CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER II
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 General
The present investigation is 'An evaluation of listening comprehension in English of the plus one students of the higher secondary level in Coimbatore district'. The present research has been undertaken to identify the degree of listening comprehension ability of higher secondary first year students. Though listening comprehension skill is an important aspect in SL curriculum, the syllabus and didactic methodology in SL curriculum gives importance only to reading and writing skill development. The literary and linguistic component of SL curriculum restricts to the development of proficiency in reading and writing of SL. Hence this research is undertaken. The research has given certain decisions regarding the all round growth in language proficiency and hence it will be useful bringing to teachers and students, the syllabus designers and material producers, parents and educational authorities to work for the achievement of the common goal of making the learners reach the target of comprehension ability of the aural input also. This chapter reflects the methodology underlying the investigation, the process underlying the presentation of the thesis regarding the status of comprehension ability among higher secondary students.

2.2 Purpose of the study
Listening skill should be inculcated even at the prime age of learning that is why rhymes and poetic form of language are introduced from the KG level. If the concentrated listening is distracted for any other reason the learning would be faulty and affected. The course of learning must be systematic. Perfect listening paves the way to the learner towards a clear understanding of the aural materials. Nowadays
proper importance is not given to listening. The pupils will be able to grasp the ideas expressed if it is given in a careful manner. Only in the higher secondary first year syllabus, for listening tasks some importance is given, but marks allotted for listening tasks and tasks on spoken English are meagre.

2.3 Significance of study

The present research is significant since this may provide some guideline for teaching listening comprehension in ESL in the Higher Secondary course (plus one and plus two) in the schools governed by the state of Tamilnadu. The aim of this research is to derive empirical evidence as to how far the teaching of listening comprehension is useful in attaining the goal of understanding and promoting the skills and knowledge of English language. The purpose of this finding is to arrive at a final decision with the help quantitative and qualitative analysis can be done relating to the testing of listening comprehension. This explains the importance given to listening in curricular setup. Taking students' data this study explains, how far students fare well in listening. In particular this study tries to report whether listening ability varies among students depending upon the types of listening and the socio-cultural background of the students.

The present research is significant since it would enable the teachers, who would like to try different approaches to listening. It exposes the students' ability in listening comprehension and the modes of developing the listening skills further. The research findings prove that the more the listening texts to which a student is exposed, the better will be his or her understanding. This evaluation ensures that a student gains something concrete from each listening experience. "A poor listener is usually below average in reading, arithmetics, intelligence and general school achievement". "It may be more logical to
group pupils in our schools on the basis of listening scores rather than on reading scores (Ross 1990).

2.4 Comparative Studies

The evaluation of the listening comprehension is assessed taking the following items pertaining to the skills and knowledge of the students.

1. General information (main points)
2. Specific information (particular items)
3. People's attitudes and opinions
4. Organization of ideas
5. Sequence of events
6. Lexical items – words expressing noise/movement
7. Structural items – use and meaning
8. Functional items – their form and meaning

The above items are elicited from the learners through the presentation of listening texts and through subsequent elicitation of answers to the questionnaire.

A Comparative study is made to show the students' performance taking into account the different parameters. The quantitative analysis reveals the performance of the students, which are illustrated in percentage form and in statistical form. The qualitative analysis reveals the skills and knowledge of the students.

2.5 Field work

The present investigation is based on the primary data collected through fieldwork. For conducting the final study, the investigator approached more than ten school teachers who teach ESL with the permission of the headmasters. The tests were conducted only in 5
schools repeatedly with the same students for each text. The tests were conducted considering the administrative difficulty in schools, the availability of the students and the time involved in administrating the test and processing the data etc. The test was limited only to 200 students selected from 5 different schools at random. The school sample included, schools run by government, by management with the aid of the government, by corporate body which comes under a corporation. The schools were selected taking into account the medium of instruction adopted. Both English and Tamil medium schools were selected for our research purpose. Thus the school sample reflects the following parameters:

Student samples were drawn taking into account the above school type parameters, the sex of the students and their economic status.

Hence the student sample includes the following

Govt. School  Male  Female
Management School  Male  Female
Corporation School  Male  Female
2.6 Selection of tools

The present English textbook of the higher secondary first year course is by and large focusing the importance of acquiring aural-oral and communicative abilities among the learners. In accordance with the course material related to the listening skill, the aural methods have been insisted in order to develop the power of comprehension or understanding. Without the ability to listen, nothing can be understood or retained in memory. Hence on the basis of the above procedure, care has been taken in selecting the tools in order to test and evaluate the skill of listening comprehension in English of the higher secondary first year students. As it is the prime concern of the present study the investigator has selected the texts and carefully framed the tools to suit the present study.

2.7 Text as tools

The texts for listening comprehension test have been selected taking into consideration the various aspects of standard XI English course book. The course book aims at the development of four skills among the young learners in terms of comprehension, retention and reproduction of the informations they acquired as chunks. The messages are associated with the previous knowledge so as to enable the students write the correct information. The course book aims at developing listening skill and follow up the other skills called speaking, reading and writing. It has also suggested an innovative scheme in the syllabus to test the aural-oral and communicative skills of the learners.

In accordance with the prescribed course material, the following test items have been used in this study (see Appendix) to assess the ability of listening comprehension among students.

Test I - Short story
For each text, suitable questionnaires were prepared and printed. As a systematic pursuit of the study, the questionnaires were supplied to the informants for testing every text. Each item was selected and recorded in a cassette with the help of a tape-recorder. The duration of the text is for a short span of time, 3 to 5 minutes. The tape-recorder was played to the students audibly and clearly at a normal speed. The delivery of the material was repeated once or twice as to the needs and necessity of the subjects. After the tape recorder stopped, the informants were asked to answer the questions found in the questionnaire supplied to them. Thus all the tests were conducted at various schools and the data were collected. These empirical data were analyzed later quantitatively and qualitatively and integrated with the parameters chosen for the study.

Table 2. Test items of listening comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Test No</th>
<th>Type of text</th>
<th>Time allotted</th>
<th>No. of approximate words used.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Test I</td>
<td>Short story</td>
<td>3 Minutes</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Test II</td>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>2 Minutes</td>
<td>80 – 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Test III</td>
<td>News broadcast</td>
<td>6 Minutes</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Test IV</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>3 Minutes</td>
<td>150-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. No.</td>
<td>Name of the School</td>
<td>Type of the school</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Economical Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Thondamurthu</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manba ul Uloom Hr. Sec. School, Fort. Che.</td>
<td>Aided</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SBOA Hr. Sec. School, Sokkampudur</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Corporation Hr. Sec. School, Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>St. Mary's Hr. Sec. School, Coimbatore</td>
<td>Aided</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sno</th>
<th>Listening text</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Topic/ Theme</th>
<th>Testing units</th>
<th>Listening skills practised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Short story (spontaneous, story-telling)</td>
<td>Three Paintings</td>
<td>Painting competition/three paintings/curtain painting cheated human being - other cheated animals judgements-</td>
<td>a) Listening for main idea b) Listening for details c) Gist making d) Recognition &amp; identification e) Grammar f) Vocabulary g) Inference</td>
<td>Main idea comprehension Intensive listening for detailed information. Story writing in note-taking. Sounds, Identifying phonetic vowels, Features, Grammatical/Structural abilities/Identifying lexical items/Content words. Responding inferential information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Announcement (monologue, informative, calling attention)</td>
<td>Railway</td>
<td>Arrivals/departures/train numbers/platforms/numbers/via</td>
<td>a) Listening for main idea b) Listening for details c) Gist making d) Recognition &amp; identification e) Grammar f) Vocabulary g) Inference</td>
<td>Specific information. Details of trains, Discriminating Knowledge Writing the gist. Number discriminating identifying various transformations. Grammatical Units. Word formation/drills. Inferencing data, digits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>News Broadcast (global listening, political, real world, international, public information)</td>
<td>Local Radio</td>
<td>International information/events/facts and figures/news/changes and innovative</td>
<td>a) Listening for main idea b) Listening for details c) Gist making d) Recognition &amp; identification e) Grammar f) Vocabulary g) Inference</td>
<td>Global listening / Main news detailed information Recognising time, Events expansion of ideas, Tenses, Voice, Articles and preposition. Word construction, Text context, Identifying Ideas through true/false.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the four tests, a schedule was prepared to get the personal data of the students. The data sheet was used to collect informations such as sex, medium, economic status etc., of the students.

Testing tools: unit of measurement

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>W/Sec</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
<th>Sy/Sec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Short story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>News Broadcast</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The texts are designed according to the normal speech rate and to the lexical and syntactical proficiency level of the first year of the higher secondary students. Auditory input for listening comprehension was selected within the limit of the vocabulary of the subjects. They were able to retain the decoding information in their memory so that they can apply their linguistic knowledge and real world knowledge. The bottom-up and top-down processes were facilitated in order to bring out their output while comprehending and understanding the passage. The text short story is a pre-recorded speech of the researcher himself. The voice was taped in a slow delivery and the informants were able to hear clearly and audibly. The short story was selected by the investigator so as to enable the students to retain the information in their memory.
Considering the railway announcement, the investigator recorded the same in the Coimbatore railway junction where a lot of trains start from and pass through. The actual announcement was recorded announcing different trains Nos., platform Nos. and the names of the trains. The informants have to keep in memory all the train Nos., platform Nos., the arrivals and departures and the starting and destination points. The announcements are four in number, given at an interval of a few seconds. The taped material with all sorts of noise in the platform during the arrival and departure of trains is presented to the informants.

The third text All India Radio news broadcast is also tape-recorded. Since it is a female voice, the audibility remains clear and static. But the newscast is a long and lengthy narrative. It has got more informations at least about six or seven messages. These texts were presented to the informants of various schools in different areas in rural and urban and to test different variables. The testing units were presented through questionnaires and answers were evolved. These answers were evaluated and analyzed.

2.8 Source Materials

During the period of research, the investigator had visited a number of places in order to gather data and sources. The following places were visited periodically.

2. Central institute of Indian languages, Mysore.
3. Dvanyaloka library of Dr. C.D. Narasimhaiah, Mysore.
4. Osmania University, Hyderabad.
5. University of Madras, chennai.

Materials were also collected from other sources like Indian Education Review and English language teaching Journal of Indian Education, Journal of English and foreign languages, Journal of English Language Teacher's Association of India, IRAL, Tesol, Indian Journal of Applied linguistics, The Canadian modern languages review, A world journal of the sciences of language, Applied linguistics etc.

2.9 Test Administration

The students were not informed anything about the test well in advance. The aim of this study and the purpose of this test were explained to the informants only at the time of the test. Hence the usual practice of memorizing and reproducing the answer was completely avoided among the informants. All the texts meant for the evaluation of listening comprehension of the higher secondary first year students, were thoroughly prepared to suit their situation and environment of the class room learning and interaction. The texts like short story, railway announcement, news broadcast were divided into many units to test their skill of listening for main idea, listening for details, gist making, grammar, vocabulary, recognition and identification and inference.

The informants after hearing the taped script through aural input retained the information in their memory and when they were asked to respond to the questions supplied in the questionnaire, they wrote the answers and returned back. What we have expected through listening is reproduced through writing. But the researcher is not testing the writing skill of the subjects. The listening skill is the only evaluating aspect, which the researcher intended to test. The questions were evolved on the basis of the skill and on the basis of the knowledge. The informants especially hail from Tamil speaking folk, though they are studying in
English medium or in matriculation schools, they struggled and baffled while listening to the tape-recorder. The investigator had to repeat the taped-script, playing the cassette twice or thrice. The listening to the tape is not an usual occurrence. Most of them are not in the habit of watching TV listening to the news telecast even. So the informants had to listen keenly without any disturbance and after the tape had been switched off, they had to seek the help of the investigator or the peer group. Somebody took notes of the information they heard and discussed among them while answering the questions.

2.10 Methods of Analysis

The data collected from the informants were duly analyzed. The quantitative analysis is made on the basis of the performance of the students taking into account the variables. The Qualitative analysis is conducted on the basis of the informant’s output after listening. In accordance with these, the main study has been perceived under four major headings.

a) Quantitative Analysis.

b) Qualitative Analysis.

c) Comparative Analysis.

d) Error Analysis.

These divisions of analysis have been presented in chapter III, IV & V respectively. The errors committed by the students have been studied and analyzed taking both quantitative and qualitative points of view.

Scores for each student have been calculated for every skill in percentage.

\[
\text{Student's Score} = \frac{\text{No. Of correct sentences produced}}{\text{No. Of sentences produced}} \times 100
\]
2.10.1 Quantitative analysis

Each and every variable score is summed up for one unit of the questionnaire and the average is calculated in that particular unit by dividing the score with the particular unit by dividing the score with the number of informants and thus the average score is found.

Though the student listen to class room teaching etc., the students are not aware of the modalities involved in listening comprehension. The prime aim of teaching the second language is to make the students comprehend completely whatever aural material presented to them. But the present day situation focuses the students prepare for the examination. As a result, the students become mostly exam-oriented, marks-oriented and there is no free acquisition of knowledge. In order to understand and crisp the ideas in brief form the students should have the skill in listening comprehension.

It is felt that a study of the evaluation of listening comprehension of the higher secondary students in English is highly needed in order to identify the performance of the students of various schools, of various areas, with different medium of instructions and with different socio-economic background etc. The quantitative analysis is evolved from the performance of the following variables, male : female, rural : urban, aided school : matriculation school, government school : corporation school, English medium : Tamil medium students, economically well : economically poor, socially forward and socially backward students. These variables were tested with the following testing units: listening for main idea, listening for details, gist making, recognition and identification, grammar, vocabulary and inference.
2.10.2 Qualitative Analysis.

In the evaluation of listening comprehension the quality of the output of students is presented in the following way.

a. Grammatical errors.
b. Syntactical errors.
c. Errors in discourse.

The output quality reflects the power of understanding. A comparative study of the analysis taking the variables show the clear picture about the real status of affairs and the standard of the higher secondary students in the basic skills in SL in general and listening comprehension in particular. Since listening is the basic skill among all the skills of learning, any teaching learning process cannot be successful without proper importance given to the skill of listening. In the second language teaching-learning process one can see what is expected from the learner after a careful and thorough teaching in the classroom. The present set up of the syllabus does not offer any chance for the students to practice the listening comprehension skill even after they have studied English for more than twelve years. As such there is no certainty or assurance that the students studying Higher Secondary Course whether in English medium or Tamil medium can understand a story, a lecture, a news broadcast, an announcement, a conversation or a telephone talk etc without a verbal or visual cues.

2.10.3 Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is the outcome of the empirical data derived from the student evaluation. The comparative analysis shows the achievement of the skill in listening. The differences among the variables relating to the texts and testing units are clearly shown in the comparison. The performance of the students are illustrated with suitable diagrams, charts and tables. Each and every text is compared according to the highest and the lowest performance. The average
percentage is found out. Thus the proper way for the development of the listening skill can be suggested for further improvement of the students.

2.10.4 Error Analysis

After the test and evaluation the performance of the students was analyzed and the mistakes were found out. These errors are categorized as 1. errors in preposition 2. errors in articles 3. errors in vocabulary 4. errors in sequence or order 5. errors in sentence production etc., These errors are further classified as addition, deletion and subtraction. Samples from the questionnaire supplied to the students are given in the appendix in which the students' performance are also illustrated. Some students have produced the answers well and most of the students have written the answers with a lot of mistakes.

2.11 Organization of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter gives an introduction about listening comprehension. The way of listening, analysis of four skills, listener function, listener response, listening comprehension, types of listening, listening comprehension process etc., are described in a vivid manner. Further the activities of listening comprehension, the comprehension skill development, translation as a strategy, listening comprehension in the L2 curriculum and the development of listening skill as a part of curriculum are illustrated. The authentic listening materials in using radio broadcast, the advantages and disadvantages are also explained. The chapter concludes with a vast reference of the previous studies on listening and the authors' explanations about listening.
Chapter 2: Methodology and research design

The aim of this thesis and the purpose of the present study are explained in this chapter. The way in which the thesis is prepared, the selection of tools and texts, the source materials and the test administration, the elicitation of the data, the schools visited and the students selected for testing the listening comprehension are narrated. The questionnaire supplied to the students and the conduct of the text is also explained. The analysis of methodology adopted by the researcher is briefly given.

Chapter 3: Quantitative Analysis

The Quantitative Analysis shows the performance of the variables and the units of testing selected for the present purpose. The data shows the performance of the students of various groups in the different types of listening ability for the given texts 1. Short story 2. Announcement 3. News broadcast. The performance of the variables are compared and contrasted through diagrams illustrating the comparison of the data. The high and low performance of the informants are illustrated with tables and charts. Each and every testing unit is taken for the data and the average performance is considered for their achievement in listening comprehension. Comparison is made taking variables like Male : Female, Rural : Urban, Aided : Matric, Government : Corporation, English medium : Tamil medium, Economically well : Economically poor students, Socially forward : Socially backward students etc.,

Chapter 4: Qualitative Analysis (error analysis)

This chapter explains the errors committed by the students, while they supply answers to the questionnaire. Listening comprehension test shows errors in the students' answers. The errors are classified into grammatical, syntactical and discourse-based. Assessment of the errors
examines the purposes behind listening skills and analyzes the situations, activities and tasks in which students are involved as SL learners. The types of errors are classified as errors in preposition, in articles order change, errors in vocabulary and errors in sentence production. The errors are pointed out on each and every heading systematically and explained with examples.

Chapter 5: Comparative analysis

Empirical data derived from the students are evaluated and compared pertaining to the testing unit, the variables and the texts. The comparative analysis shows the achievement of the skill in listening through diagrams, tables and graphs. The performance of the students is compared according to the lowest and the highest performance. The average percentage is found out. After evolving the percentage the development of the listening skill is suggested for further improvement of the students.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The finding of this research and some solutions are given in this chapter. The hypothesis presented are explained taking the student's data. Measures for improving the listening abilities, skills and knowledge related to listening skills are brought forth in this chapter. The status of listening comprehension among students of Higher Secondary level and the variations in listening comprehension among students due to social parameters are presented in a summary form. Some suggestions for developing the listening skills in the curriculum are given for the teachers and students.