ABSTRACT

The doctoral work had been an endeavour made to find the practical difficulties faced by the low-level second language listeners in the engineering college in processing the listening comprehension and in ascertaining the ways and means in rectifying it. To diagnose the problem a study was undertaken with a listening comprehension test and self reporting questionnaire to report the problem in the listening process. Based on the problems identified and the attitude of the informants towards the listening class, a mixed method of imparting listening module was framed on the platform of Krashen’s theory of affective filter.

In Indian context, demonstrating communication skills shows success path in the on-campus recruitment for engineering students. As most students lack communication skill they are not ‘industry ready’ (Infosys, 2008). It is mandatory for undergraduate students studying in engineering Colleges to learn the global language, English. It helps them in their career upliftment besides, pursuing higher education. Corporate and foreign universities expect the recruits and students, who pursue higher studies, to have proficiency in the international language. For this they expect them to have good band/ score in IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC etc., These international exams give equal importance in testing all the four skills. Since Listening skill is the base for language learning, it has an important place in these tests.

This study is bifurcated into two divisions. The first phase of this study explores the predicaments of the students’ progressive listening potentiality through their respective comprehension and approach towards listening classes. The second phase of this study concentrates on rectification of the diagnosed problem by a novel strategy of imparting listening. The informants for the study
were first year engineering students under Anna University. Since the study focuses on low level listeners, they were selected through the IELTS listening score. Among the first year engineering students, 110 low level second language listeners were selected for the study.

This study is attempted to find the problems faced by 110 low level second language listeners in the engineering college in listening comprehension. This study focuses on the problems in two dimensions. One dimension is to find problems in the listening comprehension process of the students through a listening comprehension test and a closed ended questionnaire originated in a study of Goh (2000). The second dimension of the study is to find the attitude of the students towards the listening class. To achieve that a closed ended attitude questionnaire was used. In the first part of the study, it was found that students have problems in bottom-up skills like sound discrimination, connected speech, stress, intonation, etc. Also it was found that students have low attitudes towards the method of teaching in the listening classroom i.e they were not interested in the listening materials, felt bored, had inhibitions and lacked confidence in doing listening activities.

For this study a mixed method of imparting listening was used as a new instructional method for imparting listening. This new mixed method of teaching was framed on the platform of Krashen’s Theory of Affective Filter with task items concentrating on bottom up skills in listening. To create interest in listening among students and filter affective factors listening activities with rhymes, advertisements, movie trailers, songs with and without visual support and short videos and documentary films were used.
In this study to find the effect of the mixed method of teaching listening, 110 informants were divided into two groups i.e. experimental group and control group based on the pre-test scores. The experimental group was given a treatment with the mixed method of teaching listening and the control group was given the usual way of teaching class with bottom-up task items. After six weeks of training for both the groups, a post test was conducted to find the difference in the achievement. Also, an attitude scale was administered to find the difference in the students' attitudes. It was found that though the scores of the learners in the experimental group were developed when compared to their pre-test, the experimental group performed better with more attitudes towards their listening class than the control group. The study was concluded with some implications to the teachers to be integrated while imparting listening skill in the classroom. Also, it recommends suggestions for further studies.