CHAPTER 2
AIMS AND
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2.1 Introduction

The chapter explicates the aims and objectives of the present study. It deals with the target population and discusses the significance and limitations of the study. It expounds the methodology and data for the study. It presents a review of the work already done on the topic.

2.2 Aims of the Study

The aim of the research is to focus on the role of listening in language teaching. It strives to establish the significance and importance of listening component in language teaching. Listening skill in English is not given due emphasis in second language teaching. Although an important aspect of second language proficiency, listening skill in English is not the main concern of the second language teachers and learners. Hence the present study makes an attempt to create a pedagogical model of second language listening and implement it on the target group. The main objective of the research is to help students from the regional medium background master listening skill in particular and the English language in general. It is observed that students from the regional medium background face problems in comprehending spoken English. Even at their undergraduate level they fail to grasp the gist of the spoken discourse in English. An important reason for this is the non-acquisition of listening skill at the High School level. The listening programme developed and implemented during the research enables the students to become proficient listeners.
2.3 Target Population

The population for this research consisted of 29 students from the undergraduate classes. Random sampling was used to identify students within the population that met specific criteria. The criteria for selection included:

- Students from Prof. Ramkrishna More Arts, Commerce and Science College, Akurdi should be selected.
- Students from the undergraduate classes should be selected.
- Students from Marathi Medium should be selected.
- 25 to 30 students should be selected.
- Students willing to participate in the study should be selected.

2.3.1 Rationale for Selection of Criteria

The rationale for selecting the first criterion is to make the target population a homogeneous unit. The second criterion is related to the students' level of learning. As the students are from the undergraduate classes, they have minimum seven years experience of learning English. That is a pre-requisite for attending the listening course. The third criterion is related to the students' medium of instruction at the undergraduate level. The students from Marathi Medium get little exposure to English in general and to listening skill in particular. Compulsory English is the only subject which is taught to them in English. All the other subjects are taught in Marathi. So this programme proved to be beneficial to them. The fifth criterion restricts the number of the students participating in the study. The limited number of students enables the researcher to pay individual attention to all of them. The fifth criterion suggests that each student's willingness to participate is critical to this study. Since the design of
the research involved the questionnaire, the Pre-test, the Post-test and the class exercises, the participants needed to be willing to give the time necessary to respond and participate in the programme.

Thus a random sample of 29 students was selected as the basis of observations. The subjects were from Prof. Ramkrishna More Arts, Commerce and Science College, Akurdi, Pune. Twenty nine students, who were willing to attend the listening programme, were admitted to the course without considering their mastery over English language. For all the students, Marathi was the medium of instruction at the undergraduate level. Out of 29 students female population was 9 and male population was 20, respectively. The mother tongue of 27 students was Marathi. There were two students having Hindi and Bengali as their mother tongues. The students were the residents of Pimpri, Chinchwad, Nigdi, Akurdi, Talegaon, Bhosari and Chikali. All of them knew Marathi and the national language Hindi. The limited number of the subjects enabled the researcher to give individual attention to them.

2.4 Methodology

In the present study quantitative method is used to collect the relevant data. Varied tools and instruments used in the research are the questionnaire, Pre-test, class exercises and Post-test. The constituents of the methodological design of the research include the administration of the questionnaire, Pre-test, class exercises, Post-test as well as the implementation of the listening programme.
2.5 Data for the Present Study

In the present study the data are collected through varied instruments. A questionnaire is developed for the target group, i.e., the students of Prof. RamkrISHNa more arts, commerce and science college, akurdi, Pune. Before the implementation of the listening programme the students are asked to fill in the questionnaire. It is succeeded by a Pre-test. The Pre-test is assessed and the questionnaires are scrutinized. On the basis of the assessment of the Pre-test and scrutiny of the questionnaire, observations regarding the students' knowledge of the target language and their mastery over the listening skill are made. The listening programme is taught to the target group for 18 days. Diverse listening exercises are undertaken during the listening programme. The daily record of the students' performance in the class exercises is maintained. In the end the results of the Pre-test and Post-test are compared, analysed and the statistical interpretation of the same is presented. The students' performance in the class exercises is also analysed and interpreted in a systematic way.

2.6 Significance of the Study

The present study proposes a listening programme which may help the students in increasing their proficiency in the listening skill and to improve their competence in the English language. Despite the fact that lots of materials on listening strategies are available, not much work has been done in the teaching of the listening skill. This work may prove beneficial for the English language teachers (who teach English as a second language) and enrich the teaching-learning experience.
2.7 Review of the Work Already Done on the Topic

Many scholars have given their valuable contribution to the area of the listening skill. But a lot needs to be done on the role of the listening skill in the teaching of English and the methods and techniques to be used in the effective teaching of the listening skill. The sub-section offers a bird's eye-view of some of the work already done in this area.

Mathew (2001) in his research work ‘Enhancing the Listening Skills of Regional Medium Learners to Improve Reading Skills’ focuses on establishing a close link between listening and reading skills. The aim of the study is to enhance the listening skill of learners to improve their reading skill. A package of 18 tests is given as language input to learners to help them with their reading skill. These tests range from sound distinction and word distinction tests to sentence level comprehension tests. The study comprises of three stages. The preliminary study is undertaken to know the general problem of the learners and teachers inside and outside classroom and to test the learners' competence in the receptive and productive skills. In the main study language input is given through listening tests in order to enhance the listening skill. Finally a summative test is taken in order to know how far the language input given through the listening tests during the main study helps the learners in enhancing their reading skill.

‘The Identification of Course Features Facilitating Self Instruction in Listening Comprehension’ by Julka (1980) aims at studying the needs, attitudes and listening skill of first year undergraduates in order to develop a rationale for a self-instructional course in listening comprehension. A survey and pilot project are conducted to
discover how much and what type of help a learner would need for unsupervised learning. A self-instructional course in listening comprehension is designed on the basis of the survey and the pilot project. After the rigorous training and practice exercises the final examination is conducted. The collected data are analysed. Some tips for successfully using this self-instructional course are enlisted. In the present study the focus is more on the designing of the self-instructional course in listening comprehension rather than the teaching of the listening skill.

The purpose of Mukherjee’s (1978) work ‘An Investigation into Undergraduate Students’ Proficiency in Listening Comprehension and Note-Taking in English’ is to find out the undergraduate students’ proficiency in listening to and comprehending classroom lectures in English. An attempt is also made in this study to check their efficiency in note-taking. A proficiency test in listening comprehension is designed which consists of the English test, Economics test and Botany test. The main goal of the proficiency test is to assess students’ abilities in comprehending formal classroom lectures and their note-taking abilities in different subjects in English. The other instruments are a questionnaire for the students, teacher interviews and observation of classes. The objectives of administering these instruments are to find out students’ and teachers’ reactions to the teaching and learning of the skills of listening and note-taking, the methods of teaching used and the kind of practice given to the students in the listening skill. On the grounds of the first proficiency test the main hypothesis of the study that undergraduate students do not possess adequate abilities in listening to and comprehending classroom lectures in English is confirmed. Based on the results of the first proficiency test and the findings from the other instruments certain suggestions are made for remedial teaching and systematic practice in the listening
skill and note-taking at the undergraduate level. Thus Mukherjee (1978) systematically studies undergraduate students' inadequacies in comprehending the classroom lectures in English and their note-taking abilities. Though she gives suggestions for remedial teaching, she does not propose any remedial course in listening comprehension.

Shayea (2005) in her doctoral thesis 'Developing Listening Skills of Yemeni Learners of English' makes an attempt to survey and bridge the gap between the needs of the Yemeni learners of English at the University level and the current teaching practice and syllabus design for the listening skill. She endeavours to design a model syllabus that can trigger off the learners' motivation and consequently result in promoting their listening skill. The marginalization of the listening skill leads to the learners' lack of communicative competence. The researcher claims that in order to ensure communicative efficiency the learners ought to have adequate opportunities of practising the communicative skills in the classroom. Thus the study strives to identify the extent and levels of listening deficiencies of learners in the Yemeni universities and recommend a remedial procedure for comprehensive improvement of their listening skill in English.

Thus many scholars have done commendable research in the field of listening skill. Yet a promising avenue is available for further research. Still several active steps need to be taken to make listening skill an integral aspect of English language teaching. It is also felt that we should think of several effective methods for enriching students' listening skill. The present study is a modest attempt in this direction.