

Analysis of Students' Competency in Listening Comprehension of the English Language at Pakistani Secondary School Level

¹Lin Siew Eng, ¹Abdul Rashid Mohamed and ^{1,2}Muhammad Javed

¹School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

²Department of Educational Training, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Abstract: This paper addresses to assess the students' competency in listening skill at Secondary school level in the English Language focusing on three major content areas: story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension. The target population was the male and female students of grade 10 of urban and rural secondary schools from public and private sector. Forty Secondary schools of the District of Bahawalnagar, Pakistan were selected by using stratified sampling. A sample consisting of 440 students (11 students from each school) was selected randomly. An achievement test consisting of different items namely; story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension was developed to assess the students' competency and capability in the listening skill. The audio tape recorder was used to collect the data for the present study. Mean Score and Standard Deviation were applied to analyze the students' proficiency in listening skill for each item. The t-test was applied to make the comparison on the demographic basis of gender, location, as well as public and private sector. The overall performance of all the students was better in paragraph listening as compared to story listening and listening comprehension. The analysis, based on t-value, revealed no significant difference between the performance of male and female students and the students of public and private schools, whereas there was a significant difference between the performance of urban and rural students.

Key words: Listening Comprehension • Language Learning • Students' Competency and Proficiency level in Listening Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the basic component of the process of learning and comprehension for every human being. Listening is one of the four basic language arts: speaking and writing known as 'expressions' or 'productive' and listening and reading known as 'understanding' or 'receptive' skills [1]. It helps the learner to receive and understand the message of the speaker. It also helps the learner in the accomplishment of any task related to auditory function [2].

The process of listening helps to decode and comprehend the message fully. When a listener listens attentively and correlates the newly received information with the already saved information in the Long Term Memory (LTM), then the level of comprehension increases gradually [3].

The listening skill can be defined as receptive communication skill that has a parallel relationship to reading and, in its aural aspects, is closely related to speech. Listening is the first basic skill and yet researches in the listening area are meager. Ample researches in the field of reading have made the meaning of 'reading' clear and definite. Such is not the case with 'listening'. Still various terms are being used to explain the mental processes involved in the reception of verbal sounds and linguistic behavior attached to it. According to Webster's Dictionary [4, 5] 'to listen' means to 'give ear', 'to give head' and 'to hear with attention'. Different terms such as 'listening comprehension', 'aural comprehension', 'auditing' and 'auditory comprehension' are used. Out of all these terminologies, the 'listening comprehension' is commonly used [6].

Bransford and McCarrell [7] defined listening as an active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising and generalizing that writing and reading demand; and they presented specific exercises to make students energetic to the same “inner voice” one hears when writing. Abelleira [8] added that the students should learn to decode, follow verbal instruction, infer word meaning, listen for detail and sequence, extract main idea, distinguish fact from opinion and identify mood during listening. Hirsch [9] characterized listening skill as responses and interpretation of sounds to understanding and assigning meanings by reacting, selecting, remembering, attending, analyzing and incorporating previous experience.

As regards the students’ ability in listening and understanding the text at Secondary school level, different factors that influence listening comprehension matter a lot. The previous researches [10-14] have reviewed the five major factors of listening comprehension such as a) variation in the text of listening passage, b) variations in the speaker’s personal ability, c) variation in the objectives of listening the text, d) variation in the listener’s potential to understand and e) variation in the process of interaction between speaker and listener. Listening ability helps students to enhance their comprehension level of spoken language as well [1]. The students will be unable to get the high - quality score if they do not listen and understand the teacher attentively. The listening skill plays a significant role to enhance the language learning and communication [15-18].

With regard to the students’ level of competency, the previous researches [19, 20] concluded that the students confront problems due the complex text and the speaker’s ability of utterance. On the other hand, Berne [21] found in her research that the nature of text does not matter in identifying main idea but it affects in comprehension of the details. Berne [21] further stated that the ability of comprehending the text determines the students’ level of competency. In this perspective, the present study is an effort to find out the students’ level of competency regarding the listening comprehension.

Review of the Related Literature: Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides a foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development and it plays a lifelong role in the processes of learning and communication that is essential to productive participation in life. A study by Richards [22] found that people listen 45 per cent of the time they spend in communication, is still widely cited [23, 24]. O’malley,

Chamot, & Küpper [25] found in their research that 30 per cent of communication time was spent in speaking, 16 per cent in reading and 9 per cent in writing. Rankin [1], one of the pioneers in the field of measurement of listening comprehension, presented some of the earliest descriptive statistics concerning measurement. He [1] found that people spent 70 per cent of their waking time in communication and that three-fourth of this time was spent in listening and speaking.

A similar study undertaken by Bartlett and Burt [26] revealed that 42 per cent of working time was spent in listening, 25 per cent in speaking, 15 per cent in reading and 18 percent in writing.

Apart from these studies, it is a universally observed fact that listening is a significant medium of learning in schools. Listening has become an efficient means of accumulating information. This has been found by Rosenblatt [27] while experimenting on adults that 50 per cent could comprehend and retain very little from ordinary informal talk.

In a similar study on college students, Kintsch and Greene [28] observed that students could comprehend only half. Students comprehend less than half of what they hear in the lecture [29]. Goodman, Burke, & Sherman [30] noted similar results with grade 10 students. The estimation of such kinds depends upon the difficulty level of the contents and questions used for the assessment. It can be safely concluded that there is scope for the improvement in the comprehension level gained through listening.

Some studies revealed that less research on listening comprehension is conducted as compared to research in other skills [31]. The Encyclopedia of Educational Research compiled by Monroe & Association [32] reports that scientific studies, amounting to 1951, related to reading have been published in the United States of America and The United Kingdom up to the year 1939, whereas only 14 were related to the area of listening comprehension. The earliest one dated back to 1933. The same type of picture is revealed by Brown [33] who reviewed 71 articles on listening skill published in psychological and educational literature, of which one appeared even before 1920, eight between 1920 and 1930, twenty between 1930-1940, forty-two between 1940-47. He further noted that there was no up-to-date bibliography on listening comprehension.

It means that this situation was not altered much up to 1949. The Third Mental Measurement Yearbook [34] devotes 70 pages to the available tests of reading but not a single reference has been made to any test of listening ability.

The educational literature of the past decade is heavily loaded with articles, books, devices and tests dealing with reading. Listening on the other hand appears relatively infrequently in the literature [35].

The situation is disheartening regarding listening skills. It is observed that nowadays we hear more of reading researches about various aspects of education but listening is a neglected area. In contrast to 2,800 experimental studies in the field of reading, there were a few researches in the area of listening. These researches indicate that we listen to almost three times as much as we read. It means we have 8,400 studies behind in the field of listening [36].

The mysteries surrounding listening comprehension show that the gap between practice and research was great due to difficulties of data retrieved, lack of a conceptual framework and the scarcity of tools and techniques for making the teaching of listening operational to the classroom teacher [37].

An unsatisfactory picture can be seen in the field of measurement of listening comprehension. Nothing has been mentioned in the third Mental Measurement Yearbook [38] regarding the measurement of listening comprehension. Only two tests have been reviewed by the fifth Mental Measurement Yearbook [39], two more tests appeared in the field of measurement of listening comprehension in the seventh Mental Measurement Yearbook [40]. It has been rightly pointed out that the education profession is still without a first rate instrument for the measurement of listening skill Even The Orr-Graham Listening Test by Modi [6] has not filled in the vacuum [41].

The existing situation regarding listening comprehension is really deplorable. The recent attention to oracy (used for listening and speaking, similar to literacy for reading and writing) has focused on the production aspect on speaking [42]. Tests of speaking have been devised by Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Boards in the UK [43]. Investigations would have been carried out by institutions in Southampton, Manchester, Brighton and also by individuals [44] but to the reception of speech, scarcely any attention has been paid to listening in this country. Since so much learning takes place through the ears, this would seem a serious state of affairs. The research is predominantly American: even a little was done there until 20 years ago [33]. Listening has been almost completely neglected. However, Duker [45] was able to complete a bibliography on listening of 743 items [46].

Thus, it is obvious from the foregoing pages that investigations carried out on any aspect of listening are not satisfactory. One would agree that research on listening as “sporadic, atomistic and inconclusive.” Ebel [46] lists as implications of past research findings that a theory of listening is needed and research is required to explore further the nature and development of listening abilities to apply those findings to structure and sequence in the language arts and also on many aspects of listening. Investigations on listening area are, however, now receiving attention [47]. It is noted in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research [46] that in an annotated bibliography of listening by Duker [48], 400 additional items have appeared in the literature since its publication, i.e. 400 more items in five years. Most of the researches concerning the various facets of listening have reported in the academic theses. More than 165 doctoral and more than 220 master’s theses have been written on this topic as well.

The studies in listening comprehension are still in its infancy. However, some insights about the processes involved in listening can be gleaned from native language research [49]. A tentative model of the listening process prepared by Davison & Dowson [50] is useful in this respect. In addition to outlining this general model of the listening process, they provided a list of 33 micro skills that are needed in academic listening.

Listening comprehension can be promoted through recorded tapes or cassettes. Such type of listening is beneficial for students but it is more essential to keep in mind that students can get more advantages from live listening [51]. Hymes [47] investigated that the recorded materials allow the non-native teachers to bring the voices of native speakers into the classroom and allow all teachers to present a variety of voices and accents to their students. While using recorded materials, the teacher or student can stop, repeat and play short sections or whole passage as often as necessary. Taped materials can also be used by students at any time either in or outside the classroom.

Widdowson [52] concluded that the Pakistani students face difficulty in understanding the speech of native speakers of English due to; weak relationship between English sounds and in the written language, changes in sound while occurring in rapid connected speech, the rhythmic patterns of English speech and different ways of pronouncing the same sounds.

English is the most powerful tool for communication all over the world. It is considered the second language for Pakistani students. It is taught as a major compulsory

subject from class one up to graduation level in Pakistan. It is also considered the second language for Pakistani students. The present study is an attempt to assess the Pakistani students' level of listening comprehension at secondary school level.

Objectives of the Study: The major objectives of the study were bifurcated into following categories:

- To find out students' competency in different types of listening skills.
- To compare the students' proficiency in listening skill on the basis of gender, school location and public and private sector schools.

Population and Sampling: The target population was Grade 10 students from secondary schools. Three major strata: male and female students, rural and urban areas and public and private schools were determined in this study. Twenty Boys Secondary Schools (ten from rural [5 public and 5 private] and ten from urban areas [5 public and 5 private]) and, similarly twenty Girls Secondary Schools (ten from rural [5 public and 5 private] and ten from urban areas [5 public and 5 private]) were selected by using stratified sampling technique. It means 40 secondary schools were selected for this study. There were 1375 students studying in grade 10 in the District of Bahawalnagar, Pakistan. A sample consisting of 440 students (11 students from each school) was selected randomly from 40 Secondary Schools of the District of Bahawalnagar, Pakistan.

Research Instrument: A sample consisting of 440 students was taken from the forty Secondary school of the District Bahawalnagar, Pakistan for this study. The listening test was developed to collect the data to assess the students' competency in listening comprehension. Different items related to listening skill namely story listening, paragraph listening and listening comprehension were included in the test. The materials for this instrument, taken from the textbook and English newspaper, were recorded on audio tape. Brindley [53], Crowl [54] and Wert [55] supported tape recording for such type of research. The students were directed to circle the correct option while listening to the tape recorder. The tape recorder was played only once because the major portion of the materials was selected from their textbooks and students were already familiar with that text. The Listening test consisted of three (03) sections

comprising of five (05) minutes of recording. The total marks for the listening test were 16.

The instrument was validated through language experts' opinions, followed by a pilot study on a small scale in the District of Bahawalnagar, Pakistan. In the light of experts' opinions and the pilot study, the items were improved in terms of language, format/style and content. One hundred and thirty-two (132) students were taken for the pilot study. It was 30% of the total sample size. Hertzog [56] recommended that the sample size for pilot study should be 10 to 40 per cent. The reliability of the instrument was established at 0.779 Cronbach's Alpha that was acceptable to launch the study at a large scale [57, 58].

Data Collection and Analysis: The whole activity of data collection was carried out by the researchers. The class teacher of each respective school helped the researchers in administering the test. The separate room in a calm and quiet environment was chosen in each school. To seek high response rate, the convenient time for each school administration was chosen. The students were directed to listen to the CD recording attentively and circle the correct option. Before the recording begins, the students were allowed to pre-read information found on the 'Question Paper' while the recording is being played. After the recording is completed, the students were allowed five minutes to transfer the answers from 'Question Paper' to the 'Answer Sheet'.

To analyze the data, scoring was made on the principle-one item, one mark. The mark 1 was awarded to correct response and zero mark was awarded for incorrect answer. The analysis was done in two stages.

At the first stage, the data was analysed in three steps. Firstly, the average score and frequency of each item were calculated. The marks obtained from the whole test were presented in the form of table and then tabulated according to different variables. Secondly, the standard deviation was calculated to determine the variation in the scores. It helped to know about the dispersion of data around the mean scores. Thirdly, the tables with frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations were presented.

At the second stage, an analysis through the use of t-test for independent samples to investigate significant difference at $p < 0.05$ for male and female students, the students of public and private schools and the students from the rural and urban areas was made as statistical inference.

RESULTS

All the items included in the test were analyzed separately. The results of the study were also analyzed by comparing the gender, location as well as public and private sectors separately. However, it was not possible to describe all those results in 40 tables. Hence, the result of the study was presented in six tables only. The competency in the listening skill was evaluated on the basis of Grading Formula prescribed by The Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education in Pakistan, e.g. (i) 80% and above = Exceptional, 70-79% = Excellent (iii) 60-69% = Very good (iv) 50-59% = Good (v) 40-49% = Fair (vi) 33-39% = Satisfactory (vii) 0-32% = Fail/Very poor.

Table 1 indicates that the students' scores in questions No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were 85%, 71%, 82%, 71% and 50% respectively. In this way, their performance for questions No 1 and No 3 were 'exceptional' and remained 'excellent' in questions No 2 and No 4 whereas they showed 'good' performance in question No 5. The reason of the low performance in question No 5 as compared to others is that the answer to question No 5 was not in a proper sequence as shown in the first four answers in the paragraph. The performance of the students showed that the students had already made up their mind that the answers of all questions would be in proper order in the paragraph. Thus, it can be concluded that they faced difficulty in answering those questions whose answers were not in proper sequence in the text. The mean score for all the questions was 72% which fall in the category of 'excellent'.

Table 2 indicates that the students' scores in Questions No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were 88%, 88%, 82%, 88% and 48% respectively. This means that they got 'exceptional' marks in question No. 1, 2, 3 and 4 and 'fair' scores in question No. 5. The reason for the low performance in question No. 5 is that the options for question No. 5 were rather identical with only a slight difference. It means the students faced difficulty in answering those questions whose answers were apparently similar in outlook or in meaning.

Table 3 shows that the students' mean scores in question No. 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6 were 24, 55, 44, 39, 22 and 60 respectively. It can be said that they got 'good' marks in question No. 2, 'fair' in question No. 3 and 'satisfactory' in question No. 4 whereas they failed in questions No. 1 and 5. The students' performance in this item (listening comprehension and to devise a title

of the passage) as compared to the previous sections (story listening and paragraph listening) remained poor comparatively.

The reason behind this poor performance in this section was probably due to the blank spaces provided to write the correct answers after listening to the text on the tape recorder and the options for each question were not given. It can be said that the students could easily guess or select from the given choices rather than self writing. They faced difficulty to answer those questions in which the options were not provided. Most of the students devised the title 'The Role of Women in Nation Building' that was correct.

These two hypotheses were made to compare the performance of male and female students:

H₀: There is no difference between the performance of male and female students in listening skills.

H₁: There is difference between the performance of male and female students in listening skills.

In the light of these hypotheses, a comparison between the performances of male and female students has been made in the Table 4. The results revealed no statistical significant difference between the performance of male and female students in the proficiency of listening skills. The t-value (-1.933108) for listening skills was not significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance because this calculated that t-value lies in between accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis (H₀) was accepted and it can be concluded that the performance of male and female students was the same. These results showed that the mean scores of male students in 'story listening', 'paragraphs listening' and 'fill in the blanks and devise the title of the text' were 0.74, 0.81 and 0.42 respectively. On the other hand, the mean scores of female students in 'story listening', 'paragraphs listening' and 'fill in the blanks and devise the title of the text' were 0.69, 0.77 and 0.39 respectively. The average mean scores of the male and the female students were 0.66 and 0.62 respectively. It can be concluded with the help of these results that male and female students have almost similar scores in the listening comprehension.

Following two types of hypotheses were made to compare the performance of urban and rural students.

H₀: There is no difference between the performance of urban and rural students in listening skills.

Table 1: Overall Performance of Students in Listening Story (n=440)

Statement	Questions	Frequency	Mean	SD
Listen to the story on the tape recorder and answer the following questions.				
<i>Q.No.1 (a) Appendix I</i>	1	373	0.85	0.09
	2	313	0.71	0.15
	3	362	0.82	0.10
	4	311	0.71	0.15
	5	218	0.50	0.18
	Average	315	0.72	0.13

Table 2: Overall Performance of Students for Listening Paragraph (n=440)

Statement	Questions	Frequency	Mean	SD
Listen to the paragraph on tape recorder and answer the following questions.				
<i>Q.No.1 (b) Appendix I</i>	1	389	0.88	0.07
	2	385	0.88	0.08
	3	360	0.82	0.11
	4	389	0.88	0.07
	5	209	0.48	0.18
	Average	346	0.79	0.10

Table 3: Overall Performance of Students for Listening Comprehension and Suggesting its Title (n=440)

Statement	Questions	Frequency	Mean	S.D
Listen to the text on tape recorder and answer the following questions and suggest a suitable title of the passage.				
<i>Q.No.1 (c) (Appendix I)</i>	1	106	0.24	0.27
	2	242	0.55	0.35
	3	193	0.44	0.10
	4	172	0.39	0.14
	5	97	0.22	0.05
	6	264	0.60	0.39
	Average	179	0.41	0.22

Table 4: Comparison of the Performance of Male and Female Students for Listening Skills n (male) = 220 n (female) =220

Sr. No	Skills	Male Students			Female Students			t-Value
		Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	
1	Story listening	164	0.74	0.20	152	0.69	0.17	-1.933108
2	Paragraph listening	178	0.81	0.23	169	0.77	0.19	
3	Fill in the blanks and devise the title	92	0.42	0.19	87	0.39	0.17	
	Average	144	0.66	0.21	136	0.62	0.18	

Table 5: Comparison of the Performance of Rural and Urban Students for Listening Skills n (rural) = 220 n (urban) =220

Sr. No	Skills	Rural Students			Urban Students			t-Value
		Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	
1	Story listening	152	0.69	0.19	163	0.74	0.18	4.203625
2	Paragraph listening	167	0.76	0.22	180	0.82	0.21	
3	Fill the space and devise the title	76	0.34	0.16	103	0.47	0.20	
	Average	131	0.60	0.19	149	0.68	0.19	

Table 6: Comparison of the Performance of the Students of Public and Private Schools for Listening Skills n (public) = 220 n (private) =220

Sr. No	Skills	Students of Public Schools			Students of Private Schools			t-Value
		Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	
1	Story listening	156	0.71	0.19	159	0.72	0.18	-2.077676
2	Paragraph listening	171	0.78	0.22	175	0.80	0.20	
3	Fill the space and devise the title.	81	0.37	0.17	98	0.45	0.18	
	Average	136	0.62	0.20	144	0.66	0.19	

H₁: There is difference between the performance of urban and rural students in listening skills.

In the light of these hypotheses, a comparison between the performance of urban and rural students was made in Table 5. The results revealed a significant difference between the performance of urban and rural students in the proficiency of listening skills. The t-value (4.203625) for listening skills was significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance (which is close to zero), because this calculated t-value does not lie in between the accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis (2- H_0) was rejected and it could be concluded that the performance of urban and rural students was not the same in listening skills.

These results revealed that the mean scores of rural school students in ‘story listening’, ‘paragraphs listening’ and ‘fill in the blanks and devise the title of the text’ were 0.69, 0.76 and 0.34 respectively whereas the mean scores of urban school students in ‘story listening’, ‘paragraphs listening’ and ‘fill in the blanks and devise the title of the text’ were 0.74, 0.82 and 0.47 respectively. The average mean scores of the rural and urban school students were 0.60 and 0.68 respectively. It can be concluded that rural and urban school students have variation in their scores in the listening comprehension.

These two types of hypotheses were made to compare the performance of the students of public and private schools in listening skill:

H₀: There is no difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in listening skills.

H₁: There is difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in listening skills.

A comparison between the performance of the students of public and private schools in listening skills was made in the Table 6. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in the proficiency of listening skills. The t-value (-2.077676) for listening skills was not significant at $p < 0.05$ level of

significance, because this calculated t-value lies in between accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis (3- H_0) was accepted and it can be concluded that the performance of the students of public and private schools was the same.

Table 6 revealed that the public school students got 0.71, 0.78 and 0.37 scores in ‘story listening’, ‘paragraphs listening’ and ‘fill in the blanks and devise the title of the text’. On the other hand, the mean scores of private school students in ‘story listening’, ‘paragraphs listening’ and ‘fill in the blanks and devise the title of the text’ were 0.72, 0.80 and 0.45 respectively. The average mean scores of the public and private school students were 0.62 and 0.66 respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that both the public and private school students have almost the same scores in the listening comprehension.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The effective listening skill plays a fundamental role in students’ learning language and valuable achievements. Most of the time, the listening skill is ignored in the classroom because the students are required to show their worth in writing in the examination hall which is the requirement of the examination system. If full attention is paid on listening skill, the students’ level of achievement may be increased because this is the skill that provides the foundations for increasing the level of understanding and comprehension [59].

The results of this study revealed that the students’ scores in ‘story listening’ and ‘paragraph listening’ were 72% and 79% (Table 1 & 2 respectively) whereas the average score in filling out the blank spaces and devising the suitable title was 41% (Table 3). Moreover, 39% students (Table 3, Question 4) devised correct title of the listened paragraph. It can be concluded that the students’ performance in story listening and paragraph listening was ‘excellent’ and in filling out the blank spaces and devising the suitable title was ‘fair’ and ‘satisfactory’ respectively. The previous researches [60, 61] have also shown the same results. On the other hand, the

researches conducted by Serraj & Noordin [62], Amin, Amin, & Aly [63] and Ghassemi [64] revealed different results in listening comprehension.

One of the key concerns of the study was to investigate the difference in the performance of students based on gender with respect to listening skills. The null hypothesis (H_0) that was tested was, 'there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in listening skills'. For this, Independent Sampling, t-test was applied to investigate the difference between the performance of male and female students (Table 4). The results revealed that there is no significance difference between the performance of male and female students in the proficiency in listening skills but Bügel and Buunk [65], Markham [66], Vogel [67], Goh & Foong [68], Goldstein [69] and Ibbott [70] found that there is difference between the performance of male and female students in listening comprehension. Contrary to this, a research done by Gruber & Gaebelein [71] is similar to the present study, which revealed that there is no difference between the performance of male and female students in listening comprehension.

To find out the difference between the performance of the urban and rural students in listening skill was another objective of this study. The difference between mean scores of urban and rural students in listening skill was 0.08 that shows a slight difference in the performance of the urban and rural students in listening skill. The t-value (4.203625) is significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected as can be seen in table 5. The results of Eckermann [72], Stuebing [73], Talif and Edwin [74] and Verdugo and Belmonte [75] are similar to the results of the present study.

With regards to the performance of the students of public and private schools, there was no significant difference, in the performance of the public and private school students in listening skills. The t-value (-2.077676) for listening skills was not significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, because this calculated t-value lies in between accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0); 'there is no significant difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in listening skills' was accepted and it can be concluded that the performance of the students of public and private schools was the same. Almost the same results can be found in the previous researches done by Tooley and Dixon [76], Smith and Runyan [77] Choi [78] and Law [79] whereas the research conducted by Shaw, *et al.* [80] revealed different results than that of the present study.

Recommendations: The following recommendations are put forward for the planners, policy makers, academicians, students and administrations of the educational institutions:

- The concerned teachers and heads of institutions should think of ways to improve the ability of students' listening skills that will help to enhance the proficiency in listening skills.
- Students from the public schools and students from the rural areas should try to improve their listening skills that can boost up to enhance their studies.
- Similar research is needed to be conducted in this area e.g. listening comprehension with the selection the different types of text especially associated with the visual support. Furthermore, such type of research should also be conducted at elementary and primary levels.
- Similar research is required to be conducted in other language skills in the English language such as writing, reading and speaking skills to assess the students' proficiency.
- In a nutshell, both the teachers and students should devote themselves sincerely to improving the listening comprehension that has become the dire need of the day.

REFERENCES

1. Rankin, P.T., 1928. The importance of listening ability. *The English Journal*, 17(8): 623-630.
2. Brownell, J., 2005. Listening, attitudes, principles and skills. *Recherche*, 67: 02.
3. Lundsteen, S.W., 1971. Listening: Its Impact on Reading and the Other Language Arts.
4. Webster, N., 1936. Webster's College Dictionary. Thomas Allen.
5. Webster, N., 1969. Webster's seventh new collegiate dictionary: G. & C. Merriam Co.
6. Modi, D., 1991. Construction And Standardisation Of Listening Comprehension: Mittal Publications.
7. Bransford, J.D. and N.S. McCarrell, 1974. A sketch of a cognitive approach to comprehension: Some thoughts about understanding what it means to comprehend.
8. Abelleira, P.G., 1987. Listening Instruction: A Program for First-Grade Students.
9. Hirsch, R.O., 1986. On Defining Listening: Synthesis and Discussion.

10. Byrnes, H., 1984. The role of listening comprehension: A theoretical base. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17(4): 317-329.
11. Buck, G., 1988. Testing listening comprehension in Japanese university entrance examinations. *JALT Journal*, 10(1): 15-42.
12. Dirven, R. and J. Oakeshott-Taylor, 1985. Listening comprehension (Part II). *Language Teaching*, 18(01): 2-20.
13. Joiner, E., 1991. Teaching listening: Ends and means. Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguistics, pp: 194-214.
14. Lynch, A., 1988. Grading foreign language listening comprehension materials: The use of naturally modified interaction. University of Edinburgh.
15. Rost, M., 1990. Listening in language learning: Longman London.
16. Nunan, D., 2002. Listening in language learning. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of Current Practice*, pp: 238-242.
17. Underwood, M., J. Kenworthy and M. Rost, 1989. Teaching listening: Longman London.
18. Ur, P., 1984. Teaching listening comprehension: Cambridge University Press.
19. Brown, G., A. Anderson, N. Shadbolt and T. Lynch, 1985. Listening comprehension. Edinburgh: Scottish Education Department.
20. Devine, T.G., 1978. Listening: What do we know after fifty years of research and theorizing? *Journal of Reading*, 21(4): 296-304.
21. Berne, J.E., 1993. The Role of Text Type, Assessment Task and Target Language Experience in L2 Listening Comprehension Assessment. Diss. Univ of Illinois at Urbana.
22. Richards, J.C., 1983. Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2): 219-240.
23. Gilman, R.A. and R.L.M. Moody, 1984. What practitioners say about listening: Research implications for the classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17(4): 331-334.
24. Murphy, J.M., 1991. Oral communication in TESOL: Integrating speaking, listening and pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(1): 51-75.
25. O'malley, J.M., A.U. Chamot and L. Küpper, 1989. Listening comprehension strategies in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 10(4): 418-437.
26. Bartlett, F.C. and C. Burt, 1933. Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 3(2): 187-192.
27. Rosenblatt, L.M., 1985. Viewpoints: Transaction versus interaction: A terminological rescue operation. *Research in the Teaching of English*, pp: 96-107.
28. Kintsch, W. and E. Greene, 1978. The role of culture-specific schemata in the comprehension and recall of stories*. *Discourse Processes*, 1(1): 1-13.
29. Dickson, W.P. and J.H. Patterson, 1981. Evaluating referential communication games for teaching speaking and listening skills. *Communication Education*, 30(1): 11-21.
30. Goodman, Y.M., C.L. Burke and B. Sherman, 1980. Reading strategies: Focus on comprehension: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
31. Bartlett, S.F.C. and F.C. Bartlett, 1995. Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology: Cambridge Univ Pr.
32. Monroe, W.S. and A.E.R. Association, 1941. *Encyclopedia of educational research*: Macmillan.
33. Brown, G., 1990. Listening to spoken English: Longman London.
34. Oscar, K., 1949. Buros. The Third Mental Measurements Yearbook: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
35. Morrow, E.C., 1972. The Effect of Taped Listening Lessons on the Achievement of First Grade Readers.
36. Meyer, B.J.F., 1975. The organization of prose and its effects on memory (Vol. 1): North-Holland Amsterdam.
37. Luderer, E.K., 1976. The Effect of Prefatory Statements on the Listening Comprehension of Fourth and Fifth Graders.
38. Buros, O.K.E., 1949. The Third Mental Measurements Yearbook.
39. Buros, O.K., M.M. Bryan and A. Hall, 1959. The fifth mental measurements yearbook. Highland Park, NJ: Gryphon Press.
40. Buros, O.K., 1972. The seventh mental measurements yearbook: II.
41. Garner, J.K. and C.R. Bochna, 2004. Transfer of a listening comprehension strategy to independent reading in first-grade students. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 32(2): 69-74.
42. Canfield, G.R., 1961. How Useful Are Lessons on Listening? *The Elementary School J.*, 62(3): 146-151.
43. Vygotsky, L.S., 1964. Thought and language. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 14(1): 97-98.
44. Stenhouse, L. and J. Rudduck, 1985. Research as a basis for teaching: Readings from the work of Lawrence Stenhouse: Heinemann.

45. Duker, S., 1966. *Listening: readings* (Vol. 1): Scarecrow Press.
46. Ebel, R.L., 1969. *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*.
47. Hymes, D.H., 1974. *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach* (Vol. 65): Univ of Pennsylvania Pr.
48. Duker, S., 1961. *Listening. Review of Educational Research*, 31(2): 145-151.
49. Hadley, A.O. and A.C. Omaggio, 1986. *Teaching language in context: Proficiency-oriented instruction*: Heinle & Heinle.
50. Davison, J. and J. Dowson, 2003. *Learning to teach English in the secondary school*: Routledge.
51. Rubin, D.L. and N.A. Mead, 1984. *Large Scale Assessment of Oral Communication Skills: Kindergarten through Grade*, pp: 12.
52. Widdowson, H.G., 1972. *The teaching of English as communication. ELT Journal*, 27(1): 15-19.
53. Brindley, G., 1998. *Assessing listening abilities. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18(1): 171-191.
54. Cowl, T.K., 1996. *Fundamentals of educational research: Brown & Benchmark Madison*.
55. Wert, J.E., 1938. *Educational statistics*: McGraw-Hill.
56. Hertzog, M.A., 2008. *Considerations in determining sample size for pilot studies. Research in Nursing and Health*, 31(2): 180-191.
57. Airasian, P., L. Gay and G. Mills, 2000. *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application*. New Jersey, Upper Saddle: Prentice Hall.
58. Best, J. and J. Kahn, 2005. *Research in education 0. Recherche*, 67: 02.
59. Wilt, M.E., 1950. *A study of teacher awareness of listening as a factor in elementary education. The Journal of Educational Research*, 43(8): 626-636.
60. Bacon, S.M., 1992. *The relationship between gender, comprehension, processing strategies and cognitive and affective response in foreign language listening. The Modern Language Journal*, 76(2): 160-178.
61. Hyde, J.S. and M.C. Linn, 1988. *Gender differences in verbal ability: A meta-analysis. Psychological Bulletin*, 104(1): 53.
62. Serraj, S. and N.B. Noordin, 2013. *Relationship among Iranian EFL Students' Foreign Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety and Their Listening Comprehension. [Article]. English Language Teaching*, 6(5): 1-12. doi: 10.5539/elt.v6n5p1.
63. Amin, I.A.R., M.M. Amin and M.A.S. Aly, 2011. *The Effectiveness of Using an Explicit Language Learning Strategy-Based Instruction in Developing Secondary School Students' EFL Listening Comprehension Skills: Online Submission*.
64. Ghassemi, M., 2013. *The impact of Cooperative Listening Materials Adaptation on Listening Comprehension Performance of Iranian EFL Learners. [Article]. English Language Teaching*, 6(2): 45-54. doi: 10.5539/elt.v6n2p45.
65. Bügel, K. and B.P. Buunk, 1996. *Sex differences in foreign language text comprehension: The role of interests and prior knowledge. The Modern Language Journal*, 80(1): 15-31.
66. Markham, P.L., 1988. *Gender and the perceived expertness of the speaker as factors in ESL listening recall. TESOL Quarterly*, 22(3): 397-406. Meyer, B.J. F. (1975). *The organization of prose and its effects on memory* (Vol. 1): North-Holland Amsterdam.
67. Vogel, S.A., 1990. *Gender Differences in Intelligence, Language, Visual-Motor Abilities and Academic Achievement in Students with Learning Disabilities A Review of the Literature. J. Learn Disabil*, 23(1): 44-52.
68. Goh, C. and K.P. Foong, 1997. *Chinese ESL students' learning strategies: A look at frequency, proficiency and gender. Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(1): 39-53.
69. Goldstein, H., 1941. *Reading and listening comprehension at various controlled rates. The Teachers College Record*, 42(7): 643-645.
70. Ibbott, R.W., 1977. *A study of the effects of video-tape and audio-tape information presentation on listening comprehension for Black fifth grade male and female students. University of Maryland, College Park*.
71. Gruber, K.J. and J.W. Gaebelein, 1979. *Sex differences in listening comprehension. Sex Roles*, 5(3): 299-310. doi: 10.1007/bf00287397.
72. Eckermann, A.K., 1987. *Learning styles, classroom management, teacher characteristics and rural-urban aboriginal people: some thoughts. The Australian Journal of Education Studies*, 7(2): 55-68.
73. Stuebing, K.W., 1997. *Maternal schooling and comprehension of child health information in urban Zambia: Is literacy a missing link in the maternal schooling-child health relationship? Health Transition Review*, pp: 151-171.

74. Talif, R. and M. Edwin, 1990. A Comparative Study of the Achievement and the Proficiency Levels in English as a Second Language among Learners in Selected Rural and Urban Schools in Peninsular Malaysia. *The English Teacher*, pp: 14.
75. Verdugo, D.R. and I.A. Belmonte, 2007. Using digital stories to improve listening comprehension with Spanish young learners of English. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11(1): 87-101.
76. Tooley, J. and P. Dixon, 2003. Private schools for the poor: A case study from India. Reading, UK: Centre for British Teachers.
77. Smith Jr, J.F. and M.K. Runyan, 1995. How private secondary schools can meet their obligations to accommodate students with specific learning disabilities. *W. New Eng. L. Rev.*, 17: 77.
78. Choi, I.C., 2008. The impact of EFL testing on EFL education in Korea. *Language Testing*, 25(1): 39-62.
79. Law, P., 2002. No child left behind act of 2001. *Public Law*, 107: 110.
80. Shaw, T., 1994. Adapting to the US classroom: Problems and strategies of Asian high school students in Boston area schools. ERIC Clearinghouse.

Appendix "A"

Achievement Test for Grade 10 Students

Instructions: *The students will be provided the answer sheet having the questions against their options to fill it and tape recorder will be played only once.*

Question 1 (a). *Encircle the correct option during listening to the story.*

Once upon a time, Ahmad was cycling along a road. Suddenly he heard a loud noise in the sky. He looked up and saw an aeroplane flying in the sky. He was so interested that he forgot to look around him. His bicycle collided against a bus coming from the opposite direction. Ahmad fell down on the road and the bicycle fell into the ditch. He was seriously injured. Soon the police reached. They took Ahmad to the hospital. Doctors gave him treatment. After ten days, he was shifted to home after his recovery. It was an unpleasant day of his life.

- (1) What was flying in the sky? (a) Aeroplane (b) Birds (c) Helicopter (d) Kite
- (2) Ahmad' bicycle was collided against. (a) Ditch (b) Bus (c) Aeroplane (d) Car
- (3) Who took Ahmad to hospital? (a) Bus driver (b) Police (c) Car driver (d) pilot
- (4) After how many days was Ahmad shifted to home? (a) 5 days (b) 7 days (c) 10 days (d) 15 days
- (5) Ahmad fell: (a) on the road (b) into the ditch (c) near the tree (d) on the bicycle

Question 1: (b). *Encircle the correct option during listening to the paragraph.*

Sir Syed Ahmad was born in Delhi in 1817. He received most of his education at home because his father had died when he was only a small child. He worked in East India Company for some time. He was appointed as a judge. He saved many Englishmen from death in the war of 1857. He was given the title of Sir and a good monthly pension. He established a school, which later on became the Muslim University of Aligarh.

- (1) Sir Syed Ahmad was born in. 1815 (b) 1816 (c) 1817 (d) 1818
- (2) Sir Syed Ahmad was born at. (a) England (b) Sialkot (c) Karachi (d) Delhi
- (3) Sir Syed was appointed as a (a) Magistrate (b) judge (c) principal (d) None of all
- (4) He was given the title of (a) Sir (b) Dr (c) Mr. (d) All
- (5) The name of the University established by him was
(a) Muhammadon University of Aligarh (b) Oriental University of Aligarh (c) Muslim University of Aligarh (d) Muslim University of Delhi.

Question 1: (c). *Fill in the blank spaces while listening to the text and devise a suitable title.* Women make up almost half the population of Pakistan. They are seen working in every field of life. They are taking active part in nation building programs. In the past, the sphere of their activities was very limited. They worked as lady doctors, nurses, health visitors and teachers in the beginning. But now the range of their activities is very vast. They are beating men in every field of life. They are holding responsible posts in administration, custom, income tax, railway, P.I.A, police force, banks and hospitals. They are now aware of their rights and duties in the society. In short, Pakistani women are hardworking and dutiful. (1) What is the population of women?

- (2) They worked as _____, _____ and health visitors and teachers in the beginning.
- (3) Now they are holding responsible posts in administration, custom, income tax, railway, PIA, _____ and _____.
- (4) Title _____
- (5) They are now aware of their _____ and duties in the society.
- (6) Pakistani women are hardworking and _____.