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The Challenges Pakistani Students Face in getting Prepared for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); Listening Test: An Exploratory Study.

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges faced by Pakistani students in IELTS training and introspection into the pedagogical methods used for IELTS preparation. The reason for this study is that Pakistani students rarely attain the necessary score, especially in the listening section, to be considered proficient English language speakers. The goals are to determine the learning challenges, causes, and linguistic factors that hamper their listening proficiency when it comes to instructional activities for IELTS listening preparation. Observation of lectures, interviews with IELTS instructors, and questionnaire surveys from IELTS preparatory institutes were used to obtain data. The data received from questionnaire survey were analysed through percentage method using Ms excel, observations through Communicative Orientation Langauge Teaching (COLT). The research reveals significant challenges that learners face as a result of linguistic and non-linguistic factors that prevent them from listening effectively in English. This research would assist in the development of IELTS listening strategies and the advancement of overall English language listening skills.

Keywords: *English Language Listening Proficiency, ESL Listening Difficulties, Listening Instructional Practices, Linguistic and Non-linguistic Factors.*

Introduction

Students from several regions whose first language is not English like Pakistan lack proficiency in English language when applying for higher education in English-medium universities such as Australian, European and British universities .As a developing country, Pakistan could not resist the powerful current of English and its social, political and economic power. English has become one of the distinct necessities of life in Pakistan. Considering these facts about English and the importance of IELTS, teachers are now being trained to understand the new philosophy and ideology about English and English language teaching, new course books are produced and incorporated in almost every English language learning institution. In addition to this, sophisticated technology like new computer software and smart-phone applications related to English language learning has been introduced into the learning system to multiply the student's exposure and practice of English as a foreign language.

Listening has been considered an over-looked passive skill in pedagogy of second or foreign language. And it has been widely noticed that an inadequate consideration is given to listening skill. This is all because the instruction of listening and speaking requires teaching pronunciation and cross-cultural pragmatics to understand a speaker's planned message.

People across the globe communicate through a variety of digital platforms. But these advancements in global technical communication underline the influence of listening skill in our daily contacts. . The true essence of listening has been recognized when Rankin (1979) proposed a study in which he entitled listening skill as the most dominant skill for the mode of human communication. Research into listening skill has been officially commenced in the middle of 20th century with the establishment of a professional committee, the International Listening Association (ILA) in 1979. It was believed previously that listening is a passive process but it is the communication process which entails an active participation of listeners. In 1940, two research studies have been conducted by Ralph and Stephen and Rankin which stated that Listening (46%), Speaking (30%), Reading (16%) and Writing (9%) involve our daily communication. The fundamentals of listening inquiry has been laid by James Brown, Ralph Nichols, and Carl Weaver in the late 1940s.

Wolvin and Coakley (2005) well recognized leaders in the field of listening reckoned that an improved listening skill leads to a more successful communication in all aspects of listeners' personal, academic and professional lives. Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley (1979) categorized Listening into five different types according to the context of communication being implied. These are Therapeutic, Critical, Comprehensive, Discriminative and Informative. Among those five only two Discriminative and Informative listening are involved in IELTS Listening.

This is the kind of listening in which the foremost concern of a listener is to comprehend the message delivered by the sender or a speaker. It is related to the IELTS listening section in which the participant has to locate the correct answer from multiple choice statements given indirectly. Usually the section consists of conversation between two or more than two people about grasping some information on some topic from some academic or general genre. This kind needs high concentration on the content being delivered by the speakers of the audio recording. And the concentration requires discipline and motivation. It would be reasonable to state that the role of memory is undeniable in Informative listening because when the listener looks for specific information in an audio, memory helps in recollecting the chunks of information previously been played in the audio-recording.

It is an undeniable fact that there is always an interference of language anxiety with language learning and production. Though listening is a passive skill which is not totally free from anxiety. And it is widely accepted notion now that anxiety plays a crucial role while learning a second language (Mohammadi Golchi, 2012). We as Pakistani students experience the anxiety during listening process. During listening, different factors may cause uneasiness and frustration for IELTS preparers which results in poor listening. According to Young (1992), poor listening ability originates from several factors such as insufficient focus on listening, immature teaching methodologies, ineffective listening strategies , and students' lack of vocabulary , but most of all, anxiety. It plays an indispensable role because the taking up of a foreign language use receiving information can literally instigate anxiety (Brown, 1998).

According to Scarcella and Oxford (1992), anxiety in listening only occurs when students face a task they feel is too difficult and unfamiliar. Young in 1992 also stated that listening comprehension gets over frustrating when the discourse gets incomprehensible. It becomes difficult for Pakistani students when they do not understand the accent or sometimes the vocabulary used in the listening section of IELTS. Oxford (1992) defines listening as a complex and puzzle-oriented skill and it is obviously more than just perception of the sounds. Because it consists of phrases, clauses, sentences and the connected discourse having a specific context. So that is the reason it is considerably a hard skill to master. These difficulties increases for a non-native speaker whenever he takes an international exam such as IELTS. And why this happens, because according to Rasti (2009) most IELTS candidates find listening as one of the most challenging sections because of

the rapid and confusing pace of audio recording. Moreover the recording only plays only once and the listener finds himself perplexed to lose any important information relevant to the answer.Pakistani students scarcely get proficient in listening sections of IELTS because they face some difficulties in Listening construct.

Main Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the research are to find out the difficulties faced by Pakistani students who prepare for the IELTS test. The instructional practices and techniques being employed by Pakistani IELTS instructors for preparing their students for this high proficiency test. Moreover, the linguistic resources and factors experienced by learners in Listening section tasks.

Literature Review

It has already been mentioned that this paper aims to assess the challenges experienced by Pakistani students in an IELTS preparation program and when it comes to the review of literature related to pedagogical implications in IELTS test preparation, it is needless to say that significant research has been conducted into it because IELTS exam holds the value of a standardized English Language proficiency test among all the other proficiency tests. Much research has been done in reading and writing skills. On the other hand, many scholars have underscored the role of Listening and speaking skills in human learning and development. And the reason for inadequate research in listening and speaking is that the instances of listening and speaking require cross cultural pragmatics to understand a speaker's intended message. There are considerate number of research projects and dissertations focusing on the current design of IELTS which are the outcome of several strenuous years of study, research and efforts.

Wash-back is defined as the influence of tests on the preparation of course. This also explains how could that wash-back affect the process of learning. This affects not only students but the teachers' behaviour as well. Studies related to wash-back can be taken for the impact research studies as well. And due to this reason the researcher has mentioned the work of Saville (2009) in the field of language assessment is relatively innovative and recently sprung up in the genre of literature as an extension to the idea of "wash-back". He also defined a fine line between impact and wash-back by keeping the effects and consequences of tests and examination throughout society, under one umbrella term, Impact. And wash-back as something limited which only influence tests and examination on language learners and teachers, language learning and teaching processes including materials and finally the outcomes. And from this edge, the line of pedagogical implications may arise which has been investigated in this study. They implicate that many learners lack the ability of studying by themselves for the test when they prepare for IELTS exam. Moreover, Alderson and Wallboth (1993) has spent much of their valued time in pedagogical implications and the effect of wash-back in IELTS preparation. Wash-back means the influence of test on teaching and learning methodologies. Though they did work on Sri Lankan students preparing for IELTS exam but it holds equal importance when talk about other non-native speakers appearing in IELTS exam. Moreover, it was a detailed and longitudinal study. In this study the whole classroom was observed for over two years of time span. And much to surprise, the research showed no evidence for wash-back in teaching methodology and " why this might happened, because after going through the interviewing from teachers it was revealed that teachers did not understand what the exam was testing or what the textbook was teaching in the first place"(p,55).

Mickan and Motteram (2009) presented a study of pedagogical description of an IELTS preparation class .Their study comprised of eight weeks program in Adelaide. They both observed the preparation course for three hours per day each week to describe the instructional practices opted by the IELTS instructors in this eight week course. According to their findings, the instructor used

multiple resources to prepare students for IELTS, which included internet resources, IELTS course books, practice test for IELTS and even materials for teaching general English. They documented all handouts, samples of students' homework, and classwork for the purpose of analysis. Mickan and Motteram found out that pedagogy played a main role in informing students about the test format what and how should be prepare for examination pint of view and eventually how to become an independent learner. Hence the pedagogy was teacher-directed and the test focused. Beside that the other activities involved are discussion of the exam strategies like time management and expectations of the IELTS examiner.

Buck (2014) has described his own perception about the effects of test on the teaching and learning difficulties of students in IELTS preparation. If I exactly quote his words about it would be like this; " There is a natural tendency for both teachers and students to tailor their classroom activities to the demands of the tests, especially when the test is very important to the future of the students, and pass rates are used as a measure of teacher success. The influence of the test on the classroom(referred to as wash-back) is, of course, very important, this wash-back effect can be either beneficial or harmful"(p,21).

The results collected from the combined research of Winke and Lim (2014) on implications faced by students in IELTS preparation showed that non-native students suffered from extreme anxiety while preparing for this test. Moreover, poor "test - management skill" was another factor towards acquiring low band(4.0,5.0,6.0) score overall.

Shohamy et al, (1996) has quite different perspective on effects and hurdles being faced by non-native students of IELTS preparation. She asserts that when teachers focus on teaching , what is testable only and ignore all the areas which are not supposed to appear in the exam to be tested, then it creates high anxiety and fear among students regarding test. Eventually, this anxiety and stress generate difficulties in better comprehension which ultimately leads to below average performance.

Green (2019) is acknowledged among those scholars whose studies are specifically concerned about pedagogical strategies adopted for IELTS preparation. He reviewed the literature in 1993 and agreed on a synthesis that in the preparation of IELTS exam, teaching content carries more weightage than the methodology adopted by IELTS instructors.

Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to evaluate the nature of instruction in an IELTS preparation program in Pakistan. Two IELTS preparing institutes were selected for conducting the study after being granted permission. Marif International and BETS.

Population of the Study

One instructor was interviewed from Marif International and two from BETS (one foreigner and one Pakistani). The questionnaire survey has been conducted on the IELTS test prepares specifically. The foundation of current research study is based on the primary research which is conducted on the basis of observations, questionnaires and the interviews. Data collection is a way of gathering and assembling the required information in order to utilize it for the purpose of analysis and drawing conclusion (Saunders et al, 2009). The data collected here is not only related to the IELTS pedagogy employed for IELTS exam but it will also be an incredible depiction of the behaviours of the students about what they deem and perform during IELTS preparation course in general and in specific circumstances.Besides that, the researcher requested the instructors of IELTS preparation course to conduct observation of their teaching methodologies and class activities as well.

In this research design, one of the paradigms employed is Information- rich paradigm where the IELTS instructor is approached for interview purpose. The reason behind choosing this was simple enough to describe that an IELTS teacher can easily provide the nuggets of information specifically required for the research process. Hence the target population for this paradigm is the IELTS instructors because they are well- equipped towards their teaching methodologies and strategies related to course design.

Whereas the other target population for this research is the participants who are IELTS test preparers. The rationale behind selecting Representative-sampling paradigm is simply to generalize the findings and interpretations of the study to a larger population. The questionnaires are issued to the participants to generalize the findings to a wider target population. A mixed methods approach for the collection of data is more than appropriate because the area of research which is based on IELTS exam in Pakistan is still under-researched.

Analysis and Results

This research study is exploratory in its instinct which allows qualitative research design to proceed with the research process. In respect to this reason qualitative researchers normally collect data over quite an extended period of time and they require to learn more and more about what they are looking and studying during a specific time frame. For more clarity, qualitative researchers utilize interim analysis to maintain a consistent and deeper understanding for their topic of the research study. Hence the data is collected through various tools such as interviews from three IELTS instructors; one from Marif International and two from British Education and Training system known as BETS. Whereas observations are done in IELTS preparatory class and questionnaires are issued among students of IELTS preparers. The collection of data by multiple resources or instruments adds extra vigour to the research. Because in this way the researcher is able to grab ample data that helps refining her research study.

The researcher has observed the eight weeks course for the IELTS preparation by herself. The duration of the class was one and half hour. For the purpose of observation, two IELTS preparatory institutes have been selected. Marif International and second British Educational and Training System known as BETS. These are private institutes directly associated with AEO Australian Education Organization and British Council respectively. The researcher has observed the classes with the sheer aim of observing the pedagogical strategies of IELTS course. During the class it was quite evident from the way students responded to the IELTS instructor. The IELTS class is consisted of both genders, male and females. It was clearly seen that majority of the students were preparing IELTS for the purpose of immigration to foreign countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The specific approach which has been employed in observation was communicative orientation language Teaching Approach (Allen et al,1984). The focus of interest in this approach was the way teachers and students usually interact with each other in a specific course preparation. It has been observed that majority of the respondents were not proficient enough in grammar. Primarily it is due to the insufficient academic training. The methodology employed was instructional oriented from the IELTS instructor's point of view.

During the observation session, students have been found experiencing higher level of anxiety about the IELTS listening and speaking sections' preparation. The criteria of measuring the proficiency level in IELTS speaking is on four levels which are fluency, pronunciation, lexical resources and the grammaticality of the given answer in speaking section. From observation it is quite apparent that other than these linguistic factors, non-linguistic factors cannot be subsided because anxiety among students during the interview section is found prevalent in majority of the IELTS preparers. It is

observed that one of the instructional techniques is the orientation of mock tests in the preparatory class by IELTS instructor. The reason behind the mock test is the inculcation of consistent practice in getting proficient for IELTS speaking and listening tests.

The observation is formulated on the basis of several linguistic and non-linguistic factors among which anxiety is quite prevalent in majority of the IELTS preparers. Other than this anxiety factor , respondents are found flinching during ongoing listening section task whereby they are shown as less oriented towards focused listening. This lack of attention towards listening is due to the distractions coming onto their own minds during ongoing audio-listening session. According to Karashen (1982) the emotive and attitudinal states of the learners are very much important during learning process because these two states define as the Affective filter. Besides anxiety, other negative feelings related to lack of motivation, poor self-esteem act as filter in hindering successful learning of the learner. This affective filter needs to be as low as possible in all educational learning contexts particularly in IELTS preparation so that the preparers for IELTS test tend to be more proficient in English. Moreover, the IELTS preparers usually go off the topic while answering part two of IELTS Speaking section.

Parameters for classroom observation

The classroom observation is done on the basis of following points.

. What are the significant activities in IELTS preparation class?
. What is the nature and content of class teaching materials used in IELTS preparation program?
. What are those linguistic and non-linguistic factors which affect IELTS Listening section preparation?

It is semi-structured observation technique because of the fact that only in this way the participants (IELTS students and instructor) could be observed in their natural context without any interference from the researcher herself too. IELTS preparation class held five days a week for one and half hour each day. Moreover, it is suggested that classroom observations are highly essential for implication study because questionnaires solely cannot capture the classroom activities and the teaching methodologies being utilized in IELTS preparation program.(Alderson & Wall, 1993). Consequently, the classroom observations in this research study are quite expedient as they aimed to investigate the content and nature of IELTS preparation classes including the obstacles experienced by the students (respondents). The researcher has documented almost all the lessons related to speaking and listening preparation through detailed field-notes. Audio-recordings could have succeeded in providing ample data for class lessons without interrupting the interaction between IELTS instructor and the students.

It is worth-mentioning that many institutions and training providers offer IELTS preparation courses in Pakistan due to the emerging trend to get proficient in English to secure better future in social and economic perspective. But majority of these institutes follow tried and true format. According to the observation of the researcher the methodology used for IELTS preparation is not always purely traditional teacher-centric approach with most of the instructions given in L1 (Urdu) because of the below average level of proficiency in English language acquired by Pakistani students (respondents). But also IELTS preparatory classes do involve several elements of the Communicative approach but mostly teacher-centered approach whereby the instructor presents information to the learners, who passively receive the knowledge.

It is quite overt and important to note that almost every Pakistani has Urdu as the first language and that is the reason that majority of the students speak or communicate in L1 which is Urdu. In addition to this, we as human beings probe in the language which is our native Language. While analysing the data, collected from observation it is noted that whenever the respondents had

to communicate in English to the IELTS instructor or with other respondents in English they first think in Urdu and then translate in English to speak in IELTS speaking section. The speaking section of IELTS is consisted of three parts and for this the researcher observed the students on second part of IELTS speaking in which cue card has been given to the student to speak on it for almost 2 minutes. Every student has given a different topic by the IELTS instructor which is randomly selected from the set of cue cards.

It would certainly be very difficult to comprehend any IELTS instructor's intentions behind his teaching activities and methodologies. Nevertheless, the researcher has somehow succeeded in gaining information through observations regarding teaching methodologies. At first place, the IELTS instructor is concerned with students' proficiency level and besides that he is found giving grammatical exercises containing past examination questions. On account of this, it is quite evident from the class responses of the IELTS preparers that they are shown to have several weakness in this specified skill.

As long as the IELTS listening is concerned , listening alone and in combination with speaking skills is the most common skill used by the respondents in both of the institutions; Marif International and in BETS (British English Training System). At Marif International students are not provided with techniques for solving listening questions. For instance when synonyms are used in the audio-recording conversation they are unable to figure out these questions because they expect to hear similar lexicon in the audio-recording as they find in the questions for instance when they hear a bit more advanced lexicons like ' agitated' or a phrasal verb like 'get cracking' because they do not have the meaning for that word in their memory. Therefore, it is evident that the students do not have extensive lexical resources to attempt some questions and this is due to the absence of vocabulary exercises to cater with problems related to lexical resources. The way the IELTS course has been taught in both of these institutes are less similar in terms of pedagogy. In terms of content, the main concern of both of these IELTS preparatory institutes is specifically on meaning, topics classified by COLT as broad. At Marif International the students are not provided with the aid of any BBC or any other English language based programs as observed at BETS. Moreover, Marif International does not have the kind of helping material that BETS has from the British Council because of its highly expensive prices and unavailability in the local markets. Therefore, the reliance is on locally published handbooks like 'Cambridge IELTS'. It is found that two institutes played a less significant role in teaching of language generally. In spite of this fact, upon comparison it is sprung out that a considerable part of these IELTS courses are also grammar and vocabulary-centred.IELTS instructor has used listening exercises taken from the previous IELTS exam papers.

Based on the observational study, it appeared that the teaching methodology, resources, and IELTS practice at BETS are better than Marif International. However, BETS and Marif International were not drastically different in the perspective of practising all four language skills and in their methods of interaction. At BETS, there was an abundant use of audio and video facilities and resources as compared resources at Marif International. BETS uses several different activities such as lexical resources, web designing speed reading which are absent in Marif International. On the other hand, at BETS, the IELTS instructor has used multi-media several times to show documentaries for the purpose of improving their English listening. Besides that there are activities engaging students in group discussions during class sessions.

The second phase of data collection is the questionnaire survey which has been issued among the IELTS preparers (respondents). The questionnaire is aimed at participants, specifically preparing for IELTS exam for receiving tertiary education or for the purpose of immigration to any English speaking region. The survey is conducted to get an insight into the difficulties faced by Pakistani students during IELTS preparation. The other motive of the researcher behind this questionnaire

survey is to explore how the learning and teaching strategies affect students' preparation for IELTS exam.

The questionnaire is designed by the researcher and it is consisted of 7 close ended questions and 1 open-ended question. The results showed that there are 32 male and 18 female participants of average ages 26 to 24 among 50 respondents which are preparing for IELTS exam. In other words, 64% of the male and 36% of females were the respondents in questionnaire survey. It is also important to mention that the overall interest of the female respondents was low as compared to the male respondents and probably this was due to the lesser strength of females comparatively or there could be a slight possibility of the fact that males respondents has viewed the questionnaire carefully as compared to the female candidates.

From the results of the current study through the classroom observations, interviews from IELTS instructors and through the questionnaire survey, it can be clearly seen that getting proficiency in English language is perceived to be a ticket to any socio-economic status by Pakistanis. However, students belonging to affluent family backgrounds obtain access to better educational institutes and their ample exposure to the English language leads them to be more proficient in English and securing higher band in IELTS exam. Private education in Pakistan continues in various forms which have taken root in the present education system (Patel, 2008) and this fact can be seen in growing number of people enrolling in IELTS preparatory institutes.

Due to the prior research in the current field specifically in Pakistan, the researcher collected primary data by surveying two private institutes. She sampled small number of students (N=50) from two institutes for general views and questionnaire survey because it was not practically possible to have a larger number of sample size mainly because on average the maximum number of students for IELTS exam is not more than 40 to 50 per session. However, the qualitative data extracted from the first phase of the primary resource of the study highlighted certain results which needed further exploration through questionnaires.

In addition to that, through questionnaire surveys it has been found out that IELTS preparatory institutes only provide guidelines for attempting the IELTS exam but the only thing that can be helpful in getting higher band is depending on the duration of time they spend for practising English as a whole. Majority of the students are found guilty for not understanding different accents beings used in the audio-recording of IELTS Listening section. The lack of phonological awareness and the inability to decode sounds or draw word boundaries are observed as major hindrances to listening (Kiany & Shiramiry, 2002).

Interestingly, the majority of the respondents believe that taking and passing IELTS exam is equivalent to learning English and it is another misconception among Pakistanis which was evident when one of the IELTS instructors in BETS told the researcher that even highly qualified MBBS doctors have failed in getting the required IELTS band which is mainly due to the non-English environment in Pakistani educational system where a doctor who is considered to be one of the highly qualified personnel could not make it up. However, considering the observational and questionnaire surveys into account, this would not be unjust to say that IELTS exam is holding a significant impact on education in Pakistan, where a whole lot of people are depending on the IELTS test even if they do not plan to go to abroad for any study or immigration purpose.

To add into it, Pakistani students feel that English education including the IELTS exam act as fuel that drives their socio-economic development. Pakistani students seek help from Official Cambridge guide books and some substitute on-line study materials in which IELTS with LIZ and IELTS Buddy are the most prominent and frequently used study guides. Moreover, the researcher herself

has got help from these online study tutorials as an IELTS student as she went into the protocol analysis while doing observational study for the current research.

As far as the comparison regarding teaching strategies are concerned, it is noted upon classroom observations at BETS and Marif International and interviews with their teachers N=3, along with the questionnaire responses of students preparing for IELTS that there is a drastic difference in the use of textbooks and teaching materials between these two institutions. The teaching methodology is more of test oriented at Marif International with little emphasis on local editions of IELTS Cambridge textbooks whereas on the other side of spectrum BETS used international textbooks other than Cambridge like Collins. In addition to that, It also use a variety of supplementary teaching materials on their IELTS preparation course like online practice materials, newspapers, magazines and BBC reports.

Discussion

It is observed that tudents in Pakistan are not told how to learn to listen. For example, most listening is done for non-listening purposes such as adding grammar or lexicons, checking comprehension without ever telling how to comprehend, and being familiar with various accents. No one will pretend to use listening in class "to teach students to listen more effectively," as Thorn (2009) puts it. It is common knowledge that measuring an ability without first teaching it is not suitable for writing, reading, or speaking, and should not be acceptable for listening.

This fact is elucidated by Brown, who believes that playing audio and asking comprehension questions, or even playing audio and asking them to complete tasks, is nothing more than a form of checking (Brown, 2011, 36). When it comes to IELTS Listening, the only prerequisite that students must meet is an intensive approach to listening, which entails a more oriented approach to listening directions.

Based on a study of these private institutes and classroom observations at both institutes, it was estimated that BETS students would substantially outperform their Marif peers in class tasks relevant to IELTS training. However, classroom observational instruments indicate that BETS and Marif International are not substantially dissimilar in terms of learning speech and listening skills as well as interpersonal strategies, with the exception of audio-video opportunities, which are somewhat restricted in Marif In comparison to Marif International, BETS attracts more fluent English speakers as a result of their initial screening exams ESL 1, ESL 2, ESL 3, ESL 4. However, based on the results of the interviews with IELTS professors, it appears that they do not have any clear credentials related to IELTS preparation, despite being more fluent English language speakers. To summarise, these are the results drawn from the observations, which were derived using a mixed method methodology. Also the results of the questionnaires are summarized below.

However, in response to open ended question, 77% explained that in IELTS listening task they feel difficulty when exposed to different accents of English language. This section has some multiple choice questions which requires them to listen the audio-recording attentively. While 23% responded that locating the correct option from the map representation is also one of the challenging tasks of listening section.

Its is true to assert that listening comprehension is a demanding task for language learners, and purposeful assessment scenarios enable learners to be in charge of their listening progress by self evaluating their performance while the teacher tries to monitor their learning behaviours (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005). Language tests are never for testing purposes only. But they certainly carry social, economic, and political implications for all those involved in the testing process. And as long as English remains the global lingua franca it is today, English language testing is inescapable (Chen & Hu, 2020).

Table. 1 Results of the Questionnaire

	Questions from questionnaire	Scale	Male	Female	*Frequency*	*Percentage %*
Q1	At what extent do you agree or disagree that listening section of IELTS require more proficiency in English Language?	Strongly agree	8	4	12	24.00%
		Partially agree	9	0	9	18.00%
		Agree	5	7	12	24.00%
		Disagree	6	3	9	18.00%
		Partially disagree	0	4	4	8.00%
		Strongly disagree	4	0	4	8.00%
Q2	How do you rate the level of knowledge, behavior and presentation of your IELTS instructor?	Poor	0	0	0	0.00%
		Good	4	2	6	12.00%
		Better	10	0	10	20.00%
		Excellent	18	16	34	68.00%
Q3	Is the only reliance on learning Essential tips sufficient for Getting higher band in IELTS?	NO	30	17	4	94.00%
		YES	2	1	3	6.00%
Q4	How do you assess yourself in Listening when it comes to understand the name, date, descriptions, maps and instruction Being played in an audio-recording?	Not at all	2	1	3	6.00%
		Not at all	12	9	21	42.00%
		Well	10	6	16	32.00%
		Very well	8	2	10	20.00%
Q5	How many hours do you spend on your listening preparation lesson?	20	10	10	20	40.00%
		20	15	5	20	40.00%
		10	7	3	10	20.00%
		0	0	0	0	0.00%
Q6	To what extent do you supplement the course material with material from the other recourse?	Never	1	1	2	4.00%
		Occasionally	11	8	19	38.00%
		Sometime	20	9	29	58.00%
Q7	How important do you think is practicing Listening task for IELTS preparation?	Not important	48	2	2	4.00%
		Very important			48	96.00%

Additionally, continues use of podcasting and vodcasting technology not only incorporate freedom to obtain exposure to the target language anywhere,anytime but also provide examples of real-life English use on multiple topics (Gonulal, 2020). It is pedagogically suggested for language teachers to not only become familiar with the digital resources available as podcasts and vodcasts that cater the needs of learners but also to incorporate them as a part of their instructional practices.

Limitations of the study

This study is limited to Listening section of the International English Language Testing System only excluding Speaking, Reading and Writing sections.

Conclusion

The bottom line of the results derived from the current study have revealed elaborately that in Pakistan, the dominant paradigm for listening instruction is test oriented rather than on learning how to listen effectively. However, this is mainly due to the old-fashioned rote learning approach of which Pakistani students have been victimized since their earlier schooling and until and unless these ineffective pre-existing pedagogical trends are not wiped off from Pakistani English language teaching, the students would not pick up English speaking and listening skills not only for International English Language Testing system (IELTS) exam but on other internationally recognized platforms as well.

Learners are considered as the first beneficiary of this study. Learners can only overcome their listening challenges only when they are exposed to practices and interactive learning environment. When learners are aware of their listening skills, they can take essential action to solve the possible deficiencies listening as well as strengthening their listening ability.(Ghorbanpour, E., Abbasian, G. R., & Mohseni, A. (2021).

It is also observed that the conventional Pakistani Education system encourages rote learning in which students remain dependent on their teachers from their early education. However, this may not be the case entirely because from the response of the respondents it is concluded that they undertake some practice at home as well. Besides that the private learning institutes including local or international institutes have started attracting considerable number of students for IELTS preparation because of the increasing trend of study abroad which has resulted in economic opportunities for IELTS preparation providers.

With the results and discussion of the current study in mind, the following guidelines are provided for enhancing the English language proficiency of Pakistani students in order to obtain a higher band score in the IELTS test. It has been proposed that not only can they achieve the requisite band in the IELTS test, but that their overall English language proficiency can also be significantly increased. In addition, this research would assist in better comprehension and consideration of approaches to improve English language teaching, learning, methodologies, resources, and practises. However, the researcher had only gathered primary data for analysis due to a lack of previous research in the current sense of the study, especially in Pakistan. At the undergraduate or postgraduate level, there must be lectures and associated workshops related to English language proficiency. Furthermore, audio lessons for students at the college or university level are needed so that Pakistani students become accustomed to listening to English. In essence, there is an urgent need to replace Pakistan's rote learning system with a more communicative approach to learning.

It is proposed that classrooms that respect listening do more than just teach students how to be effective listeners. Teachers must specifically instruct, delegate, and evaluate listening in order to provide input. They should also make listening an engaging activity in which students are required to produce something as a result of their listening.

As a whole, the fact that one must listen closely in order to produce speech in the same language cannot be ignored. The researcher goes on to say that there is a strong need for intense and thorough listening in order to understand how to become a skilled listener. She recommends that students develop the practise of always listening, along with an approach that lets them concentrate on sounds and words, which aids in the construction of meaning through the activation of prior experience and the comprehension of sounds. Pakistani students should brag about their listening abilities and gain useful information through a variety of methods including extensive and intensive listening procedures with active listening practice rather than passive.

Outside of the classroom, extensive listening takes place without the supervision of a teacher as an autonomous learner. It can happen in the students' homes, cars, or on their personal stereos or mobile devices like smart-phones when they commute from one location to another. They should, for example, listen to TED TALKS from various genres. In intense listening, on the other hand, the task of the teacher cannot be underestimated, as he must develop his students' trust by assisting them in listening effectively rather than solely evaluating their listening skills.

Listening journals are one of the methods that the researcher can discuss when keeping it into consideration. A listening diary is a book in which students keep track of their comprehensive and rigorous listening habits, as well as their thoughts on the experience (Anthony Schmidt, 2016). When transitioning from comprehensive to intense listening instruction, students should concentrate on interpreting or other similar skills to help shape their listening ability. There are some activities that can help you learn how to be a better listener. For starters, a gap-filling exercise in which students are given the opportunity to complete texts by transcriptions is extremely beneficial.

Furthermore, students may practise pronunciation by focusing on mimicry or contrast, such as selecting brief clips of 10 to 20 seconds from every audio file and listening to and repeating these clips carefully, aspiring to copy the sounds and tone of the original speaker. They will capture their voices and compare their pronunciation by listening to both the original and the captured version.

In terms of lexical opportunities, students can discover new words in their listening practise and carry this vocabulary back to the classroom to be integrated and shared with other practises, which can be beneficial not only in IELTS listening but also in communicating. As a result, Pakistani students cannot be good listeners until they are exposed to a wide range of English listening content, with a particular emphasis on the sounds, lexicons, and phrases that make up this input.

Moreover, giving students ten seconds before calling on someone gives them time to think about their answers before voicing them aloud. Second, concise but informative narratives that illustrate the core theme and some key points presented during the audio recording. This technique assists learners in rehearsing what they've learned and voicing what they found most interesting right away.

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