

Strategies for improving English language Listening Skill (The Case of Distract BANNU)

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Abstract

This study aims to provide some innovative strategies for improving listening skill of English Language of secondary level students at district Bannu. Effective Listening in English language, guiding the students towards effective oral communication, is the problem with all the ESL students at secondary level and as such it creates problem for English language teachers. The objective of the study was to help the English language teachers and students to overcome this problem by showing the results of application of innovative strategies for improving English language listening skill. Specifically, this study aims to guide the teachers of district Bannu to bring innovation in their teaching and thus enable their students to overcome their listening problem. For this purpose, first of all, data was collected from English Language teachers of secondary level in order to know about the steps taken for the improvement of listening skill of their students. The data was collected through rating scale questionnaire. After that an experimental study was carried out for which a 10th grade class was selected. For the collection of data t-test was used. Results indicated that a visible change occurred in the listening skill of the treatment group, after the application of innovative strategies on this group. Hence it proved that the application of innovative strategies for improving listening skill had a very positive impact on the students.

Keywords: Listening Skills, English Language, Innovative Strategies, t- Test.

I- Introduction

According to Eli Hinkel (2006), TESOL has been a field that continues on changing and it will remain so in future as well. With the passage of time new areas are discovered in this field. This field is mainly concerned with what to teach and how to teach English as a second language. According to Bradley & Bryant (1983), the awareness about the Phonological aspect of the language is to understand that oral language can further be broken up into individual words. These words are then broken into syllables, and syllables in turn are then broken into individual sounds. A qualitative analyses shows that better listener focused more on key information ('selective attention'). Their general approach was much more of a 'top down' one, while less effective listeners were more reliant on strategies for word by word decoding ('bottom-up' strategies) (O Malley and Chamot, 1990). The 'top-down' process of listening activates previous knowledge. The listener's store of background information can relate to the context, the topic, the type of text, conventions of rhetoric and discourse organization. This prior knowledge becomes helpful in decoding a message even when the message has not been heard in its entirety (Peterson, 2001). Knowledge of facts and expectations allow prediction and inferencing that bring the listeners to a position to bypass some aspects of bottom-up processing (Chaudron and Richards, 1986). This facilitates the listeners to fill in the gaps which are often there in spontaneous unrehearsed speech. It helps them to arrive at global meanings and interpretations which do not depend on comprehension of every subsection of the message. Thus listeners can more often get a meaning just from the context and their knowledge of key words without paying any attention to grammatical form. 'Bottom-up' process, according to Peterson (2001) is the lower level process that operates to construct meaning from recognition of sounds and words, which, when judged, are fit into larger phrasal units and then are matched with related ideas which are stored in long term memory. Donald E Powers (2010) is of the opinion that to most users of the English Language what matters is the overall ability to communicate effectively in the language rather than mastering a distinct skill.

II Literature Review

According to Lindsay Miller (2003), one of the major advancements to come out of research into listening strategies was the understanding that listening exercises could be divided into three main parts: pre-listening, while-listening and post listening activities. This division has proved very fruitful for the learners as well as teachers. For example, in the pre-listening stage a teacher can start a short discussion with the learners with the aim to know about their views about the topic which s/he is going to start. In this way s/he will be activating their world/personal knowledge about the topic. Then the learners can be asked to share whatever information they got from the text in an extended discussion in the post-listening stage. In between these two stages the

learners can be given help to remain focused on their listening by careful selection of tasks that are meaningful and that cater to developing specific listening skills. Lindsay Miller gives some practical suggestions as how these divisions can be used with authentic materials delivered through technological media like radio, television, and internet/CD-ROM. About the use of radio Miller contends that using real time radio is one of the more easily accessible forms of authentic listening practice in a class room that a teacher can give to his/her learners. Being cheaper in price, all the teachers can afford it. Secondly, it can be easily taken to the class room. Airwaves are filled with programs twenty four hours per day and radio stations like BBC and Voice of America are constantly on air. In order to use radio in a class room a teacher can select a suitable program on some global listening tasks for his/her learners. Similarly about the use of TV/Videos in a classroom Miller argues that activities with television/videos can also be divided into three main parts: pre-listening, while-listening and post listening. The use of TV/Videos in a class room can also give learners a good practice of listening. They have an upper hand over the radio as here they can also see what is happening, in addition to listening to the text. Students often watch movies for entertainment. A teacher, in a language class room, can sensitize the learners to how they can make use of movies to help them develop their second language listening skill. Miller further says that a rapid increase is noticed in the development of internet facilities and CD-ROMs. This has enabled the teachers to direct the learners to sites on the internet where they can practice their listening. Youngsters are very much interested in the use of computers. So this interest can be utilized in improving their listening skill. Strategy can be planned by suggesting to the learners a creative discussion about the news.

The strategy with the use of radio as discussed by Lindsay Miller is very practical and applicable. Although the use of radio and television is not something new, but in the classrooms at district Bannu they are not used by the teachers. The use of radio, inside the class room, will prove helpful as activity with it will not only prove handy for the teachers but will also remove the monotony. Students feel boredom from the same routine followed throughout the week. Hence the listening activity performed with radio will be welcomed by the students. This research will apply practically activities like this one in order to show the difference between teaching using innovative strategies and without such strategies. The activities of pre, while, and post listening with television can prove very helpful to the teachers for improving the listening skill of the students, especially in the weekends. This activity will be applied in this research. Activities with internet/CD-ROM are very useful but unfortunately majority of the students at district Bannu do not have this facility.

One of the reasons why listening is not given proper attention by the teachers seems to be the fact that listening skill is considered as passive skill. Joan Morley argues that listening has been labeled as a passive skill though it is not so. Anderson and Lynch (1988) also hold the same view and reject the concept of listening as a passive act by terming listener as a 'tape recorder'. Morley stresses that students must also be realized the fact that listening is not a passive skill. Hence it is the duty of the teachers to guide the learners to realize that achieving skill in listening requires as much hard work as required to become skilled in reading, speaking and writing. According to Morley, considering the role played by us in listening, the three specific communicative listening modes can be identified as: bidirectional, unidirectional and autodirectional. In bidirectional mode two or more participants take their turns and play the role of speaker and listener. In unidirectional listening mode auditory input comes from variety of sources and, more often, we show reaction to that input by talking to ourselves and analyze whatever we hear. In autodirectional listening mode, we attend to our own internal language while we plan something in our mind and make decision. These modes constitute an important language behavior and should be discussed with the students. While discussing the development of listening comprehension activities and materials, Morley stresses three principles to be followed by the teachers. These principles are the principles of: relevance, transferability/applicability and task orientation. By the principle of relevance it is meant that the listening lesson content and its outcome should be as relevant to the learner as possible. This factor will motivate the students and they will remain very much attentive while listening to the information. The lesson will appeal to students very much if the lesson focuses on things from real life. In the self-created class room listening activities, it is very much easy to control relevance. However with published materials, it is necessary for the teacher to select those lessons which are relevant to the students. By transferability/applicability it is meant that the content and outcome of the lesson used for the activity should be such that it can be used by the students in other classes as well as in out of school situations. For example the activity with radio or TV broadcasts serves the purpose not only for listening comprehension but its content can be used for discussion outside the school. In the task orientation, tasks are assigned to the students after the listening activity and the success of the listening activity is judged from the performance of the tasks by the students. So far as listening instructional activities are concerned Morley recommends Listen-and-Do format for listening instructional activities in the ESL or EFL curriculum. It implies an outcome objective. "Outcome", according to Sinclair, is a realistic task that people can envision themselves doing and accomplishing something. Morley discusses six broad categories of outcome. These outcome categories are:

1- Listening and performing Actions and Operations: In this category a response is shown by the listeners to things like directions, instruction and descriptions in various contexts. For example listening and drawing a

picture, figure, locating routes of specific points on a map, operating a piece of equipment etc.

2- Listening and transferring information: There are two kinds of information transfer which are: Spoken-to-written and spoken-to-spoken. In spoken-to-written information one writes while hearing information, while in spoken-to-spoken one hears the information and transmits it in speech. Activities for spoken-to-written practice include: listening to somebody and taking a message (in person or by telephone), in a gapped story game, where the purpose is to complete the story, listening to the teacher and filling in the blanks, Listening to the teacher and summarizing the gist of a short story etc.

3- Listening and solving Problems: Various activities, belonging to this category, can be performed by a teacher. These activities include: word games in which the answer is derived from verbal clues, “twenty questions”, “animal”, “Vegetable” or “Animal”, a jigsaw mystery etc.

4- Listening, Evaluating, and Manipulating Information: These outcomes challenge the intellect of the listener where the listener evaluates the information received. For example making predictions from information received.

5- Interactive Listening-and-Speaking: Negotiating Meaning through Questioning/Answering Routines: The focus of the outcome is both to transmit the information as well as negotiate meaning in interactive listener/speaker exchanges. It is suggested that the activity may be started in small groups, containing four to ten students. A student can give presentation on some announcement or some personal story or anything else of interest to the students. Either during or soon after the presentation is over, each listener is supposed to ask at least one question in a question/answer mode. It means that speaker, too, will play a double role of a speaker as well as a listener. Some examples of the question from listener are: “Could you repeat the part of your statement xx?” “I could not get, could you say that again?”, “Did I understand you to say that xx?”, “Could you give us an example of xx?”, “Could you tell more about xx?”

6- Listening for Enjoyment, Pleasure, and Sociability: Activities in this outcome include: listening to songs, stories, plays, poems, jokes or, as suggested by Ur, “general interesting chat improvised by the teacher” (1984, p29). “teacher-talk” according to Ur, on personal topics like hobbies, future plans, and local issues can give students a relaxing break from more intensive work. It will give students both listening as well as speaking practice

Unfortunately listening skill is not given any attention by the secondary level teachers at district Bannu. The points raised by Morley are very valid and they must be given attention by the teachers if they want to improve the listening skill of their students. The communicative modes, discussed by Morley, are very important and must be discussed by teachers with their students. Teachers must design activities for improving the listening skill of the students and in those activities they must give due consideration to the principles as pointed out by Morley. In this connection the principle of relevance is most important. The “outcome” categories are very interesting and will be applied in this research.

Generally speaking, various techniques in L2 listening instruction have withstood the test of time and they are considered very essential, for example, pre-listening, listening for main idea, listening intensively and making inferences (Eli Hinkel, 2006). According to Hinkel, in the 1990s a number of studies pointed out the difficulties which the learners experience while coping with comprehension problems and making inferences. In this connection researchers have taken great interest in metacognitive and cognitive strategies of successful L2 listeners (e.g., Rost & Ross, 1991; Vandergrift 1999, 2004). The findings of their research advocate the teaching of metacognitive and cognitive strategies especially for L2 listening comprehension. Some of the important metacognitive strategies that are adopted in L2 listening instruction widely are: planning for listening, self-monitoring the comprehension process, evaluating comprehension, and identifying comprehension difficulties (e.g., Rost 2005, for a discussion).

Metacognitive and cognitive strategies, as discussed in the above paragraph, have given very positive result in the foreign countries. They can also give promising results if applied in district Bannu.

Research indicates that the students who are better placed in the listening comprehension are due to the fact that they acquired effective learning strategies (Oxford 1990: 8). Murphy (1985) discovered that effective listeners used a great number and range of strategies. They also showed greater flexibility in their approach. Weaker listener, according to him, concentrated too much on either the text or on their own world knowledge. But with the passage of time the fact emerged that it was not the number of strategies employed that was crucial, but the manner in which they were employed (Suzana Graham-2003). It has also been claimed that it is unhelpful to talk about ‘good’ or ‘bad’ strategies. More often less effective students use the same kind of strategies as are used by effective ones, but often in isolation from other strategies and on tasks where their use is inappropriate (Graham 1997). Innovation was brought by the work of O’Malley, Chamot and colleagues who added theoretical frame work to the learner strategies. This application of theoretical frame work was missing in the earlier studies (Suzana Graham-2003). They presented learner strategies as complex cognitive skills and categorized them as metacognitive, cognitive or social/affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies have been defined as ‘... higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity’.

Cognitive strategies are those that ‘...operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning’. Social/affective strategies are ‘interaction with another person or ideational control over affect’ (O’ Malley and Chamot, 1990). This division of strategies into metacognitive and cognitive changed the focus of later studies. For example Chamot and Kiipper (1989) reported that among Russian university level students, comprehension monitoring and problem-identification (metacognitive strategies) were more frequently used by effective listeners as compared to ineffective listeners. In a research conducted by Vandergrift (1997), where he looks at the difference between the successful and less successful listeners at four different levels of competence, he concludes that greater use of metacognitive strategies characterizes more successful listeners. These strategies include: comprehension monitoring, problem identification and selective attention. The above discussion shows that in Russia, at university level, effective listeners used metacognitive strategies. The research of Vandergrift (1997) also showed that a greater use of metacognitive strategies characterized more successful listeners. Unfortunately in district Bannu no such strategies are applied by the teachers. This research is an attempt to introduce the teachers with these strategies.

III METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The research design adopted in this study was experimental research design. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) defined experimental research simply as a study in which participants are placed in groups randomly. They undergo various treatments imposed on them by the researcher. In order to assess the effects of the treatments, observations are then followed (p. 108). The most commonly used experimental design is the pretest-posttest design with control group (Campbell & Stanley, 1963 as qtd in Yair Levy and Timothy J. Ellis, 2011). For the collection of data 10th grade class of a government high school was selected and its 40 students were divided into two groups randomly on the bases of pre-test. These groups were termed as Treatment group and Control group respectively. The Treatment group was taught for one month by applying the strategies suggested by Joan Morley (2002) and Miller (2003). The Control group, on the other hand, was taught by using the method which was traditionally used in the classrooms. After a month both the groups were re-examined with the help of posttests. In order to check the improvement in the listening skill of treatment and Control groups, their pre and post-tests were compared and the final result was calculated using t-test.

In terms of methodology, this research was quantitative in nature. In qualitative research one does not arrive at findings by means of statistical procedures (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17). On the contrary in quantitative research, one arrives at the findings by means of statistical procedures. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people construct meaning and how they make sense of their world (Merriam, 1998, p. 6)

B. Research Instruments

In order to get knowledge about teachers’ practices inside the classroom for improving listening skill of the students; rating scale questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was self developed. This research tool was developed under the supervision of research and language experts. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of items related to basic information of the respondents like age, gender, qualification, and the institutions where they were teaching. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of Likert-styled items, related to listening skill. For validity, the questionnaire was given to 10 language and research experts. Their valuable suggestions and recommendations were incorporated. For reliability the questionnaire was personally administered to 10 English Language teachers as pilot study. The collected data was analyzed through SPSS 16. The reliability of the questionnaire found was .82 which was reasonable.

Another tool, used for the collection of data in the study, was Pre and post tests. These tests were developed on the bases of ideas taken from the strategies suggested by Morley (2002), Miller (2003).

C. Mode of Data Collection

In this research primary data was required. Primary research, according to Clarke, R.J. (2005), is a study of a subject through first hand observation and investigation while secondary research involves the examination of studies of other researchers. For literature review, material was collected from research journals and books available in the libraries and on internet. Primary data was obtained through questionnaire and pre and posttests.

D. Population

Population of this study consisted of all the secondary level teachers and students at district Bannu.

E. Sample

Out of 88 high schools in the public sector; 16 schools, 8 urban and 8 rural, were randomly selected. Out of the total number of selected schools 50% were boys while 50% were girls’ schools. A questionnaire was distributed among the teachers, two teachers from each school. Thus out of the population 32 teachers, 16 male and 16 female, were taken as a sample in this study. For this purpose stratified sample followed by proportion allocation technique was followed. As experimental study was conducted in the second part of the study, a sample of 40 students was taken which was randomly divided into Treatment group and Control group.

F. Data Analysis Techniques

Two types of data were collected in this study. One was the data collected from questionnaire and the other was collected from pre and posttests. For the analysis of data, collected from questionnaire, percentage was used. Similarly for the analysis of pre and posttests, independent sample t-test was used.

G. Hypothesis

The study is based on the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: Innovative strategies do not play a significant role in improving the listening skill of English language of Secondary level stu

IV DATA ANALYSIS

In order to know the reasons for the poor listening comprehension of the students a survey was conducted. The purpose of the survey was to know about the practices of the English teachers inside the classroom for improving the listening skill of the students. For this purpose a questionnaire was distributed among the teachers of public sectors high schools. The details of the questionnaire and findings got from this questionnaire are discussed below.

Table 1.1 Reading aloud a paragraph or two before explanation

| Statement | | Urban | | | | Rural | | | |
|---|----|-----------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
| | | Frequency | | Percentage | | Frequency | | Percentage | |
| | | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Practicing a strategy of reading aloud a paragraph or two before explaining them. | SA | 02 | 02 | 25 % | 25 % | 01 | 01 | 12.5 % | 12.5 % |
| | A | 01 | 0 | 12.5 | 0 % | 0 | 01 | 0 % | 12.5 % |
| | UD | 0 | 01 | 0 % | 12.5 % | 01 | 01 | 12.5 % | 12.5 % |
| | D | 01 | 01 | 12.5% | 12.5 % | 02 | 02 | 25 % | 25 % |
| | SD | 04 | 04 | 50 % | 50 % | 04 | 03 | 50 % | 37.5 % |
| Total | | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100% | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100 % |

The table 1.1 shows that in the urban area 25 % male and 25 % female teachers follow the technique of reading aloud a paragraph or two, while in rural area this technique is followed by 12.5 % male and 12.5 % female teachers.

Table 1.2 Encouraging students to listen to English News at their homes

| Statement | | Urban | | | | Rural | | | |
|--|----|-----------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
| | | Frequency | | Percentage | | Frequency | | Percentage | |
| | | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Encouraging students to listen to English News at their homes. | SA | 02 | 01 | 25 % | 12.5 % | 0 | 0 | 0 % | 0 % |
| | A | 0 | 01 | 0 % | 12.5 % | 0 | 0 | 0 % | 0 % |
| | UD | 0 | 0 | 0 % | 0 | 01 | 02 | 12.5 % | 25 % |
| | D | 02 | 03 | 25 % | 37.5 % | 03 | 03 | 37.5 % | 37.5 % |
| | SD | 04 | 03 | 50 % | 37.5 % | 04 | 03 | 50 % | 37.5 % |
| Total | | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100% | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100 % |

The table 1.2 shows that in the urban area 25 % percent male and 12.5 % female teachers performed the activity and assigned the task to the students of listening to English news at their homes. In the rural area no male and female teacher assigned the task to the students of listening to English news at their homes.

Table 1.3 Encouraging students to watch English plays and movies at home

| Statement | | Urban | | | | Rural | | | |
|---|----|-----------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
| | | Frequency | | Percentage | | Frequency | | Percentage | |
| | | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Encouraging students to watch English plays and movies at home. | SA | 01 | 01 | 12.5% | 12.5 % | 0 | 0 | 0 % | 0 % |
| | A | 01 | 0 | 12.5% | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| | UD | 01 | 0 | 12.5% | 0 % | 0 | 0 | 0 % | 0 % |
| | D | 02 | 03 | 25 % | 37.5 % | 03 | 02 | 37.5 % | 25 % |
| | SD | 03 | 04 | 37.5% | 50 % | 05 | 06 | 62.5 % | 75 % |
| Total | | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100% | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100 % |

The table 1.3 shows that in the urban area 12.5% male and 12.5 % female teachers tried to improve the listening skill of their students by assigning them the task of watching English plays and movies. In the rural area no male

and female teacher assigned students the task of watching English plays and movies.

Table 1.4 Giving all the instructions to students in English

| Statement | | Urban | | | | Rural | | | |
|---|----|-----------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
| | | Frequency | | Percentage | | Frequency | | Percentage | |
| | | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| giving all the instructions to students in English. | SA | 02 | 02 | 25 % | 25 % | 01 | 01 | 12.5 % | 12.5 % |
| | A | 01 | 0 | 12.5 | 0 % | 0 | 01 | 0 % | 12.5 % |
| | UD | 0 | 01 | 0 % | 12.5 % | 01 | 0 | 12.5 % | 0 % |
| | D | 01 | 01 | 12.5% | 12.5 % | 02 | 03 | 25 % | 37.5 % |
| | SD | 04 | 04 | 50 % | 50 % | 04 | 03 | 50 % | 37.5 % |
| Total | | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100% | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100 % |

The table 1.4 shows that in the urban area 25 % male and 25 % female teachers gave instructions to students in English language. In the rural area 12.5 % male and 12.5 % female teachers gave instructions to students in English language.

1.5 Making use of electronic media like radio, TV in English class to improve the listening skill of students

In response to this statement all the respondents agreed that they did not make use of electronic media in the class room.

Table 1.6 Encouraging students to re tell the story in the target language in English class

| Statement | | Urban | | | | Rural | | | |
|--|----|-----------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
| | | Frequency | | Percentage | | Frequency | | Percentage | |
| | | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Encouraging students to re tell the story in the target language in English class. | SA | 02 | 01 | 25 % | 12.5 % | 01 | 01 | 12.5 % | 12.5 % |
| | A | 01 | 02 | 12.5% | 25 % | 0 | 01 | 0 % | 12.5 % |
| | UD | 0 | 0 | 0 % | 0 % | 01 | 01 | 12.5 % | 12.5 % |
| | D | 02 | 03 | 25 % | 37.5% | 02 | 02 | 25 % | 25 % |
| | SD | 03 | 02 | 37.5% | 25% | 04 | 03 | 50 % | 37.5 % |
| Total | | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100% | 08 | 08 | 100 % | 100 % |

The table 1.6 shows that in the urban area 25% male and 12.5% female teachers encouraged students to re-tell the story in the target language. In the rural area 12.5% male and 12.5% female teachers encouraged students to re-tell the story in the target language.

4.2.1 Analysis of the data

The above data shows that one of the main reasons responsible for the poor listening comprehension of the students is the practices of the teachers inside the class room. The data shows that no proper attention is given by teachers of Bannu district to improve the listening skill of their students. Listening plays an important role in learning any language. The data also shows that no proper strategies are applied by the teachers to improve listening skill of the students. The same was the situation in other countries in the past as well. But they came forward with some effective strategies and the problem was solved to a greater extent. For example Graham (1997) argues that research was carried out for many years on students' perception of different skill areas and, for them, "listening comprehension was the area in which they felt they had experienced the most difficulty." Research also indicates that the students who are better placed in the listening comprehension are due to the fact that they acquired effective learning strategies (Oxford 1990). All the four skills play an important role in learning any language. The same is the case with the English language too. But the prevailing condition in the society is such that students do not get proper opportunity to listen to and speak the language. In the society and at their homes the medium of communication is Pashto. Outside the schools majority of the students do not get an opportunity to listen to and speak a single word of the language. Inside the boundaries of schools in classes other than English, students most of the time listen and speak either Pashto or their National language Urdu. Thus out of 24 hours, the teacher in English is left with only 35 minutes in which the teachers have to make them master in all the four skills. But as those 35 minutes are also not utilized properly by the teachers, no improvement in the listening skill of the students is taking place.

Data shows that teachers are not making use of electronic media in the classroom or outside the classroom as an assignment. Although the use of radio and television is not something new, but activities performed with them can prove very handy. Such activities will not only prove handy for the teachers but will also remove the monotony. Students feel boredom from the same routine followed throughout the week. Hence the listening activity performed with radio and television will be welcomed by the students. If, in case a teacher selects a

program like news on BBC or VOA, students will also get acquaintance with the accents of the native speakers of the language. Some of the teachers belonging to urban area; perform the activities with the television by giving them tasks of watching English plays and movies. But majority of the teachers do not practice this activity. Many reasons can be responsible for it. Most of the time students abhor anything which is connected with test. But Lindsay Miller (2003) suggests that no tests should be involved in the activity. In the beginning the process is very boring as it is very much difficult for the beginner to catch the speaker in the movies or in the news. But a teacher should not be disappointed rather s/he should encourage his/her students. Definitely there will be students who are not in a position to recognize and understand a single word but, at the same time, there will be students who could narrate a major portion of the story. So a teacher should not be discouraged but s/he should continue his/her practice and, very soon, s/he will feel the difference. Similarly, if a teacher feels that students are getting bored with the same activity time and again, s/he should change the activity.

One of the reasons why listening is not given proper attention by the teachers of the district seems to be the fact that listening skill is considered as passive skill. Joan Morley argues that listening has been labeled as a passive skill though it is not so. Anderson and Lynch (1988) also hold the same view and reject the concept of listening as a passive act by terming listener as a 'tape recorder'. Morley stresses that students must also be realized the fact that listening is not a passive skill. Hence it is the duty of the teachers to guide the learners to realize that achieving skill in listening requires as much hard work as required to become skilled in reading, speaking and writing. While discussing the development of listening comprehension activities and materials, Morley stresses three principles to be followed by the teachers. These principles are the principles of: relevance, transferability/applicability and task orientation.

The responses of the teachers in the above questionnaire clearly indicates that one of the main reasons, responsible for the poor listening skill of the students, is the flaw in the teaching methodology of the teachers. No systematic approach is adopted by the teachers to improve the listening skill of the students. In order to help the teachers improve the situation, an experimental study was conducted. The purpose of the study was to see whether there comes any improvement in the listening skill of the students or not.

4.2.2 Testing of Hypothesis

In order to check whether the application of innovative strategies for improving the listening skill of the students in English language classroom at secondary level, make any difference or not; an experimental study was carried out. For this purpose a 10th grade class of a government high school was selected and the strategies suggested by Morley and a strategy with television suggested by Miller (2003) were applied. The procedure of the strategies and their results are given below.

4.2.3 Participants

The participants involved in this study were 40 students of 10th grades in a government high school of District Bannu. All the participants were studying English as a second language.

4.2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

For the collection of data the 40 students were divided into two groups randomly on the bases of pre-test. These groups were termed as Treatment group and Control group respectively. The Treatment group was taught for one month by applying the strategies suggested by Morley and Miller. The Control group, on the other hand, was taught by using the method which was in use of the teacher in normal days. After a month both the groups were re-examined with the help of post-test.

4.2.5 Treatment group

Hypothesis;

$$H_0: \mu_d = 0$$

$$H_1: \mu_d \neq 0$$

In order to check the improvement in the listening skill of the treatment group, both its pre and post-tests were compared and the result was calculated using t-test. The scores of students, belonging to Treatment group, are shown in the table No 1.7.

Table No 1.7 Scores of students in pre and posttests

| Pre (x_1) | Post (x_2) | $d_i = x_2 - x_1$ | d_i^2 |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|
| 13 | 16 | 3 | 9 |
| 15 | 16 | 1 | 1 |
| 16 | 14 | -2 | 4 |
| 10 | 15 | 5 | 25 |
| 12 | 14 | 2 | 4 |
| 9 | 11 | 2 | 4 |
| 6 | 10 | 4 | 16 |
| 10 | 9 | -1 | 1 |
| 6 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| 13 | 15 | 2 | 4 |
| 17 | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 10 | 8 | -2 | 4 |
| 11 | 14 | 3 | 9 |
| 6 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| 7 | 9 | 2 | 4 |
| 14 | 16 | 2 | 4 |
| 11 | 13 | 2 | 4 |
| 9 | 12 | 3 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| | | Sum= 34 | Sum=116 |

From table 1.7 Arithmetic Mean was calculated in order to know about the average improvement of students belonging to Treatment group using the following formula

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d_i}{n} = \frac{34}{20} = 1.7$$

After that the values of Test Statistics t and critical region were calculated using the following procedure The Standard deviation is

$$s_d = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n-1} \left[\sum d_i^2 - \frac{(\sum d_i)^2}{n} \right]}$$

Putting values we get,

$$s_d = \sqrt{\frac{1}{20-1} \left[116 - \frac{(34)^2}{20} \right]} = 1.750188$$

Now the standard error is

$$s_{\bar{d}} = \frac{s_d}{\sqrt{n}} = \frac{1.750188}{\sqrt{20}} = 0.39135$$

$$\text{Test Statistics } t = \frac{\bar{d}}{\frac{s_d}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{1.7}{0.39135} = 4.34389$$

(v) Critical region

$$t_{\frac{\alpha}{2}}(v) = t_{\frac{0.05}{2}}(20-1) = 2.093 \quad (\text{Searched from table})$$

4.2.6 Control group

In order to check the improvement in the listening skill of the Control group, both its pre and post-tests were compared and the result was calculated using t-test. The scores of students, belonging to Control group, are shown in the table No 4.2.6.

Table No 1.8 Scores of students in pre and posttests

| Pre (x_1) | Post (x_2) | $d_i = x_2 - x_1$ | d_i^2 |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|
| 10 | 9 | -1 | 1 |
| 14 | 14 | 1 | 1 |
| 13 | 11 | -2 | 4 |
| 8 | 6 | -2 | 4 |
| 10 | 9 | -1 | 1 |
| 6 | 4 | -2 | 4 |
| 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | 5 | -2 | 4 |
| 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | 13 | -1 | 1 |
| 6 | 5 | -1 | 1 |
| 9 | 6 | -3 | 9 |
| 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | 5 | -1 | 1 |
| 12 | 11 | -1 | 1 |
| 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 7 | -1 | 1 |
| 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Sum= -15 | Sum=35 |

From table 1.8 Arithmetic Mean was calculated in order to know about the average improvement of students belonging to Control group using the following formula

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d_i}{n} = -15 / 20 = -0.75$$

After that the values of Test Statistics t and critical region were calculated using the following procedure

The Standard deviation is

$$s_d = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n-1} \left[\sum d_i^2 - \frac{(\sum d_i)^2}{n} \right]}$$

Putting values we get,

$$s_d = \sqrt{\frac{1}{20-1} \left[35 - \frac{(-15)^2}{20} \right]} = 1.1180$$

Now the standard error is

$$s_{\bar{d}} = \frac{s_d}{\sqrt{n}} = \frac{1.1180}{\sqrt{20}} = 0.2499$$

$$\text{Test Statistics } t = \frac{\bar{d}}{\frac{s_d}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{-0.75}{0.2499} = -3.0012$$

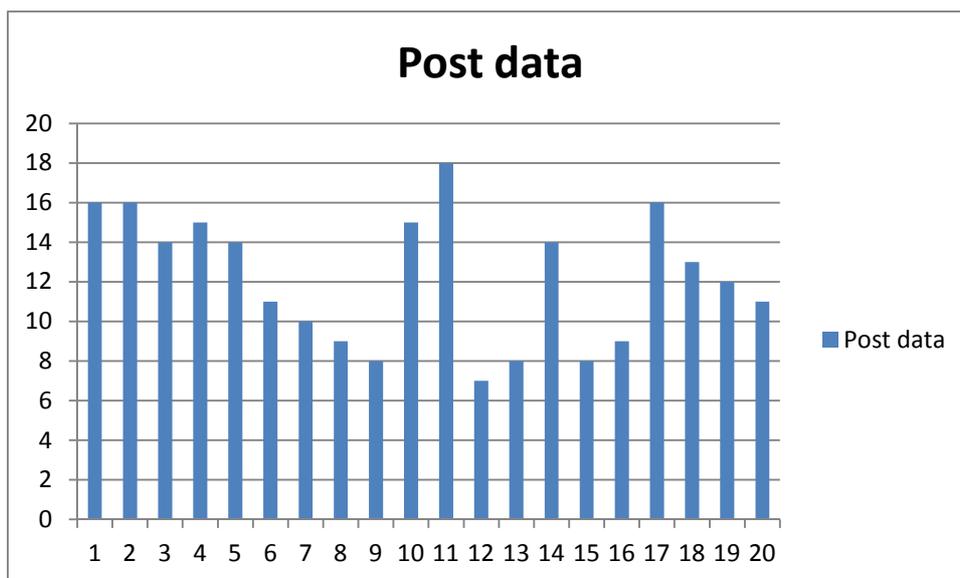
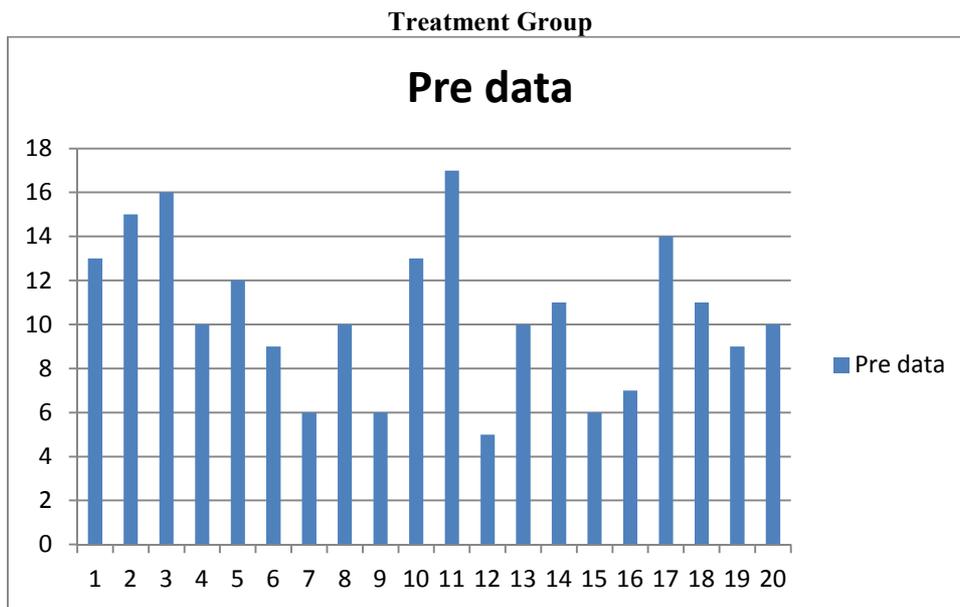
(v) Critical region

$$t_{\frac{\alpha}{2}}(v) = t_{\frac{0.05}{2}}(20-1) = -2.093 \quad (\text{Searched from table})$$

Results

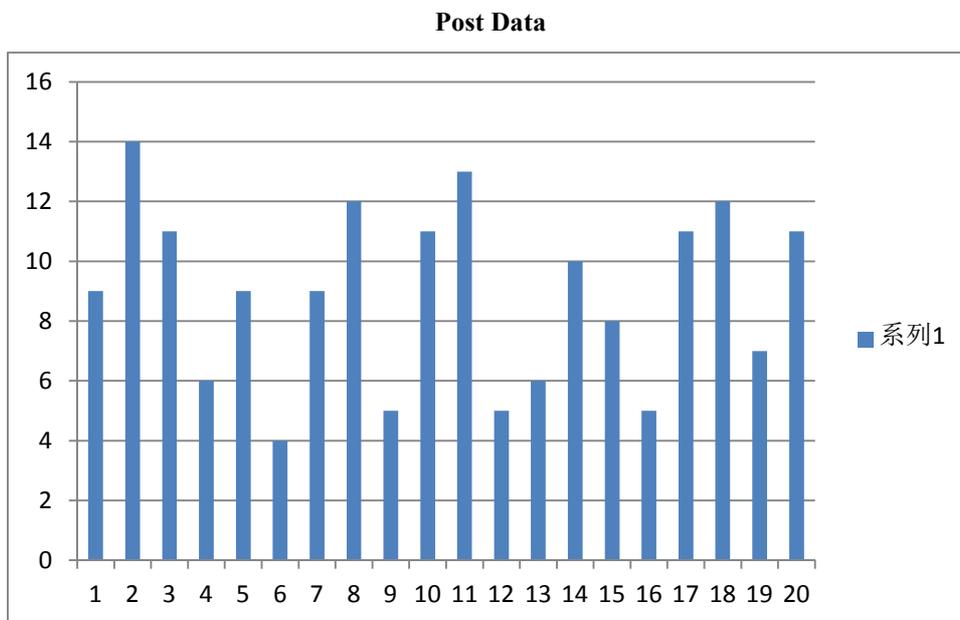
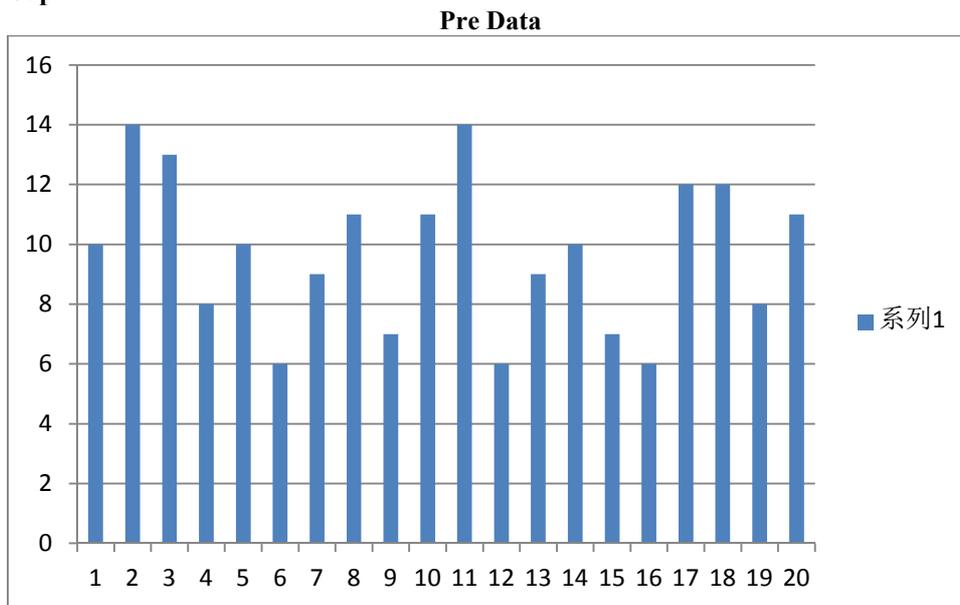
The value of Arithmetic Mean of Treatment group (1.7) shows that there is significant average improvement in

the listening skill of the students belonging to Treatment group. Overall improvement in the listening skill of the Treatment group students is also indicated by the difference in the values of Test Statistic t and Critical region ($4.34389 > 2.093$). The difference between the two values shows that the value of Test Statistic is significant. As the calculated value of $t = 4.34389$ is greater than the tabulated value of $t = 2.093$, so H_0 is rejected and it is concluded that the pre and post data set have different averages, and the application of innovative strategies play a significant role in improving the listening skill of the students. Thus the application of strategies does make a difference and gives positive results. Similarly the values of Test statistical and Critical region for the Control group were calculated and were noted as -3.0012 and -2.093 respectively. (The scores of pre and posttests of students of Control group are given in Table No 4.18.6). The difference of values of Test Statistics and Critical region shows that the value of Test Statistics t is insignificant ($-2.093 > -3.0012$). This shows that no improvement occurred in the listening skill of the students of Control group. The graphical representation in the improvement of the students of the Treatment group is given below



The graphical representation of pre and posttests of Control Group is given below

Control Group



5. Conclusion

Students of secondary level at district Bannu are not in a position to communicate satisfactorily in English language. The main aim of the study was to find reason for this problem of the students and come forward with workable remedy. Students' competence in listening skill was checked by giving test to a 10th grade class in which their performance was very poor. In order to find reasons for this poor performance of students, a questionnaire was distributed among teachers. The purpose was to find out steps taken by them for the improvement of English language learning skills.

So far as teachers' practices for improving listening skill of the students is concerned, no systematic strategies are applied by them. Very few teachers follow the technique of reading aloud a paragraph or two for improving the listening skill of the students. Some of the teachers assign the task to students to listen to English news and watch English plays and movies, but majority of the teachers do not assign this task. Majority of the teachers give instructions to students either in native language or in National language and very few teachers give instructions in the target language. So far as the use of electronic media is concerned; no teacher makes use of electronic media in the classroom. In order to compel students to listen to the teachers attentively, very few teachers use the technique of asking students to re tell the story in the target language. In order to concentrate on improving listening skill of the students, no proper selection of lessons for listening purposes is made by the

teachers. Almost all the teachers agree that time utilized inside the classroom is not sufficient to bring improvement in the listening skill of the students. The teachers also agree that mother tongue creates great hurdles in improving listening skill of the students. In order to improve the situation, an experimental study was conducted. The results of the experimental study showed that a significant change in the listening skill of the students could be brought if innovative strategies were applied in the classroom.

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