motivation is high, language is of acceptable level. Cross (1992:120) pinpoints more features of natural speech as follows:

a. Purpose

Speech is purposeful. We have some clear intention in mind while using the language we request, greet, apologize, criticize, command, suggest or inform people because we want to do that.

b. Unpredictability

Language consists of finite number of rules and vocabulary items, which can generate infinite number of utterances. We cannot guess the exact nature of speech acts that the Speakers are not going to produce, nor can we predict the exact words or utterances.

c. Slips and Hesitation

We cannot edit, check and recheck our speech in the same way as we do in written work. Sometimes it is possible that we are likely to violate the grammar norms of written language. Moreover, speakers pause, repeat themselves, paraphrase and use 'uhm' and 'er...' as they organize their speech. Spontaneous speech therefore, makes natural use of discourse markers and gap fillers.

d. Creativity

Creativity in natural speech refers to the fluent speakers who create and understand novel utterances, which they have never heard before. Even children produce un-modeled language forms. We are rarely conscious of this wonderful gift. We can all string familiar words in a new and quite novel utterances.

e. Spontaneity

Speaking is complex and complicated skill. In addition to the content or the message it involves the mental process of what is to be said. We, however, normally plan what we say in natural speech. We compose as we talk.

f. Economy

Economy refers to shorter and more concise expressions to longer ones if they express the same meaning. We avoid redundancy and unnecessary repetition. Words are not wasted.

g. Intonation and Stress

We express attitudes and feelings through the music of language. We can make changes of meanings evidenced by the tone of voice. Intonation and stress reflects the speakers' emotions and attitudes.

h. Comprehension Checks

We look at people with whom we talk, checking if they have understood. Often there is a verbal check (Right? you know? yeah? ok? etc.)

i. Turn Taking

Natural speech is not mono directional. There are both speakers and listeners, and they often change turns: speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers. This change in turn may be marked by gesture, facial expression or by intonation.

1.1.5 Language Teaching and Language Testing

Language teaching and language testing are two sides of a coin and one would be meaningless in the absence of other. It is an obvious fact that language teaching and testing are so closely interrelated that it is virtually impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other. It means teaching is influenced by testing and vice-versa. Test, in ordinary words, is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area. This definition captures the essential components of a test. Testing is one of the means of evaluating students' language ability or language capacity. Nunan et al (2001) defines test as a "method of eliciting a sample of individual language behaviour under standardized conditions". His definition limits the test within standardized condition but it is not the case always. Testing can be done in an informal setting as well but the purpose may be different.

For Mc Graph (1996) "Teaching without testing is like a painting in bad light." He strongly maintains that teaching can not be done without testing for it gets light from testing with the help of testing, we can find areas that need more attention and we can manage for remedial teaching if it were diagnostic test. In case of achievement test, testing depends on what has been taught. So in one sense testing provides guidelines to teaching and in another sense it may be vice-versa.

To sum up the above discussion, we can say that teaching and testing are mutually inclusive and complementary to each other.

1.1.6. Classification of Language Tests

Language tests can be classified from a number of perspectives. Language tests are classified on the basis of the purpose for which the test is being administered; on the

basis of the medium (Oral or written) in which the test is carried out; on the basis of the marking scheme; on the basis of the aspects of language being tested and on the basis of the skill being tested.

1.1.6.1 Goal -based Tests

We use test to obtain information. The information that we hope to obtain will of courses vary from situation to situation. The test being administered for a particular purpose is called goal-based test. Goal-based tests can be classified in to five types.

- i. Proficiency test.
- ii. Achievement test.
- iii. Diagnostic test.
- iv. Prognostic test.
- v. Placement test.

1.1.6.2. Medium-based Tests

On the basis of the medium test can be divided into two types.

- i. Oral test.
- ii. Written test.

If people are tested through oral production, the test is called an oral test; if through written production, it is called a written test.

1.1.6.3 Mode-based Tests

Mode-based tests refer to the test by which the test is marked. Harrison (1991) remarks: 'It is not really the tests which are objective or subjective, but the system by which they are marked.' Mode-based tests are of two types.

(i) Objective test.

(ii) Subjective test.

Objective testing and subjective testing are distinguished on the basis of the methods of scoring, and nothing else.

1.1.6.4 Aspect-based Tests

Language has several aspects like pronunciation, spelling(in writing), vocabulary, grammar, communicative functions, etc.

To have a command over a language, one has to have a mastery over these aspects.

These aspects together make a language serve its purpose. Aspect-based tests, by name, are the tests which assess different aspects of language.

The aspect-based tests are usually the tests which are based on :

- i. Grammar and usage.
- ii. Vocabulary .
- iii. Pronunciation.
- iv. Communicative functions.

1.1.6.5 Skill-based Test

There are four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the past, learning a language was considered to be equivalent to learning to read and write. But, now the situation has changed. Today we give equal importance to all the four skills of language. Moreover, Listening and speaking are considered as the primary manifestation of language. So, learning a language is essentially related to the spoken form of language. This view in language learning gives rise to the testing of listening and speaking. All the four skills are equally important and they have to be tested.

1.1.7 Testing Listening

It is rather odd to test listening separately from speaking, since the two skills are typically exercised together in oral interaction. However, there are occasions when no speaking is required and the testees' listening ability is tested. As listening is a receptive skill, the testing of listening parallels in most ways the testing of reading. A test of listening is included in language testing for the development of oral skills.

Listening test is the test of candidates' macro skills which might include;

-) Listening of specific information
-) Obtaining gist of what is being said
-) Following directions
-) Following instructions
-) Interpretation of information pattern and
-) Recognition of function of structures

Listening is not just a single skill but an integration of several skills. Therefore, testing, listening means testing the following specific components of listening skill.

- i. Discriminating between sounds.
- ii. Recognizing words.
- iii. Identifying stressed words and grouping words.
- iv. Identifying function in a conversation.
- v. Connecting linguistic cues to paralinguistic cues (intonation and stress) and non-linguistic cues in order to construct meaning.
- vi. Using background knowledge (what we already know about the content) and context (what has already been said) to predict and conform meaning.
- vii. Recalling important words, topic and ideas.

Testing listening includes testing discrimination and testing comprehension.

Testing discrimination

Testing discrimination includes tests of phoneme discrimination and of sensitivity to stress and intonation pattern in context. Therefore, testing discrimination refers to testing segmental sounds and suprasegmental features at recognition level. Different types of phoneme discrimination tests can be included in the listening test items.

1.1.7.1 Testing Comprehension

Testing comprehension means testing listening comprehension. The general technique to test listening comprehension consists of presenting orally to see if the students understand the complete utterance or certain crucial parts of it. The utterance

presented to the students should contain the problem being tested. The following items can be used for testing listening comprehension.

- i. True/false item
- ii. Multiple choice item
- iii. Ordering item
- iv. Gap filling item
- v. Answer the question item
- vi. Table completion item
- vii. Listen and do/act/draw item
- viii. Sentence completion item
- ix. Listen and tick item
- x. Listen and find item
- xi. Summary completion item.

While administering a listening test recorded materials should be used. The advantage of using recordings when administering a listening test is that there is uniformity in what is presented to the candidates. This is fine if the recording is to be listened to in a well maintained language laboratory or in a room with good acoustic quality and with suitable equipment.

If presentations are to be live, a single speaker for each part of a test is preferred so that uniformity and reliability will be achieved. To administer a listening test through live presentation, the speaker must be trained, should have a good command of the language, highly reliable, responsible and trustworthy individuals. Only then, the scoring will be valid and reliable.

1.1.7.2 Testing Speaking

Testing speaking refers to testing speaking ability. Specifically, speaking skill consists of two component skills namely pronunciation skill and communication skill.

Pronunciation skill under speaking deals with sounds, stress and intonation on production level. Communication skill, under speaking indicates the skill of communicating message by using language orally communication skill is the ability to convey our messages selecting the appropriate linguistic elements, paralinguistic elements and non-linguistic elements so that it would arouse in the receiver the meaning we are trying to convey. For this we should have the knowledge of grammar as well as the knowledge of what grammatical forms are used to carry out what communicative purposes and the knowledge of when where and whom to use the sentence.

Testing speaking means testing the three components of speaking skill they are:

- i. Linguistic (or pronunciation) component.
- ii. Communicative component
- iii. Social component

Linguistic or pronunciation component refers to the skill of how to pronounce a word in isolation and in connected speech. This component includes:

- i. Sound
- ii. Stress
- iii. Intonation

In other words, pronunciation component of speaking skill deals with how to use (Produce) sounds, stress and intonation in the language.

Social component is totally the non-communicative component of speaking skill.

There is no information gap even then we speak to serve the function of maintaining social relationship. Thus skill of maintaining such relationship is the social component of speaking skill.

The general technique of testing speaking is to give the students sufficient clues to produce certain utterances that contain the problems we wish to test. Speaking skill is generally tested in the form of an interview, a picture description, role-play, conversation, description and reading aloud.

Testing speaking skill may involve the following language functions:

Expressing: thanks, requirements, opinions, comment, attitude, confirmation, apology, want/need, information, complaints, reasons/justifications

Narrating: sequence of events

Eliciting: information, directions, service, clarification, permission

Directing: ordering, instructing, persuading advising, warning etc.

The scoring of speaking test should be valid and reliable. While planning and conducting oral test:

- i. Test should be as long as feasible (about 15-30 minutes should be provided to test all the information required).
- ii. More than one format should be used.

- iii. Test should be planned carefully.
- iv. candidates should be given as many fresh starts as possible and encouraged to speak (produce) utterances.
- v. More than one tester is desirable.
- vi. Testers must be trained, sympathetic, flexible having good command of the language.
- vii. Interview must be taken in a quiet room with good acoustic. It is important to put the candidates at their ease.
- viii. The oral production of the candidates should be recorded in order to come to the reliable judgment.

1.1.8 Provision of Listening and Speaking in Secondary Curriculum

English is taught as a foreign language in all the schools of Nepal. Four major skills in communicating through language are often broadly defined as listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the past, in the context of Nepal, the four language skills were not equally emphasized. Among the four skills reading and writing were highly emphasized and listening and speaking were paid less attention. However these have started attracting people's attention recently.

English is the appropriate international language for Nepal, and a vital tool for all students to become successful in local, national and international communication.

English is the means of communication globally and is also the major world language.

English is taught as a foreign language in Nepal. Nepalese learners of English start learning English from the very beginning of their schooling but they do not get ample opportunities to listen and speak to the native speakers of English. They solely depend upon their teachers who are also non-native speakers of English. Though they begin

to learn it since the very first day of their schooling and are very much interested in, most of them fail to be proficient in English because of a number of reasons, one of the major ones is the lack of listening and speaking practice. Taking these facts in to consideration, the syllabus designers of school have made provision for teaching and testing listening and speaking proficiency. The revision of secondary curriculum 2057 B.S. emphasized on all the four skills of language learning and language here is seen as a skill that allows one to get things done. To make the students equally competent in all the four skills, this curriculum prescribed a practical examination (oral test) in the S.L.C. for testing listening and speaking skills of the students.

According to this curriculum a practical examination is conducted for testing, listening and speaking which contains 20 marks (listening-8, speaking-12) and the students are required to obtain 40% of it to pass the exam.

The curriculum was further revised in 2064 B.S. and allocation of marks is 25 (listening-10 and speaking-15) in the S.L.C. examination and the students should obtain 40% of it.

Secondary curriculum (2007) states the purpose of teaching English in grades 9 and 10 is to enable the students to exchange ideas with people of any nationality who speak or write English and to expose them to the vast treasure of knowledge and pleasure available in written and spoken English. It has also stated the specific objectives of listening and speaking as:

Listening: Students will be able to show understanding of variety of authentic listening texts, understand the gist, retrieve specific information, make summary of main points and respond appropriately to spoken instructions.

Speaking: The students will be able to speak fluently and accurately in a variety of authentic situations, with appropriate discourse devices, engage in group discussion, express opinions, convey messages, produce and respond to different question types, describe an object or event and express emotions using appropriate structures and phonological features.

It has emphasized on the assessment on an informal situation on continuous basis rather than formal test or examination.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

Singh, (2000) has carried out his research entitled "A study on listening comprehension of grade VIII students". The objective of this study was to find out the students' listening comprehension and assess their problems in developing the listening comprehension. He sampled the students of grade VIII of different schools of Kathmandu district. He has concluded that the performance of the eighth graders in listening comprehension was fairly good and the performance of the students of private school was far better than the students of public school in listening.

Likewise, Timilsina, (2000) has carried out his research work on the topic "A study on effectiveness of recorded materials over conventional teaching in teaching listening comprehension". It was an experimental

Study on teaching listening comprehension. Its objective was to find out the effectiveness of recorded materials in teaching listening comprehension. The Population of the study comprises grade nine students of Jhapa district. The researcher taught the experimental group by using recorded materials whereas control

group was taught using conventional techniques. He has concluded that the students should have a lot of practice with ample examples in teaching listening activity.

Khadka, (2001) in his study "A comparative study of listening comprehension between rural and urban students" Sampled the students of rural areas of Kathmandu and Urban areas of Nepalgunj. The objectives of the research study was to compare the student of rural and urban areas on listening comprehension. He used random sampling procedure to collect the data. He has concluded that the students of rural areas of Kathmandu district are far better than those of the students in urban areas of Nepalgunj.

Aryal, (2001) has conducted his research entitled "A study on listening proficiency of grade ten students". The objective of the study was to find out the listening proficiency of the students while preparing for the SLC examination and to compare their achievement in listening comprehension between seen and unseen texts.

The findings showed no significant difference in the performance of the students between seen texts and unseen ones.

Sharma, (2002) carried out a research on "A comparative study to find out the effectiveness of role play techniques in teaching speaking. " His objective was to find out the problems of using role play techniques in teaching speaking. He conducted some classes in different schools by using role play techniques to promote speaking . It has showed that role-play technique had relatively a better impact in teaching speaking and language on the whole.

Lamichhane, (2004) in her M.Ed. thesis entitled "Listening comprehension of grade IX students in recorded materials" aimed to find out the listening ability of grade IX

students under CDC developed materials. She conducted listening test of the students of Gorkha District randomly. She has concluded that the students of grade IX are good in listening comprehension under recorded materials in the CDC developed materials.

Chaulagain, (2004), Carried out a research on "A study to find out the problems in applying communicative approach to language teaching", aiming to find out the problems of applying communicative approach in real class situation in language teaching. He found out that lack of physical facilities, large class size and lack of sound knowledge on communicative approach to language teaching were the serious problems for effective teaching-learning of speaking skill.

Timilsina, (2005) carried out a research to determine the students' ability to communicate orally in English and to compare the achievements of the students in terms of different variables. The objectives of the research were to find out the students' ability to communicate orally and to compare their achievements with the aim of the syllabus of compulsory English. He found out that although the syllabus of compulsory English is communicative, students' performance in speaking is not satisfactory.

Yadab, (2005) has carried out his research on "Listening Skill in Secondary English Curriculum". His study focused on finding out the listening objectives set in the curriculum and the appropriateness of the listening text in terms of the level of the students. His findings are about the positive aspects and shortcomings of listening texts of secondary level English text books. He pointed out that the listening texts are authentic, useful, comprehensive, well recorded, informative and enjoyable. As the shortcomings of the listening texts, he found that they are not related to speaking

activities and lack enough exercises to meet the objectives of teaching listening. He also pointed out that they lack clear instructions for the teachers.

Many research works have been carried out on testing and comparing listening and speaking proficiency of students of different places and levels but not a single research has been carried out to find out the effectiveness of listening and speaking test and its evaluation system in the S.L.C.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This research study has the following objectives:

- i. To point out the ways of evaluation of listening and speaking in the S.L.C. exam.
- ii. To find out the effectiveness of practical examination (listening and speaking) in terms of evaluation system in the S.L.C. exam.
- iii. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research study is useful to the prospective researchers who may want to study in similar areas. It is helpful for the students and teachers involved in teaching learning English in secondary level. It is also significant to those who have been involved in policy-making, curriculum designing and experts of curriculum development centre and ministry of education. It is further beneficial to all the stake holders in education. The findings of the study is also significant to all those who are directly or indirectly involved in teaching learning English as a second/foreign language specially in the context of Nepal. The researcher hopes this research to be of global significance.

CHAPTER - TWO

METHODOLOGY

The following method was adopted to carry out this research study:

2.1 Sources of Data

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

i) Primary Source

This research study was mainly based on primary data. For collecting information, two sets of questionnaires were used. Questionnaire-1 was given to 20 monitors involved in evaluating the students in the practical exam in the SLC. Questionnaire-2 was given to 100 students who passed S.L.C. in 2065 and 2066 B.S. from Sunsari District. The study was based on the information obtained from the above-mentioned respondent.

ii) Secondary Source

As secondary sources, secondary curriculum, text books of grade ix and x, specification grid, teachers' training manuals on listening and speaking, some books on language testing and research methodology and thesis related to this field were also consulted.

2.2 Sample Population

The total population of this study were 100 students including both boys and girls who passed S.L.C. in 2065 B.S. and 2066 B.S. from both public and private schools

of Sunsari district and 20 monitors involved in evaluation of listening and speaking test in the different S.L.C. exam centers of Sunsari district.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

The study made use of non-random purposive sampling procedure. 100 students who passed the S.L.C. in 2065 B.S. and 2066 B.S. from the listed schools and exam centers of Sunsari district and 20 monitors involved in evaluating those students were sampled purposefully.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

The main tool for this research study was questionnaires. The researcher visited the sample population and used questionnaires to gather required information. Apart from this, the researcher interviewed them for getting more information.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

In order to collect the required data for the study, the following processes were applied:-

- a) At first, the researcher visited the selected schools/exam centers (See Appendix-3) presented his aim to the English teachers and requested for help.
- b) Then, questionnaire-1 (See Appendix-1) was provided to the teachers who were involved in evaluation of listening and speaking test in the S.L.C. in 2065 B.S. and 2066 B.S.
- c) After collecting the responses, the monitors (See appendix-4) were interviewed in order to find their opinions, feelings and attitudes towards the test. Their responses were noted down.

- d) Again, the researcher visited the targeted higher secondary schools and colleges to collect information from the students who passed S.L.C. in 2065 B.S. and 2066 B.S.
- e) After getting permission from the authority administration, the required number of students were gathered.
- f) Questionnaire-2 (See Appendix-2) was distributed to the students and they were requested to write their responses.
- g) After collecting the questionnaire, the students were interviewed in order to gather more information.
- h) Finally the collected data were analyzed.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited in the following ways:

- a) This study is confined to 100 students who passed S.L.C. in 2065 B.S. and 2066 B.S. from both public and private schools of Sunsari district and 20 monitors involved in evaluating them in listening and speaking test.
- b) It is further limited to the students and monitors of the sampled schools/S.L.C. exam centers of Sunsari district.
- c) The study is limited to the analysis of the responses obtained from the above-mentioned respondents.
- d) While analyzing the evaluation system of English practical exam, only the selected students were consulted.

CHAPTER – THREE

PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter is the heart of this research report, which consists of all the main aspects of the research study. To be more specific, tabulation, interpretation and presentation of data is done in this chapter.

This section first provides an analysis of the evaluation system of listening and speaking test in the S.L.C. Then, it follows an analysis of the effectiveness of practical examination with the help of the responses obtained from the respondents.

3.1 Evaluation System of Oral Test in the S.L.C.

Four major skills in communicating through language are often broadly defined as: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The secondary curriculum 2057 B.S. emphasized on communicative approach to language teaching and all the four skills are equally emphasized. This curriculum prescribed a practical examination (listening and speaking test) with the allocation of 25 marks (listening 10 and 15 marks in speaking) the students are required to obtain 40% of it in the test.

3.1.1 Testing Listening

The ability to listen well involves the ability to recognize the sounds and combination of sounds and the ability to make sense of these combinations of sounds. In the process of listening the students have to be able to recognize and discriminate the contrasting sounds. The sound combinations are used to express meanings. So, they should be able to understand the gist of the text and extract key information on specific points in the text they hear.

In the S.L.C. practical exam, listening contains 10 marks in which short utterances, dialogues, talks and lectures are given to the testes. The text is recorded in the cassette. There are five different texts with true/false, fill in the blanks, matching ordering, vocabulary and short answer type questions. The students are put in groups and each groups get different sets of questions. The cassette is played and the students listen to the particular text for three times and they have to write their answers on the answer sheet. Later, their answer sheets are marked by the monitors (the evaluation committee)

3.1.2 Testing Speaking

Speaking is one of the basic skills of language learning. It is an essential skill for communication. Speaking involves more than the ability to produce the sounds of language. The learners should be able to pronounce the individual sounds and words as well as use the language in connected speech for communication.

In the S.L.C. oral test, speaking contains 15 marks. Speaking test is taken in the form of an interview, role-play, picture description and problem solving. The students should be able to speak fluently and accurately in a variety of authentic situations, use appropriate discourse devices, communicate appropriately, express opinions, convey messages, describe a picture, an object or events, follow particular grammatical structures, use suitable language functions and express emotions using appropriate structures and phonological features.

For speaking test too, there are five different sets of questions and each students are given different sets randomly. The monitor (teacher involved in evaluating them) should create comfortable and friendly situation and encourage the students to speak

and answer the questions orally. The monitor marks on the scoring sheet considering their pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, discourse devices, situational and grammatical use of language and lexical and phonological features. Finally, the students' marks on listening and speaking are added and the total mark is their mark obtained.

3.2. Effectiveness of Practical Examination

In this section tabulation, presentation and analysis and interpretation of data are done. Data were collected with the help of the questionnaires to the monitors and the students. Questionnaire-1, which includes 20 questions of both open and closed ended type, was given to the monitors involved in the evaluation of the practical exam (listening and speaking) in the sampled S.L.C. exam centers of Sunsari District.

Questionnaire-2, which includes 10 questions, was given to 100 students who passed SLC 2065 and 2066 B.S. from both public and private schools of Sunsari. Required information was gathered on the basis of the responses obtained from the above-mentioned respondents.

After collecting the data, the information was presented, tabulated and analyzed and interpreted. The analysis and interpretation have been done in order to achieve the designated objectives. The data were analyzed and interpreted in terms of the type of questions used in the questionnaires as:

- i) Analysis and interpretation of closed-ended questions.
- ii) Analysis and interpretation of open-ended questions.

3.2.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Monitors' Responses

Questionnaire-1, which includes 20 questions of both open and closed ended type was given to the monitors involved in the evaluation of the practical exam (listening and speaking) in the sampled S.L.C. exam centers of Sunsari District. The researcher has analyzed the feelings and opinions expressed by 20 monitors in the questions used in the questionnaire-1. Among 20 questions, 11 questions were objective type. The options and attitudes of the monitors towards the questions were counted in turn. The feelings and opinions of the monitors towards each of the questions are shown in the table below.

Table No.: 1 An analysis and interpretation of closed ended questions used in questionnaire-1.

Q. No.	Questions				
1	Have you got monitor's training?	Yes		No	
		60%		40%	
2	Do you follow the instructions to the monitor while taking listening and speaking test?	Yes exactly		To some extent	
		80%		20%	
5	Do all the students answer well in the speaking test?	Yes	No	Public school	Private schools
		20%	80%	30%	50%
6	Do you find the students well prepared?	Yes, all of them		Some of them	No, none of them
		0%		80%	20%
7	Are they confident?	Some of them		No, none of them	
		70%		30%	
8	Are they serious about the test?	Very few		Yes	No
		80%		10%	10%
10	Are you sure that many students are capable to obtain 25?	Of course		Rare case	
		30%		70%	
11	Are you satisfied with the test?	Yes		No	
		10%		90%	
16	Do you use a cassette player or own voice for listening test?	Cassette Player		Own voice	
		70%		30%	
18	There are 5 sets of questions for listening, are they of equal standard?	Yes always		Sometimes not	
		10%		90%	
19	Are the voices in the cassette comprehensive to the students?	Yes	No	Sometimes not	
		40%	30%	30%	

The above table presents complete interpretation of all the closed questions used in the questionnaire-1. The table shows the percentage of the monitors towards the questions and options used in the table. The analysis and interpretation of the whole questions are presented below:-

The first question on the questionnaire was 'Have you got monitor's training?' In response to this question, among the 20 monitors concerned, 60% had the training whereas 40% are found untrained. That is to say 40% monitors have never got any training on conducting listening and speaking test still they are appointed as monitors.

Concerning question no. 2 majority of monitors try to follow them exactly but some of them follow the instructions to some extent only. From this it is clear that the monitors have some problems to conduct the test following the instructions exactly.

In response to 5th question 80% of the monitors responded that very few students (20%) answer satisfactorily but the rest of them (80%) do not answer well. They also added that some students do not speak even a single sentence in English rather they use Nepali. It was also found that the students of private schools are quite better than the students of public schools.

So far as question no. 6, 7 and 8 are concerned all the 20 monitors had nearly the same responses. Majority of monitors mentioned that no students are found well prepared, confident and serious about the test. Most of them think the test is just a formality. They also added that the trend and concept of the test has made the students be careless. Most of them do not feel that they are taking an exam as all of them are provided at least pass marks even if they didn't speak at all.

About the tenth question, 70% of the monitors responded that the students having such competency are rarely found. It is only an exception if they are evaluated exactly and accurately. But 30% of them mentioned that some students are capable of obtaining 25.

On the 11th question, no monitors were found completely satisfied with the test. All of them expressed some problems of the test. They are conducting the practical exam as they have to.

In response to 16th question, 70% monitors responded that they used cassette player for listening test whereas 30% of them use their own voices i.e. they read the tape script themselves. They also mentioned that in some exam centers the students are found very poor and they are unable to answer any questions by listening to the cassette as they don't understand anything at all. So, finally, they use their own voices. Sometimes, they even have to read the text themselves due to some technical problem.

Concerning the 18th question, majority of monitors think the different 5 sets of questions are not of equal standard as some sets includes true/false and gap filling items only but some sets include question answer. The students can answer true/false and gap filling items by guessing also but for answering question they must understand the text.

On the 19th question, 40% of monitors think that the voices are clear and comprehensive to the students. 30% of them feel that they are not comprehensive. 30% of them mentioned that sometimes they are clear but sometimes not. Some of them also added that it depends on the students.

3.2.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Subjective Questions

In questionnaire-1, some subjective questions were also included to find out the overall concept, feelings and attitudes of the monitors towards the test and to achieve more information about it. Altogether 9 subjective questions were included in the questionnaire. In answer to those questions, the monitors have expressed the real situation, trend and evaluation system of the practical exam (listening and speaking) in the S.L.C. The analysis and interpretation of those questions are presented below:

3.2.3 An Analysis and Interpretation of Subjective Questions Included in Questionnaire-1

Table No. 2: Monitors' responses on subjective questions

3	How many students does a monitor have to test in a day?	50-60	60-70	70-100	Average
		12	5	3	70
4	How much time do you provide to each student for speaking?	3m	4m	5m	Average
		13	3	4	4m
9	What do you do if a student doesn't speak at all in the speaking test?	Encourage them. Ask general questions. Provide clues/hints. Provide pass marks.			
12	Do you think this test fulfills the objective of the curriculum?	If taken seriously. According to norms of curriculum. Trend and concept.			
13	What is the effective and proper way of taking this test?	Appointment of trained monitors only. Strict sit planning for listening test. Less no. of students. On the basis of regular evaluation/non formal test.			

14	What are the weaknesses of the test?	Concept to pass all the students. Uncontrolled environment. Large number of students to be tested. No system of keeping record of spoken matter. Unnecessary pressure.			
15	What are your suggestions about the test?	Limit number of students. Very poor students shouldn't be passed. Suitable environment should be created. Strict monitoring and supervision should be made. Listening and speaking test should be included in school exams too.			
17	How many students do you include in a group for listening test?	30-35	30-40	40-50	Average
		6	5	9	40
20	What percentage of students really understands the text?	Public Schools	Private Schools		
		20%	30%		

The above table presents complete and clear analysis and interpretation of the subjective type questions used in questionnaire-1. The table shows the feelings, opinions, suggestions and attitudes expressed by the selected monitors. The analysis and interpretation of those questions are presented below in turn.

In response to question no. 3, the monitors responded that a monitor has to test average 70 students in a day. Their responses were 50-60, 60-70 and 70-100. This clearly shows that they have to test minimum 50 to maximum 100 students in a day.

About the 4th question, the monitor responses were 3m, 4m and 5m. The average time they provide to each students for testing speaking skill is 4m which seems not enough to test the over all proficiency of the students speaking skill.

So far as 9th question is concerned, the monitors' responses vary. Some monitors responded that they encourage the students as far as possible and make them speak. Some monitors ask them general questions about themselves while some provide clues/hints and ask them to speak. Some of them just provide at least pass marks as there is no provision to fail the students even if they didn't speak at all.

On the 12th question, majority of the monitors concerned expressed that the practical exam has failed to fulfill the objectives of the curriculum. They also added that it will fulfill the objectives if it is taken seriously and sincerely according to the norms and objectives of the curriculum. More over, the trend and concept of the test should totally be changed.

In response to 13th question, the monitors put forward different ways of taking the test in an effective way. They mentioned that trained monitors should only be appointed, strict sit planning for listening test should be made, less no. of students should be tested by a monitor in a day. 40% of them are found in favour of regular evaluation (non-formal test), which saves both time and money.

Concerning 14th question the respondents expressed several weaknesses that have made the evaluation of the test less reliable. They responded that the trend and concept to pass all the students whether they are competent enough to meet the objectives of the curriculum or not, uncontrolled environment, difficult to maintain discipline, fear of being insulted by the students, large no. of students to be tested in a day, no system of keeping record of spoken matter, unnecessary pressure to the monitors are the weaknesses of the test.

In response to 15th question, 70% monitors accepted that they have not been conducting the test in accordance with the objectives of the curriculum. They are not satisfied with the evaluation system of the test themselves. They presented several suggestions to make the evaluation more reliable and effective.

About the 17th question, the monitors mentioned that they include average 40 students in a group for listening test. No sit planning is done and they can sit where they like. Majority of students are found very poor in listening skill.

On the 20th question, majority of monitors responded that most of the students (70%) do not understand the text as they have never practiced such exercises in their school. In some exam centers the monitors read the text themselves as most students are found unable to answer any questions by listening to the cassette. As a whole 20% students from public schools and 30% from private schools only are able to comprehend the listening test and make response.

3.3 Holistic Interpretation of Monitors Response

After analyzing the 20 questions included in questionnaire-1 in turn, the responses obtained from the informants are gathered together. On the basis of the responses obtained from questionnaire-1, the following interpretation have been made:-

3.3.1 Holistic Interpretation of Questionnaire-1 given to the Monitors:

-) 40% of monitors involved in the test are untrained i.e. they have never got any training on conducting the listening and speaking test but still they are appointed as the monitor.

-) A monitor has to evaluate average 70 students in a day and provides average 4m. for each students for testing speaking. They are unable to provide enough time for testing overall proficiency on speaking because of the large no. of students to be tested in a day.
-) Only 30% students from public schools and 50% from private (English medium) schools answer satisfactorily in the speaking test. Rest of others does not speak at all or use Nepali.
-) Most of the students are not well prepared for the test, they are not serious and confident about it, and they just think it's a formality still the monitor has to provide at least pass marks in speaking test whether they are competent enough or not as there is no provision to fail them in the practical exam.
-) 80% monitors themselves are not satisfied with the evaluation system of the test as they have to conduct the test in an unhealthy environment, test large no. of students, difficult to maintain discipline, fear of being insulted by the students and provide marks against their will.
-) Average 40 students are included in a group for listening test and only average 40% students really understand the listening text and most of them answer by guessing or copying from others.
-) The aim of this listening test according to the curriculum is to enable the students to listen some recorded text and understand and interpret the message make sense of the spoken message and find out the gist. The aim of speaking test is to enable the students to express their feelings and attitudes using appropriate discourse devices and situational language with appropriate grammatical structures but the test fails to fulfill the aim of the curriculum as majority of students do not answer well in both listening and speaking.

J Unless the trend and concept of the test is changed, it can not be reliable and effective measure.

3.4 An Analysis and Interpretation of Examinees' Responses

Table No. 3: An analysis of the questionnaire-2 given to the students of S.L.C. 2065 B.S. and 2066 B.S.

Q.No	Question									
1	When did you pass the SLC?		S.L.C. 2065					S.L.C. 2066		
			50					50		
2	Where was your exam center?	Janata	Jyoti	Kachana	Kabir	Peace Zone	Pathivara	Va.Si.	Duhabi	
		12	14	14	10	10	10	15	15	
3	How much marks did you obtain in English practical exam?			Below 15		16-20	20-24		25	
				6%		19%	44%		31%	
4	Did you answer all the questions on listening test paper?					Yes		No		
						78%		22%		
5	Did you understand the listening text well?					Yes		No		
						51%		49%		
6	Were the questions easy enough for you?					Yes		No		
						65%		35%		
7	Did you have listening classes in the school?					Yes		No		
						47%		53%		
8	Did the monitor ask you all the questions from speaking test paper?					Yes		No		
						35%		65%		
9	Did you answer all the questions?					Yes		No		
						72%		28%		
10	Were the questions easy for you to answer?					Yes		No		
						80%		20		

The above-mentioned table shows complete interpretation of all the 10 questions given to 100 students. The table clearly presents the number and percentage of the

students and their answer on each questions. The analysis and interpretation of the whole answers are as follows:

In response to question no. 1, the students wrote the year when they passed the SLC. 50 students of SLC 2065 and 50 students of SLC 2066 were purposefully selected. Altogether 100 students were sampled.

About question no. 2, they wrote their respective exam centers where they took the SLC exam. The students of 16 exam centers of Sunsari district were included.

Regarding question no.3, the students expressed their marks they obtained in the SLC practical exam (listening and speaking). Among 100 students sampled, 6% are found to have below 15, 19% are found to have 16-20, 44% have 20-24 and 31% are found to have 25 out of the full marks 25.

About question No. 4, 78% students responded that they answered all the questions on the listening test paper whereas 22% answered only some questions.

In response to question No. 5, 51% students understood the listening text well but 49% of them didn't understand the text at all. They also added that some of them never had listening classes in their schools so the voice in the cassette were not comprehensive to them. The responses of the students to question 4 and 5 were found quite controversial. When the researcher asked them how they answered all the questions without comprehending the listening text, some of them even copied from others. In some exam centers, the students even responded that the monitor did not play the cassette instead they used their own voice which was quite comprehensive to them. More over in some exam centers, the students responded that the monitor didn't play the cassette rather he/she dictated the answers to the students.

Concerning the sixth question, 65% responses were positive while 35% responses were negative. Some students expressed that they couldn't answer all of them although the questions were easy. It is because they couldn't understand the listening text well.

About seventh question, 47% of students were found to have listening classes by cassette player in their school but 53% of them never have listening classes by playing the cassette. In those schools, either the teachers read the tape script themselves (i.e. use their own voice) or they never have such classes in their schools.

So far as eighth question is concerned 65% of students were not asked any questions from the speaking test paper but they were asked general questions about the students themselves (as name, symbol no., school) etc or about their family, hobbies, likes and dislikes, rules and regulations of their schools and they were not asked any questions from the speaking test paper. Only 35% students were asked from the test paper.

Among them too, most of them were asked only one question on picture description.

The responses to 9th and 10th question were found to be dependent on question 8.

Those who were asked questions from the test paper responded 'no' to both 9th and 10th but those who were asked general questions except the test paper responded 'yes' to both 9th and 10th questions.

After analyzing, presenting and interpreting the responses obtained from the questionnaire-2 the researcher came to the conclusion that is presented under the sub heading holistic interpretation below.

3.4.1 Holistic Interpretation of Examinees' Responses

On the basis of the responses obtained from questionnaire-2 the following interpretation have been made.

- J Concerning the score of the students 6% have below 15, 9% have 16-20, 44% have 21-24 and 31% of them have obtained 25 out of the full marks 25.
- J 51% students really understand the listening text although 75% of them answer all the questions on the test paper as some students answer by guessing or even copying from others.
- J In some exam centers, the monitors do not use cassette player but read the tape script themselves (i.e, use their own voice). The teacher's voice is obviously more comprehensive than the voices in the cassette. So the students of equal competency obtain different marks. In some exam centers, the monitors even dictated the answers of listening test paper without playing the cassette.
- J 33% of students never have listening classes in their school, 20% of them have only sometimes. So, they feel difficulty to comprehend the text recorded in the cassette. They are unable to answer all the questions even though the questions are easy. Only 47% students are found to have practice on listening in their schools.
- J The monitors do not ask them all the questions from the speaking test paper but ask them general questions about themselves, their schools and family and provide marks without evaluating their actual competency.
- J As the speaking test is taken in the form of an interview, some serious students feel nervous, they are afraid and hesitate to express their feelings though they are brilliant enough.
- J The above-mentioned reasons are not the water-tight reasons behind the findings we can neither 100% accept nor 100% reject them. They may be partially true.

CHAPTER - FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

In order to find out the effectiveness of the practical examination (Listening and speaking) in the SLC, this research study was done. On the basis of the questionnaires used and the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the informants, the following findings are made:

-) 40% of the monitors involved in evaluation of the practical exam are untrained still they are appointed as monitors
-) Average 70 students are evaluated by a monitor in a day and they provide average 4m to each students for testing speaking skill.
-) Majority of students are not well-prepared, confident and serious towards the test but their scores in the test are good.
-) Majority of students do not speak at all in the speaking test. Some of them even use Nepali, however, they are provided good marks without evaluating their proficiency in listening and speaking accurately.
-) Majority of monitors themselves are not satisfied with the test. The large no. of students to be tested, unhealthy environment, difficult to maintain discipline, provision to pass all the students, unnecessary pressure of halo-effect are the problems to the monitors to evaluate the students accurately on the basis of their performance.
-) Some monitors are in favor of regular evaluation by the subject teachers as in other subjects, which have practical marks.

-) Some monitors use their own voice instead of playing the cassette because of some technical problems. Some of them even dictate the answers of the listening text instead of making the students listen to the text.
-) Even if the cassette is played, majority of students do not comprehend the voices and answer the questions by guessing or copying from others.
-) The marks obtained by the students depends on the monitor rather than their competency in listening and speaking as in same exam centers, the students are evaluated accurately and provided marks on the basis of their performance. So they have obtained 12-20 marks only whereas in same exam centers they are provided 25 out of 25.
-) The test has failed to fulfill the objectives of the curriculum and maintain reliability of the test. It has been ineffective because of its evaluation system. The evaluation is not done in accordance with the norms and objectives of the curriculum.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

-) The evaluation should be done on the basis of regular evaluation throughout the academic year and the subject teachers should be given authority to evaluate the students' competency as in other subjects like health and physical, population and environment, science, accountancy and education that saves both time and money.
-) The number of students to be tested by a monitor should be limited (i.e. not more than 50) so that they can provide enough time to test their overall competency. (The present norms is 75 students per monitor per day)

-) Suitable environment should be created and brought in to strictness and strict monitoring and supervision should be made.
-) The trend and concept of the test should be changed and very poor students who do not possess competency in accordance with the objectives of the curriculum shouldn't be passed.
-) The students should be given more exposure on listening and speaking in the schools and made well-prepared for the test with more practice.
-) The test should be carried out honestly and evaluation must be done on truth and reality rather than just to maintain formality.

REFERENCES

- Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge: CUP
- Chaulagain, Bhesh Raj. (2004). *The problems in applying communicative approach to language teaching*. An unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Kirtipur: TU.
- Cross, David. (1992). *Language testing*. UK: Prentice Hall international Limited.
- Harmer, J. (1997). *The practice of English language teaching*. Longman.
- Khadka, P.B. (2001). *A comparative study of listening comprehension between Rural and Urban Students*. An unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Kirtipur: TU.
- Khaniya, T.R. (2005). *Language teaching and testing*. Kirtipur: Kshitiz Publication.
- Khatiwada, R.K. and M. Adhikari. (2007). *Research methodology*. Kirtipur: Kshitiz Publication.
- Kumar, Ranjit. (1996). *Research methodology*. London: Sage Publication
- Office of the controller of examination. (2007). *Teacher's training manual on listening and speaking*. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Office of the controller of examination. Ministry of Education.
- Pokhrel, Bhes Raj. (2006). *Language testing*. Kirtipur: Jupiter Publication.
- Rai, Bishnu Singh. Ishwor Shrestha and Krishna Raj Hamal. (2000). *English text book grade 10*. Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Janak educational material centre ltd.

Richards, J.C. and T. Rodgers. (1995). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: CUP

Secondary curriculum (2007), 1st Ed. Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Centre.

Sharma, Uma Nath. (2007). *Language testing*. Kirtipur: Sunlight publication.

Shubhechchu, Gopal.(2006). *Education research methodology*. Kirtipur: Hira books enterprises.

Singh, Nabin Kumar. (2000). *A study on listening comprehension of grade 8 Students*. An unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Kirtipur: TU.

Sthapit, S.K. (2000). *Teaching language for communication*. in Journal of NELTA, Kathmandu.

Timilsina, Rishi Raj. (2005). *Determine the students ability to communicate orally in English and to compare the achievements of the students in terms of different variables*. An unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Kirtipur: TU.

Timilsina, Tek Raj. (2000). *A study on effectiveness of recorded materials over conventional teaching in teaching listening comprehension*. An unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Kirtipur: TU.

Ur, Penny. (1996). *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.