Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter discusses the related literature as the theoretical base to conduct the research on the problems encountered and strategies used by students in attempting the listening section of the IELTS test. On this literature review the researcher will ventilate theoretical description and review of the related studies. Moreover, conceptual framework is provided to make the information clearer.

In this part, there are some terms that are explained by research expert in listening. The terms are the notion of the IELTS test, listening section of the IELTS test, listening skill in IELTS test, listening difficulties and strategies used to overcome listening difficulties of the IELTS test. Each of them consists of sub-terms that support the explanation. Every part will be explained systematically.

International English Language Test System (IELTS)

There are several types of language testing and one of them is International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test. According to Douglas (2000), IELTS is originally called English Language Testing Service (ELTS). It was introduced in 1980 by British Council as a test for international application to British Universities. The IELTS is designed to assess the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication (Douglas, 2000). IELTS is jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL), British Council and International Development Program (IDP): IELTS Australia. IELTS conforms to the highest international standards of language

assessment. IELTS is recognized by universities and employers in many countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zeeland, the United Kingdom and the United Stated of America. It is also recognized by profession bodies, immigration authorities, and other government agencies. IELTS is not recommended for candidates under the age of 16 years old. IELTS is available in two formats, academic and general training. Academic is provided for candidates who want study in university level and general training is for immigration or work admission.

In the IELTS tests, candidates are tested in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Based on University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (1994), in the IELTS test, each sub test is scored separately and the sub test scores are then averaged to obtain overall band score. IELTS scores are reported in terms of descriptive bands as shown below:

Table 1

Band Score of IELTS test

Band Scores	**Description of Band Score**
9 Expert user	It has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate, and fluent of with complete understanding.
8 Very good user	It has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situation. Handle complex detailed argumentation well.

7 Good user	It has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstanding in some situation. Generally handle complex language well and understand detailed reasoning.
6 Competent User	It has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstanding. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situation.
5 Modest user	It has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situation, though is likely to make many mistake. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
4 Limited user	Basic competence is limited in familiar situations. Has frequent problem in understanding and expressions. It's not able to use complex language.
3 extremely limited user	Conveys and understands only general meaning in familiar situations. Frequent breakdown in communication occur.
2 Intermittent user	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
1 Non User	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

Note. IELTS Band score. Adapted from *Assessing Language for Specific Purpose,* by D.Douglas, 2000, New York: Cambridge University press. Copyright 2000 by Cambridge University.

A test taker receives score on a Band Scale on 1 to 9. Band scale 9 is the highest score and band scale 1 is the lowest score. A score is reported for each subtest. The four individual subtest scores are averaged and rounded to produce overall Band Score. Test taker receive test report form setting out their score on each of four subtest such as listening, reading, writing and speaking. Each of the subtest score is equally weighted. The overall Band Score is calculated by taking the mean of the total of the four individual subtest score. Thus, a test taker who achieve 6.5 for listening, 6.5 for reading, 5.0 for writing, and 7.0 for speaking will be awarded an Overall Band Score of 6.5 (25:4=6.25=Band 6.5). Band score 6.5 means competent user. Candidates who have that score, generally have effective common of language, can use and understand complex language, and able to handle basic communication in own field (Douglas, 2000).

Listening section of IELTS

In this part, the researcher discusses listening tasks. Listening section of the IELTS test has some components such as time approximately 30 minutes consisting of 40 questions in four sections. Candidates listen to a number of recorded texts. These include a mixture of monologues and conversation. These also provide a variety of English accents (Douglas, 2000). The recording is played only once, then candidates are given time to read the questions, check their answer and write down their answers. When the recording ends, ten minutes are allowed for candidates to transfer their answers to an answer sheet. In recordings of IELTS, speakers use

accents including standard Australian and some regional British accents which reflect the international usage of IELTS.

In the listening section of IELTS, there are some task types. The first two sections are concerned with the social needs. There is a conversation between two speakers and then a monologue for example, that the final two sections are concerned with situations related more closely to educational or training contexts. There is a conversation between two up to four people and then a further monologue. A variety of questions are used and chosen from following types: multiple choices, short answer questions, sentence completion, note/summary/flow -chart/ table completion, labeling diagram, classification and matching (Douglas, 2000).

Listening Skill in IELTS.

Students or test takers who want to succeed in IELTS listening test must have good listening comprehension skills. Douglas (2000) stated that having good listening comprehension skills is not only useful for the IELTS test, but it is also important for academic studies, work-related, and general day-to-day situation. Identifying information consist in IELTS listening section such as dates, names and places, understanding speaker attitude/opinion and following signpost words, are some skills used to measure students' abilities to understand spoken English in different context. Those skills are needed in mastering listening section of IELTS test. This summary below explains the type of questions in IELTS along with the specific listening skills that are tested in each type.

Table 2

Skill IELTS listening section

Question Types	**Skills on IELTS Listening section**
Multiple-choice of picture questions Multiple-choice of words questions	Predicting, listening for specific information, recognition repetition, listening for distinguishing features in the pictures, understanding speaker attitude/opinion, recognizing speaker pronunciations, recognizing speakers' role, focusing more than question at a time, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words, listening for comparisons.
Summary Completion Sentence Completion Gap fill questions	Predicting, listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for main ideas, listening for and recognizing signpost, understanding speaker attitude/opinion, recognizing speaker pronunciations, recognizing speakers' role, focusing more than question at a time
Diagram Labelling: Flow chart Map Process Picture of an subject	Predicting, listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for main ideas, listening for and recognizing signpost, understanding speaker attitude/opinion, recognizing speaker pronunciations,

	recognizing speakers' role, focusing more than question at a time
Classification Matching	Predicting, listening for specific information, listening for main ideas, listening for and recognizing signpost, understanding speaker attitude/opinion, recognizing speaker pronunciations, recognizing speakers' role, focusing more than question at a time

Note. IELTS Band score. Adapted from *Assessing Language for Specific Purpose,* by D.Douglas, 2000, New York: Cambridge University press. Copyright 2000 by Cambridge University.

The table above show skills that students or test takers should have if they want to attempt IELTS listening test. Referring to those skills, predicting skill should be done in every question. It means that test takers should have a good predicting skill because they should predict information in every question. Most of skills tested in every question type are the same, except multiple choices and completion. Skill of comparison enrolls on multiple choices and completion. To obtain this skill, students or test takers should be aware of detail information from what they heard in recording. Thus, they can master the skill of comparison on listening section.

Listening problems

There are many problems faced by students on listening section. According to Brown (2007), there are eight characteristics that can make the listening process difficult. The difficulties are dealing with clustering, redundancy, reduced forms,

performance variable, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, and intonation, and Interaction.

Clustering. In written language students are conditioned to attend to the sentence as the basic unit of organization. People has limited memory in spoken language, therefore they have tendency to chunking or clustering. Clustering is breaking down speech in to smaller groups of words.

Redundancy. Learners may get confused by this because spoken language does not have good deal of redundancy. Redundancy is common in spoken language, in which speakers make repetition, make elaboration, or add some expressions when they are speaking in. Ur (1984) stated that there are three reasons why redundancy can be the problem in listening. First, test taker or language learners do not understand about redundancy. Second, the spoken language consist of lexis, sound combinations and collection where the test takers are not familiar with them. Third, language learners try to understand every single word that they heard in spite of those which are unimportant. The next time you are in conversation, you should notice the rephrasing, repetitions, elaboration, and little insertion of "I mean" and "you know". It is difficult because not every new sentence or phrase will necessarily contain new information. Anderson and Lynch (1998) revealed that redundancy affects difficulties because listeners have to process much information in one time. It means that redundancy can lead listener face difficulties because they need to get information or meaning of every single word in one time based on what speaker says.

Reduced Forms. One of some difficulties on listening is reduced forms. Reduced forms means decreasing the form. While spoken language contains a good deal of redundancy, it also has many reduced forms and sentences fragments. Reduction can be phonological ("Djeetyet?" for "Did you eat yet"), morphological (contraction like "I'll"), syntactic (elliptical forms like when "when will you back?" "Tomorrow, Maybe."), or pragmatic (phone rings in a house, child answers and yells to another room in the house, "Mom! Phone!"). These reductions pose significant difficulties, especially for classroom learners who may have initially been exposed to the full form of the English language.

Performance Variable. This part is difficult because spoken language of native speaker commonly contains ungrammatical structures. Some of these forms are simple performance slip. Students who do not understand grammatical structure will get frustrated. They cannot recognize the meaning and specific information from speakers. This also makes listeners who master grammatical structure feel confused because speaker speak ungrammatically.

Colloquial language. Colloquial refers to expressions or the word difficulties in colloquial language consist of idioms, slangs, reduced forms, and shared cultural knowledge at some points in conversation. Colloquial arises in both monologue and dialogue. The other difficulties of colloquial language are contraction and assimilation. Ur (1998) gave an example, speakers commonly said '*where you going?*' Instead of '*where are you going?*'. In informal speech some words are

pronounced as one assimilation such as /sɪ daʊn/ for sit down, and /ɔːˈ raɪt/ for all right. Therefore, when listeners are unfamiliar with colloquial, they will not recognize the word or expressions. Even, they are not aware of certain words or expression are pronounce by speakers.

      Rate of delivery. The students find the problem in rate of delivery message from speaker. Based on Richard (cited in Brown, 2007), the number and length of pauses used by speaker are more imperative to comprehension than sheer speed. That is why, every language learner initially thinks that native speakers speak too fast. In the listening section, the student cannot have the opportunity to stop the speakers. This condition is different from reading where a student can stop and go back to reread. The student should continue to listen the stream of speech although they lag.

      Stress, rhythm, and intonation. Stress, rhythm, and intonation in spoken language can terror language learners. It happen because stress, rhythm, and intonation. It is not just interpreting straightforward elements such as questions, statements, and emphasis but it is also for understanding more subtle messages like sarcasm, endearment, and insult. The students or test takers who cannot recognize stress, rhythm, intonation of speaker will be confused to interpret the situation or context in spoken language.

      Interaction. Interaction plays a big role in listening comprehension. In the listening test especially on the IELTS, it consists of conversation which is the subject to all the rules of interaction: negotiation, clarification; attending signal; turn taking;

and topic nomination, maintenance, and termination. Being a good listener, student should be able to give a good feedback or response. In that way, Interaction on spoken language will make students who is only as listeners will get confused. They cannot understand what the speakers discuss or say. This part also makes some listeners lose their concentration because they should focus on two or more speakers.

Factors Affecting Listening Problems

There are many factors affecting listening problems. According to Hamouda (2013), the difficulties of listening are caused of four factors. They are speakers in recording, listeners (test takers), contents (materials) and environment.

Speakers' factors. To begin with, there are three difficulties related to speaker. Those are the number of the speaker in the spoken language, speaker speech rate, and speaker accent. First, the number of speakers gives effect of students' ability to understand the spoken language. Listeners will find difficulties if the speakers are more than one. They should focus on some of speakers and have to deal with their speaking habits. It will decrease their ability to comprehend the spoken language. The Second reason which makes a listening text difficult is the speed. If the speakers speak faster than normal, listeners may have difficulties to catch the target words. Underwood (1989) states that on the contrary of listening comprehension the listener cannot control speed of the speaker and this cause the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension. Moreover, the third problems related to speakers' factors is accent. Munro and Derwing (1998) claimed that too many genres of accented speech would result a significant reduction in comprehension. Yagang (1994) pointed out

that usually EFL listeners adopt and acquire the teacher's accent. This make listeners feel difficulties if they should listen to different accents such as British and American.

Test takers' factors. Listening difficulties are also affected by listeners or test takers. The difficulties are dealing with the attitude or role of the listeners and listeners' interest in listening. In terms of listener roles, listeners are overhear and participant. As overhear, listeners only focus to listen spoken language. As participants, listeners should implicate and give responds to what speakers said in spoken language. Listeners will feel easy to understand on the spoken language when they can involve and interpret on spoken language. Otherwise, listeners will find difficulties if they are only as overhear on the spoken language. The other difficulties factor from listeners is interest. Students' interest or motivations one of the crucial factors that affect listening comprehension. It can be difficult for students to maintain the concentration in a foreign language learning classroom. When listener find the topic of the listening text interesting, comprehending would be easier. For all that, listeners find listening very boring even if they are interested in the topic because it needs a huge amount of effort in order to catch up the meaning. Furthermore, the other problem effected by test takers is anxiety. It is defined by Gonen cited on Hamouda (2013). He stated that students feel anxious while listening due to many factors such as authenticity, incomprehensibility, inaudibility and others.

Contents' factor. Contents of spoken language contribute a difficult factor on listening spoken language. Contents of spoken language consist of vocabulary, grammatical structure and knowledge background (Brown & Yule, 1989). With

regard to vocabulary, they said that listeners will find tribulation when they stumble with unfamiliar vocabulary. Otherwise, spoken language will be convenient if the students know about the meaning of vocabulary. Another problem is many words have more than one meaning and if they less common usage, students will get confused. When listener feel unfamiliar with the vocabulary they also difficult to recognize grammar structure of spoken language. Further, the other difficult factor on contents is being unfamiliar of the cultural knowledge of language. It plays a great role to understand the context. The marriage between language and culture is indivisible (Brown, 1994).The topic may contain completely different cultural matter than what the students have. In this case, the students may have difficulties to imagine what the speakers talk about. For instance, if the listening topic is about Halloween where it is not commonly celebrate or experience by students. It will make students cannot catch some points.

Supporting factors. Supporting factors which can make difficulties in listening are quality of audio used and physical condition. In terms of audio used, quality of sound system affects understanding of listener. Low quality of sound system makes the spoken language unclear and students may lose some information. Hamouda (2013) found that bad quality of recording is one of the major listening difficulties faced by EFL students. Further, other factor is physical condition. The temperature of the class can be counted as a factor that makes listening comprehension difficult. The class that does not have air conditioner or heater may be too hot in summer or too cold in winter. The physical condition of listeners also can

make them facing difficulties. Listeners can decrease their concentration if their conditions are unwell.

IELTS Listening Test Taking Strategies

There are many ways to overcome listening difficulties of the IELTS test. One of them is strategy- based approach. Ho (2006) stated that "listening strategies refer to skills or methods for listeners to directly or indirectly achieve the purpose of listening comprehension of the spoken language" (p.25). In this chapter, the researcher presents the studies from three researchers about strategies used to overcome listening difficulties of the IELTS test. First researchers are Bagheri and Karami (2014).They conducted research entitled "*The Effect of Explicit Teaching of Listening Strategies and Gender on EFL Learners' IELTS Performance"*. The finding demonstrated that explicit teaching of listening strategies such as selective listening, predicting, and finding keywords had significant effect on participants' IELTS listening score. Further, those strategies helped to outperform the students who were not aware of listening task.

The second researcher is Golchi (2012).She conducted a research by title *"Listening Anxiety and Its Relationship with Listening Strategy Use and Listening comprehension among Iranian IELTS learners"*. The finding showed that the low anxious learners used metacognitive strategies more than the high anxious learners. Golchi implemented metacognitive which is developed by Lee (1997) and cited in Ho (2006).

Metacognitive Strategies. Metacognitive strategies are important because they are oversee, regulate or direct the language learning. Metacognition refers to

listener awareness of the cognitive processes involved in comprehension, and the capacity to oversee, regulate, and direct these processes (Goh, 2008). Vandergrift (1999) stated that metacognitive strategy is kind of self -regulated learning. It consists of plan, check, monitor, select, revise, evaluate etc. Metacognitive strategies are divided into three stages as shown below:

Pre-listening Strategies. In this part, there are three steps. First, before listening, the student clarifies the objective of an anticipated listening task and proposes the strategies for handling it (advanced organization). Secondly, before listening, the student concentrates their mind on the listening task and don't give attention to things that distract their attention (Direct attention). The last, before listening they scan the question first, and then decide to listen for specific aspects of scripts (Selective attention).Vandergrift and Goh (2012) also added that to plan for successful completion of the activity, listeners can anticipate words or ideas that they may hear and predict what they will hear, based on information brought to consciousness and any relevant contextual information.

While -Listening monitoring strategies. While listening, the students can use some strategies such as self-management and self-monitoring and refocusing. In the selective selection, while listening to the recording, students try to keep up with the speed. In self-monitoring, students ask themselves about what they are listening to, or how much they have understood. The last is refocusing. In this aspect, students answer their inattention and make themselves refocus on the material.

Post- Listening evaluation strategies. In this part, students can do self-evaluation after listening section ended such as check their listening comprehension and try to correct their errors. Students can check their grammar error before the correct answer is moved into answer sheet. After that, students can reflect their problems faced during the listening section such as the speech rate that was too fast, or the linkage was hard to identify. They may use the checklist to evaluate listening progress as well.

In addition, Badgar and Yan (2006) conducted a study entitled "*The use of Tactic and Strategies by Chinese Students in the Listening Components of IELTS*". The result showed that there is no significant differences between native speaker of English and nonnative in terms of the strategies, sub strategies and tactics they use when they taking an IELTS listening test. Among of those strategies, there is called Cognitive Strategies.

Cognitive Strategies. Cognitive strategies manipulate the material to be learned or applied a specific technique to listening task. Cognitive strategy is problem solving that learner's employ to manipulate their learning task and facilitate acquisition of knowledge or skill (Derry & Murphy, 1986). Moreover, cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long term memory for later retrieval. Goh (2002) established sub strategies of cognitive strategies as shown in this table below:

Table 3	
Cognitive Sub strategies by Goh (2002)	
Sub strategies	**Tactics**
Inferencing	use contextual clues, use familiar content words, draw on knowledge of the world, apply knowledge about the target language
Elaboration	draw on world knowledge, draw on knowledge about the target language
Prediction	anticipate general contexts, anticipate details while listening
Contextualization	place input in a social or linguistic context, find related information on hearing a key word, relate one part of text to another
Translation	find L1 equivalents for selected key words, translate a sequence or utterance
Fixation	stop to think about the spelling of unfamiliar words, stop to think about the meaning of words, memorize/repeat the sounds of unfamiliar words, memorize words or phrases for later processing
Visualization	imagine scenes events, objects being described, mentally display the shape of key words
Reconstruction	reconstruct meaning from words heard, reconstruct meaning from notes taken

Based on information written in table 3, Cognitive Strategies have some sub-strategies following the tactic to solve the problems of IELTS on listening section. The sub strategies such as contextualization and visualization have close relationship.

Visualization displays the shape of key words, then Contextualization finds the

keywords. Tactic in Fixation strategy is very useful for students or test takers who

find unfamiliar words or meaning. The other researcher such asVandergrift (2003)

also classifies cognitive strategy into some sub strategies. Those are shown following

table:

Table 4	
Cognitive Sub strategies by Vandergrift (2003)	
Sub strategies	**Tactics**
Note taking	While listening, write down some idea and keywords.
Remarking the key	Remark the key points of the scripts by understanding or capitalizing.
Deduction	The learners use linguistic clues to comprehends the scripts, such as prefixes and suffix
Segmentation	Use pronunciations, intonation and part sentences
Listening for main idea	Listening for main idea first, then details.
Questioning elaboration	Try to use the combination of question and words knowledge to understand the meaning.

In table 4, there are some cognitive sub strategies defined by Vandergrift. In

keeping with Vandergrift, he classifies Note Taking and Remarking the Key into

Cognitive Formal Practicing strategies. Then, he categorizes deduction and

segmentation strategy into Cognitive Bottom-up Strategies. Besides, he classifies Listening for main idea and questioning into elaboration of cognitive top-down strategies. Further, cognitive strategies are very useful for helping student as listeners or test takers to find the difficulties factor from speakers, contents while they listen to the speakers in the recording. Moreover, the nature of this test is that the recording can be heard only once. Further, the other strategy mentioned by expertise is Social/affective strategies. Discussion and asking for clarification is a apart of those strategies. It is impossible to happen in a test condition. In addition, test-wiseness strategies are widely used in language tests than Social/affective strategy.

Test-Wiseness Strategies (TWS)

The other strategies used is TWS. TWS is an ability to utilize the characteristics and formats of the test to achieve a high score. This strategy is applied many researchers to help student answer question in listening test paper. One of researchers who conducted research using TWS is Li (2016). She conducted research by title "*IELTS Listening Test Strategy Research: Chinese Students' Strategy use with the Lecture-based Question in the IELTS Listening paper*" There are some sub strategies of TWS defined by Millman (cited on Li, 2016). Those TWS sub strategies could be seen in this table.

Table 5	
TWS Sub strategies by Millman (Cited on Li,2016)	
Sub strategies	**Tactics**

Time-using strategy	Begin to work as rapidly as possible with reasonable assurance of accuracy
Error-avoidance strategy	Pay careful attention to directions, determining clearly the nature of the task and the intended basis of responses.
Guessing strategy	Always guess if right answers only are scored and always guess if the correction for guessing is less severe than a "correction for guessing" formula that gives an expected score of zero for random guessing.
Deductive reasoning strategy	Eliminate options which are known to be incorrect and choose from among the remaining options. Choose neither or one (but not both) of two statements, one of which, if correct, would imply the incorrect-ness of the other.
Intent consideration strategy	Answer items as the test constructor intended. Consider the relevance of specific detail.
Cue-using strategy	Recognize and make use of any consistent idiosyncrasies of the test constructor which distinguish the correct answer form incorrect options. Consider the relevancy of specific detail when answering a given item.

There are six sub strategies in table which are belonged to TWS. Those sub strategy strategies are time-using strategy, error-avoidance strategy, guessing

strategy, deductive reasoning strategy, Intent consideration strategy, and cue-using strategy. By looking at TWS sub strategies' explanation, the strategies are compatible used by students in test condition.

Conceptual Framework

IELTS is used for several purposes. In terms of academic area, IELTS is used to entrance the college or scholarship. IELTS measures four skills in English proficiency, namely listening, reading, writing and speaking. Dealing with listening section of IELTS, redundancy, accent, colloquial language, intonation, speech rate, grammatical structure, and vocabulary should be considered by students or test taker as well. Those complexities are the reason why students or test takers as a non-native speaker of English need to recognize of question types, skill, problems, problems' factor and strategies used in listening section.

IELTS listening test is considered demanding because it is necessary to use range of skills simultaneously when answering a variety of question types. There are some question types on listening section in IELTS test. They are multiple choices, gap fill/ sentence completion, short answer, map diagram labeling, table completion, and matching. Also, the level of difficulties increases in each section. Those difficulties are anxiety, unfamiliarity with the accent, unknown background knowledge, lack of interest, low concentration, deficiency of vocabulary, grammatical structures, length of the spoken texts, fast speech rate, low quality of recording and noise. The problems are affected by four factor, namely speakers in recording, listeners (test-takers), contents (materials) and environment. Those problems faced by students when answering six

questions type in listening section of IELTS. Besides, there are three majors test taking

strategies which can be used by students to answer those questions types. The strategies

are metacognitive, cognitive and TWS. Thus, the problems and strategies in IELTS
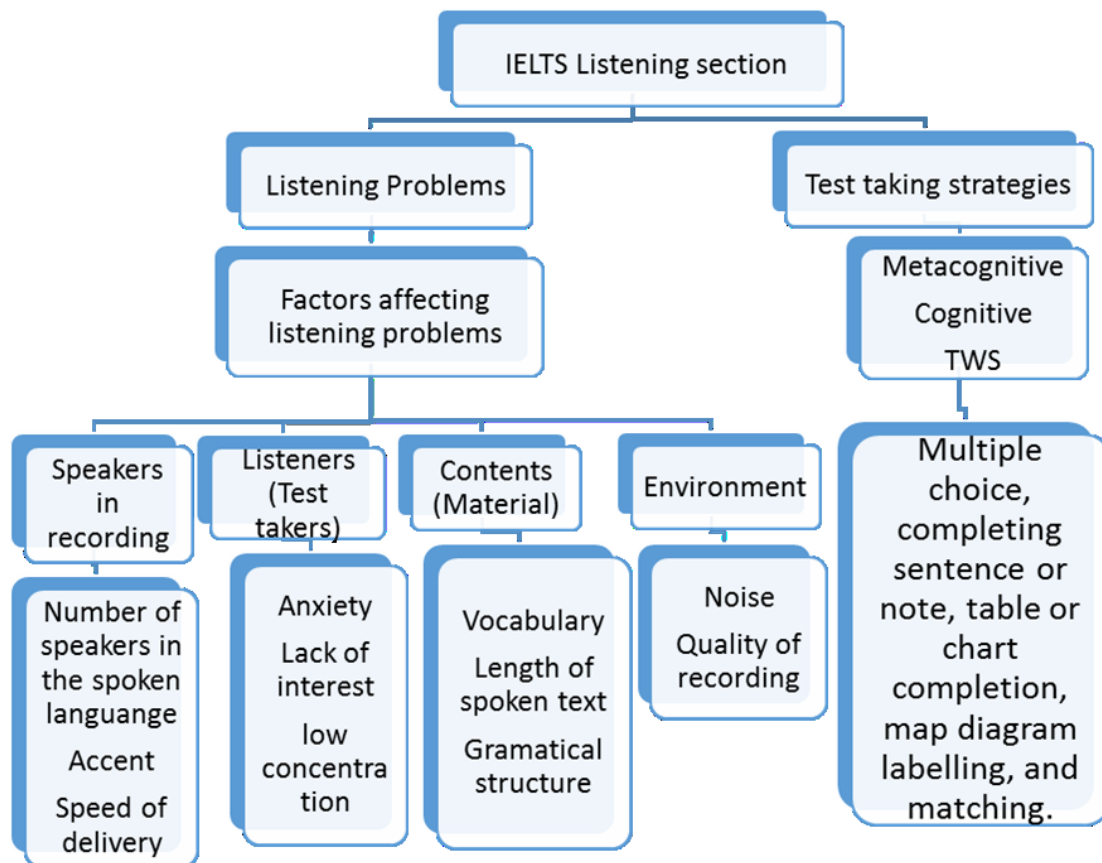
listening test are drawn in framework shown below

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework