

Investigating the Students' Attitudes towards Using the Best Practices in English Listening through CALL

Dr. Chamundeshwari¹, Sivananda DN²

¹Assistant Professor, REVA University, Bengaluru, India

²M.A Student, REVA University, Bengaluru, India

***Corresponding Author:**

Dr. Chamundeshwari

Email: chamundeshwaripari@gmail.com

Abstract: In the Indian scenario, demonstrating communication skills shows success path in the placement recruitment for the engineering students. Most of the students lack communication skill; they are not 'industry ready'. It is mandatory for undergraduate students studying in Engineering Colleges to learn the English language. It helps them to pursue higher education. Now a days, Corporate and foreign universities requires the students, who pursue higher studies and have proficiency in the international language. They expect them to have good score in IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC etc., These exams are based on LSRW skills. Since Listening skill is the base for language learning, it has an important place in these tests. This study is an action research project to know the students' perception on English Language Listening Skills and to determine whether the students develop listening skills using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The participants of the study comprised of 70 students from Computer Science Engineering, second semester. They were heterogeneous group of students from Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban areas. Data collection was in the form of a Questionnaire comprising 20 questions framed to know the student's proficiency of listening skills. The purpose of this research is to explore the student's attitude on Listening Skills using Computer Assisted Language Learning among college students. Since they have been using Language Laboratory for the two semesters, it examines how students learned CALL package listening programs and online resources. Findings revealed positive attitudes towards the training as well as towards the use of the listening strategies.

Keywords: Listening Skills, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), positive attitude.

INTRODUCTION

English is the most widely used second language in the world and it is accepted as the international language due to its supremacy in the fields of economy, culture, politics and technology. It eliminates all communication borders worldwide. This has made each and every one to learn the English language. It is essential for the learner to have command on English, so that it helps the learner to express his/her thought through speech or writing in different contexts. Successful communication requires both descriptive knowledge and procedural knowledge of a language. A second language learner who tries to learn a new language must be familiar with all the four skills of the target language. Listening has received an increasing attention in language classrooms after the emergence of the communicative competence in language learning and teaching. Morley [13] describes the change of the status of listening in language learning and teaching as: At one time, listening was assumed to be a passive activity, meriting little classroom attention. Now listening is recognized as an active process, critical to L2 acquisition and deserving of systematic development as a skill in its own right. As the role of

listening changed, the approach of teaching listening has changed from audio-lingual approach to communicative approach. Also, listening instructions accentuate the process of listening instead of product of listening. Instructions largely lay emphasis on the ability to identify words, sentence boundaries, sound discrimination and sound combination, that is, bottom-up process in 1970s. Then, the instruction shifted its focus to top-down process, as the view of second language listening shifted from language based to schema based. This approach activates the background knowledge such as discourse clues, topic familiarity and pragmatic conventions. Later, listening pedagogies gave emphasize on strategies integrated instruction to enhance the learning. But, none of the approaches proved its success. In recent years, affective factors were given more attention in instructional design. In second language acquisition, Karshen [11] points out that success in language learning should be associated with student's emotional condition.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Even though English is both the language of university lectures at English medium universities and

the language of most global conferences and seminars universal, researchers had not paid enough notice to the nature of educational listening [3]. Researcher highlight that the plan training be supposed put together into listening classes; yet, learners be supposed not be divested of the best contact of listening practice on the expense of teaching strategies. Even though research demonstrates that teaching learners listening comprehension strategies is helpful and slot in strategy teaching into language courses need a number of changes in the plan of the exacting course, it is unidentified what English teachers in India think about listening comprehension strategies. Teachers' approach toward teaching second language (L2) listening comprehension and the difficulties they face as teaching it are also unidentified.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Buck [2] refers to the need for strategy training in L2 listening comprehension and propose some behavior for teachers to apply in listening comprehension lessons. The aim of this project was to examine the second year English medium students' approaches towards the recently- planed mix to gather learning listening course before described. Example of study concerned a group of (74) students at QOU/Ramallah Branch and (18) students at Dura in Hebron District. The tool of the study included a weekly working journal which the participants were required to stay during the preparation to evidence thoughts, feelings, or comments concerning the listening tasks and strategy learning in class practice. Based on the data to be got from classroom comments, students' journals, and students' reply to the questionnaire and comments on the Moodle website of the course at the end of the semester were analyzed.

The attitudes of teachers toward teaching listening might, to degree, result from the exacting difficulties that they face as teaching listening comprehension. Their approach might also be connected to the student struggle in L2 listening comprehension exposed in the literature [15]. These student difficulties might result in challenges for teachers as teaching L2 listening comprehension.

OBJECTIVES

- To know the students' perception on English Language Listening Skills.
- To determine whether the students develop listening skills using CALL.

HYPOTHESIS

The students' would have a positive attitude in developing listening skills using CALL.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Harmer [6] thought that one of the main cause for receiving students to listen to spoken English was to let them hear different diversity and pronunciation rather than know the voice of their teachers with own idiosyncrasies. Nowadays, students require being representation not only to one variety of English (British English, for example) but also to varieties such as American English, Australian English, Caribbean English, Indian English or West African English. Ridgway [15] told "Practice is the most important thing in improving the students' listening performance, and Teach listening comprehension is the most important skill". Petric [14] study got the best kind of result in one-semester program of listening lessons on the development of listening skill. In order to achieve this goal, the development of the listening skill in two major groups of university students of English was compared: the first group that received everyday teaching at the English Department and the second group that received extra methodical listening training during one semester. This new study showed of listening instruction enhanced students' listening skills. The difference between the pre-test and post-test means in the new group was statistically significant.

Other studies explain that teaching listening develops other language skills as well as listening. Hamid's [5] observed the result of listening practice and training on the writing performance of 8th grade students. She used listening practice with the new group as an entry to writing tasks. She proved that listening practice has considerably positive effects. It is an effective means to make easy and improve writing. Kavaliauskiene [8] in his research studied the learners' self-appraisal of listening difficulties and challenges in performing listening tests. The participants in this project were university students. The answer gave imminent into the practice of expanding listening skills. It was a helpful instruction for the best practice of teaching effectual listening skills in the second language that was obtainable based on the research data and surveillance of the students' presentation. One more study by Guo [4] was a one-year research of teaching English as a second language at Shanxi University of Finance and Economics. The experiment engages three teachers and 550 non-English major undergraduates of the University, sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Education. The research goal is to discover the belonging of good and automatic practice. Results of the research are of meaning and may show helpful to English language teaching in Chinese tertiary institutions. All these studies support the ideas. Non-interactive listening is where the listener is connected in listening inertly to a language even in conversation [1]. Some non-interactive listening situations are listening to the radio, CDs, TV, films, lectures etc. and listener

typically doesn't have the chance to inquire for clarification, slower language [12].

WHAT IS CALL?

CALL is the acronym for Computer Assisted Language Learning. Computer literacy is becoming more and more of a necessity for a proper understanding of the real world today. The inventions that have left their stamp on twentieth century – records, radio, television, audio and video recording, computers or cable and satellite broadcasting have a remarkable technological dimension. Their significance is essentially economic and social.

Computer in Language education does not entail a breakaway tradition. It is a linear, long drawn out tradition of educational technology right from the use of chalk and blackboard, pictures and audio – video visuals, to the use of the computer, which has the ability to integrate all media. There are many innovative uses of computers that still remain to be manipulated and exploited for the benefit of the learners of English Language. It is the onus of the enthusiastic teacher who can facilitate productive learning in alliance with media technologies. Computers are the latest tools in the series of modern aids, to language teaching/learning, the earliest being Linguaphone records.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to explore the student's attitude on Listening Skills using Computer Assisted Language Learning among college students. Since they have been using Language Laboratory for the two semesters, it examines how students learned CALL package programs and online resources, the study aims at giving information about the effective use of CALL programs installed and web resources at the Language Lab in the University. The participants of the study comprised of 70 students from second semester, Computer Science Engineering. They were heterogeneous group of students hailing from Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban areas. It was felt that limiting the participants of 70 students was sufficient for the required information. The secondary source of data collection included books and Journals on the literature of the language and technology, both in print and from the Internet. This provided good reference materials for the investigator. In the university, Lab classes that offer CALL for Second Language Instruction are integrated. The laboratory comprised of 71 computers with Wifi-connections. The computers were loaded with various CALL programs, which included various programs for listening such as:

- Face2face Software
- English in mind Software
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation

- You-tube videos
- By providing the group with listening activities to know the productivity gains of LSRW skills.

Tasks concerning Affective Filter, Video

Teaching English through videos is a popular method of teaching English. Especially when students listen with a visual effect they can retain it for a long time. Kellerman (1992) describe show a speaker's body movement and stressed syllables are linked. These movements are helpful for the listener because stress often coincides with items that are semantically salient, in that they often provide new information. Even without being able to hear the words, an observer can visually see where the stressed syllables occur. In a stress based language like English, this kinesis behavior can aid the learner's recognition and storage in short term memory (STM), of the aural input and help the learner to chunk it appropriately [10].

In this study, the students have used the different way of video supported listening input like advertisements, visual supported songs, short videos, and documentary films to attract the listeners and enhance the listening skill.

Advertisement

Advertisements are quite appealing in nature. Nowadays, advertisements in visual media attract everyone from younger to older people. It has turned to be a medium to spread ideas with the help of pictures. The instructor used commercial advertisements as input to enhance listening skill. Advertisements from visual media are taken into consideration. Though advertisements play for less than one minute, they give enormous resources for intensive listening. Since the study is to develop bottom-up skills, advertisements were used to develop that. Some of the commercial advertisements played during the training were Nescafe, Indigo Love of Reading Fund, Cool Millions from the Colorado lottery, Adobe Marketing cloud, etc. Some funny commercials were also used to make the activities enjoyable.

Movie trailer

Listening is not simply receiving the aural input; it involves attention and active participation. The monotonous method of playing audio and doing the same activity will frustrate the learners, which in turn stand as a hurdle to learning listening. In this study, movie trailers were also used as an input for teaching listening. The instructor played varieties of movie trailers like Ice Age, Mission Impossible, etc. with varieties of tasks to create an enjoyable learning situation. Full length movies provide contextual situations to answer comprehensive questions. Since, the study focuses on bottom-up skills, these movie

trailers were used. Learning with movie trailer gave pleasurable and enjoyable moments to the students.

Short Videos and Documentary Films

Short videos and documentary films are great sources for imparting listening. There are many short videos available in the Internet which focuses on a single theme. "Live curious" is one of the short videos used in the training programme. Another important source which can be used as input was a documentary film that plays for about 15 minutes to one hour. Documentary films document some aspects of reality, primarily for the purpose of instruction or maintaining a historical record. As documentary speaks reality, it may create interest for learners to know the reality behind the events. So, the doc. film was used as an instructional input to create an interesting atmosphere for learning.

Hiroshima
 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwkyPvIWPM0>)
 was one of the documentaries which were used by the instructor as an instructional input.

Rhymes

In the beginning stage of the training, students were exposed to rhymes with music. Students were encouraged to work in groups to rephrase the words and make new rhymes on their own for the original music. Since, students were made to do work in groups they enjoyed the class and felt relaxed. Throughout the six weeks of training seven rhymes like Row Row Row your boat, Twinkle Twinkle little star, etc. were used as the source for the training in the class.

Songs with Audio

Songs with audio helped the learners to learn sound discrimination and stress. For the study three songs with different genres were used as the instructional input. During the first listening, the students were not given the complete tape script. In the second listening they were given complete lyrics and were made to arrange the jumbled verses.

This chapter presents the settings and participants of the study, the instruments used for data collection and data analysis.

Data collection was in the form of a Questionnaire comprising 20 questions. The questionnaire was framed in such a way to know the student's proficiency of listening skills. Group discussions were held for the same questionnaire posing the reasons for their option selected orally.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Listening material in the Lab are well designed for practice.

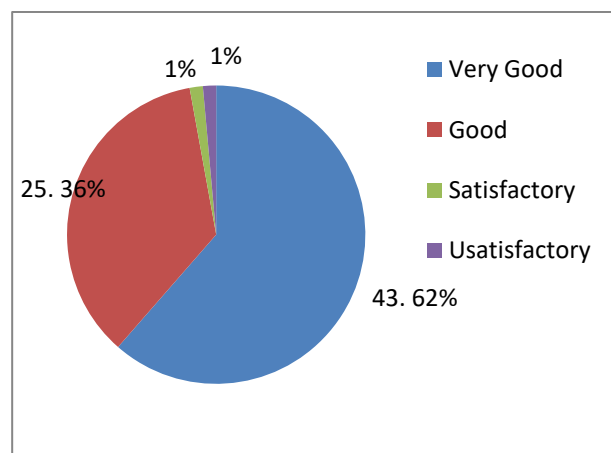


Fig-1

Out of 70 students, 43.62% of them rated Very Good as they felt listening material in lab are well designed because they could do their comprehension and use foreign accent while speaking. 25.36% of them rated Good as they felt e-books may be added as materials. 1% of them could not understand some materials and 1% were not satisfied as they insisted to add more videos for listening skills.

2. Listening material of the program has various tasks and different forms of listening exercises.

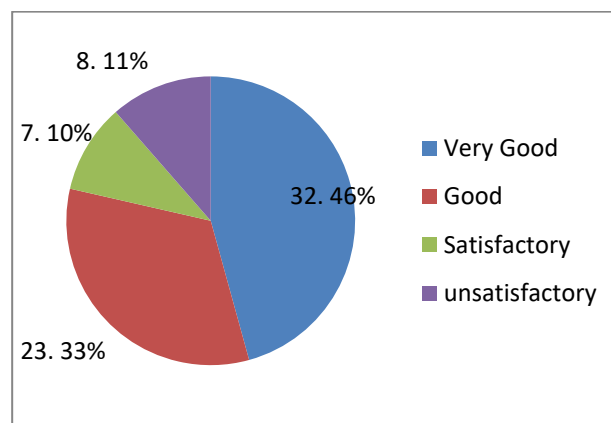


Fig-2

Out of 70 students, 32.76% of them acknowledged Very Good as they felt listening tasks were more in number to practice. 23.33% rated Good as they felt that the tasks were interesting but couldn't practice at home. 7.10% affirmed satisfactory as they were unable to understand the accent and 8.11% mentioned unsatisfactory as they wanted some Indian accent English videos to practice who had a regional background.

3. Language laboratory using listening material and other supplementary materials were beneficial.

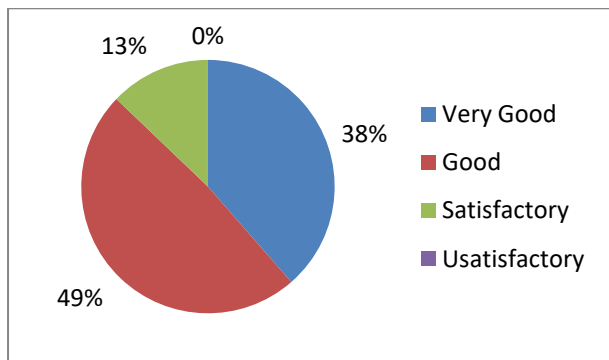


Fig-3

Out of 70 students, 38% of them responded as Very Good as they felt listening tasks were more beneficial. 49% rated Good as they could enhance their knowledge in listening skills. 13% were satisfied who felt that some more exercises and videos to be added. None of them were unsatisfied.

4. Online resources were useful to improve listening skills such as English news, songs and movies.

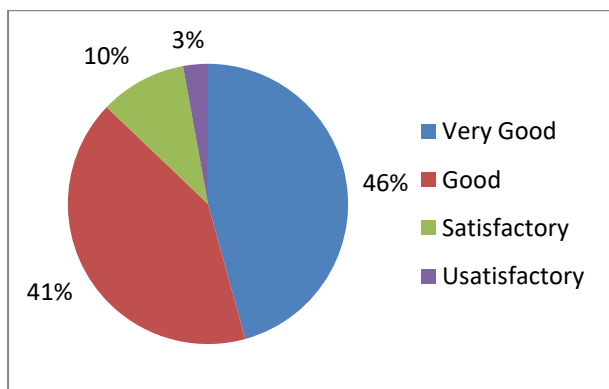


Fig-4

Out of 70 students, 46% of them responded Very Good as they felt listening tasks were more interesting and was fun doing exercises. 41% rated Good as they could improve their fluency in English. 10% were satisfied felt that exercises and videos were little difficult to understand. 3% of them were unsatisfied as they had no idea about the exercises inspite of the explanations given.

5. Software and online resources made me an autonomous learner.

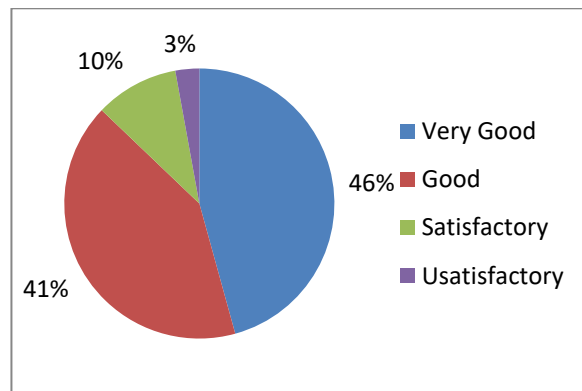


Fig-5

Out of 70 students, 46% of them responded Very Good as the online resources had all that they needed to improve their English. 41% rated Good as they were confused to select the needed from the vast resources online. 10% were satisfied as they did not know much about browsing online. 3% of them were unsatisfied because they found it time consuming.

6. I felt pre-listening questions are important in listening practice.

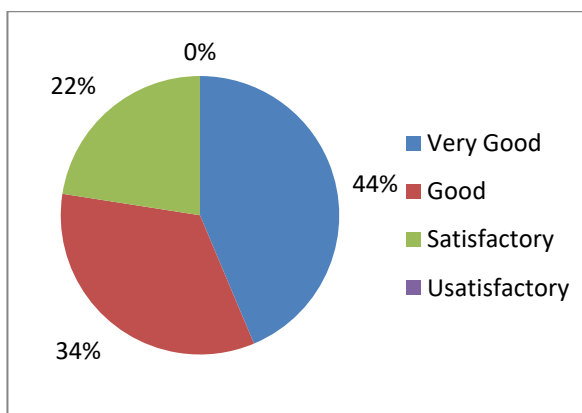


Fig-6

Out of 70 students, 44% of them responded Very Good as they felt themselves more confident after this activity. 34% rated Good as they were in need of more questions. 22% were satisfied felt that prelistening questions were not interesting but were helpful. None of them were unsatisfied.

7. Software activities were interesting and easy to follow.

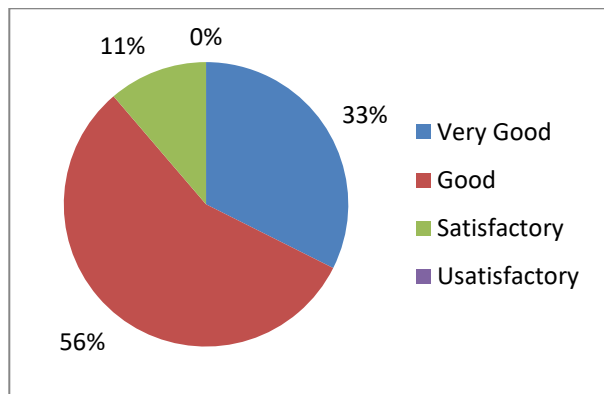


Fig-7

Out of 70 students, 33% of them responded Very Good as they felt software activities helped them to improve their listening skills. 56% rated Good as the activities boost up their English fluency. 11% were satisfied felt that these activities were difficult to understand and solve. None of them were unsatisfied.

8. Videos were well designed to follow the instruction on e-activities.

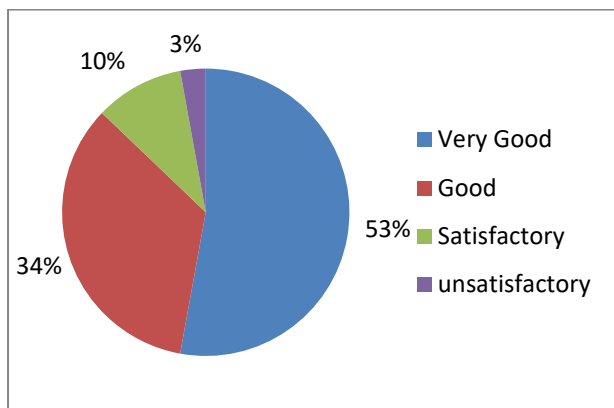


Fig-8

Out of 70 students, 53% of them responded Very Good as they felt that the videos were more interesting and well equipped. 34% rated Good as they were not much effective but were good enough to improvise their fluency. 10% were satisfied felt that videos were faster and could not follow. 3% of them were unsatisfied as they could not get along with the videos.

9. Software videos and audio were stimulating and attractive.

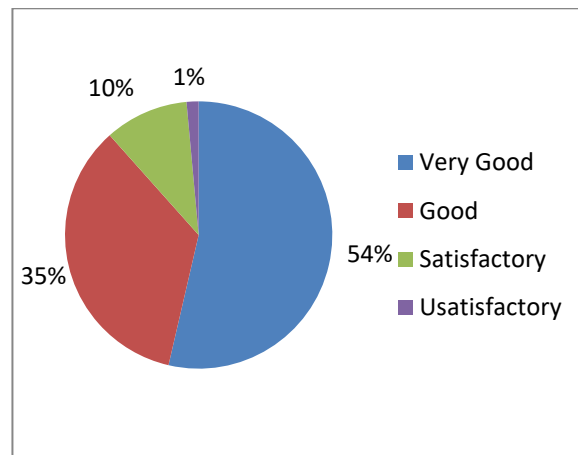


Fig-9

Out of 70 students, 54% of them responded Very Good as they felt that the videos were colorful and full of information's. 35% rated Good as they felt resources to be insufficient. 10% were satisfied felt that videos and audios were attractive but were confusing. 1% of them were unsatisfied as they did not like those videos and audios did not help.

10. I felt confident learning English language after the listening course.

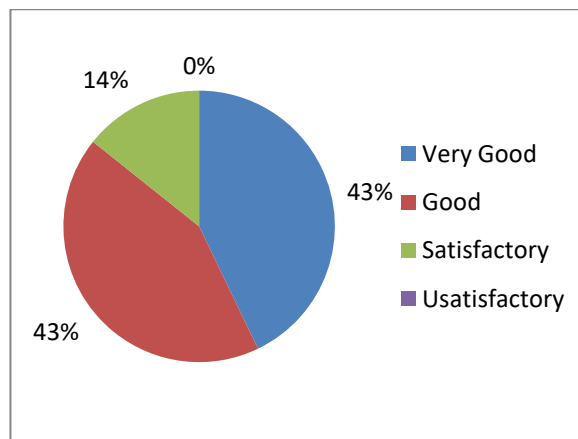


Fig-10

Out of 70 students, 43% of them responded Very Good as they felt more confident after listening course. 43% rated Good as they helped to improvise their fluency. 14% were satisfied felt that they were better than before after attending this course. None of them were unsatisfied.

11. I felt that using CALL improved my computer and internet skills.

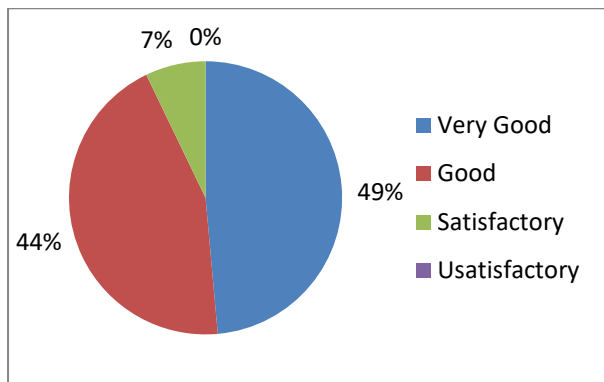


Fig-11

Out of 70 students, 49% of them rated Very Good as they felt that CALL was a great breakthrough in their English proficiency. 44% rated Good as the program helped them a lot to overcome their difficulty. 7% were satisfied as they were not familiar with computers before. None of them were unsatisfied.

12. I like to study more English course in the same way.

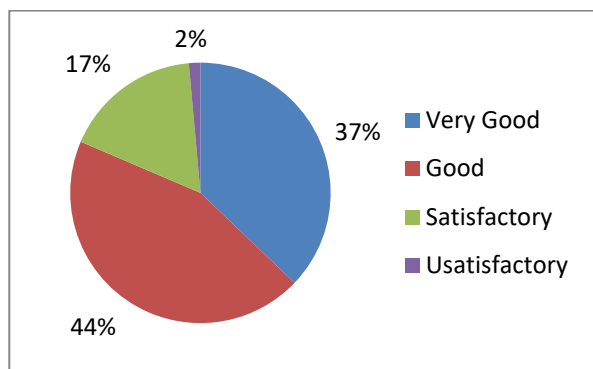


Fig-12

Out of 70 students, 44% of them acknowledged Very Good as they felt that CALL was the best course for learning. 43% rated Good as they felt this as an efficient way to learn English. 14% were satisfied as they liked the way English learning has become easier to learn through this course. 2% rated unsatisfactory as they felt classroom teaching was better.

13. I could enhance my pronunciation and accent through listening.

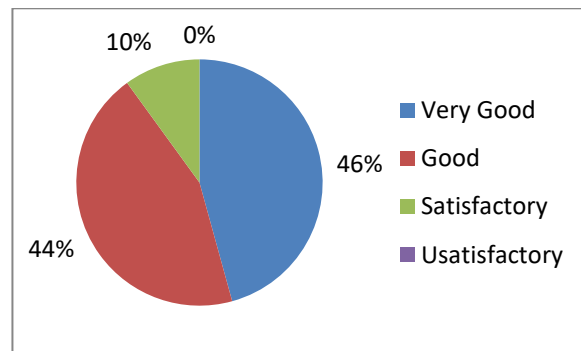


Fig-13

Out of 70 students, 46% of them responded Very Good as they felt more confident while speaking English as CALL has improved their accent. 44% rated Good as their pronunciation was refined after attending these classes. 10% were satisfied felt that their accent improvised after attending this course. None of them were unsatisfied.

14. I could enrich my conversation skills.

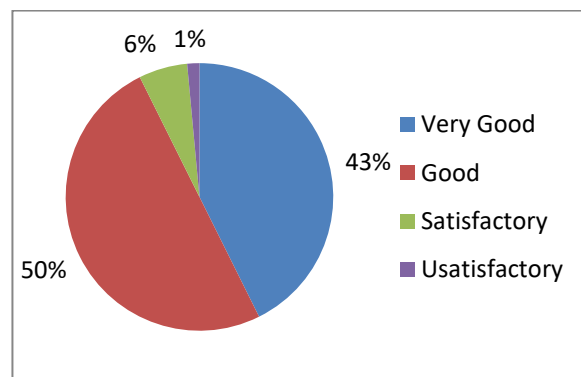


Fig-14

Out of 70 students, 43% of them rated Very Good as they felt that they could interact well after attending this course. 50% rated Good as they felt they were bold enough to converse unlike before. 6% were satisfied as they improved their conversation skills after attending this course. 1% rated unsatisfactory as they did not understand the nuances of learning through this course.

15. Listening helped me in understanding the content of the materials.

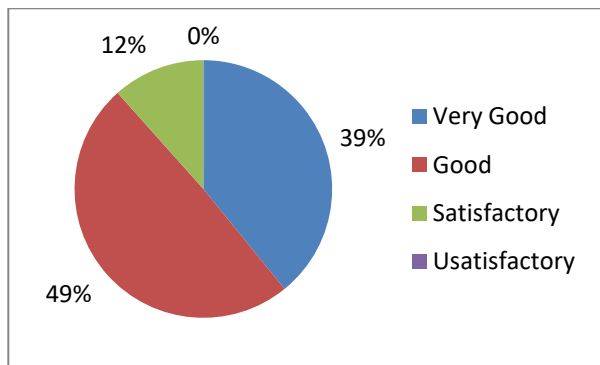


Fig-15

Out of 70 students, 39% of them rated Very Good as they contents were dealt in depth in this course. 49% rated Good as they could understand contents much better. 12% were satisfied as they found that this course improved their fluency but did not gain access to the materials. None of them were unsatisfied.

16. I could use vocabulary to an extent while speaking and writing.

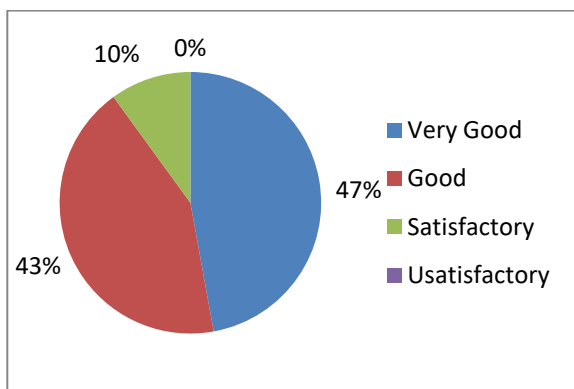


Fig-16

Out of 70 students, 47% of them rated Very Good as they improved their vocabulary skills through this program. 43% rated Good as the activities were very helpful to develop their skills. 10% were satisfied as they found it difficult in understanding. None of them were unsatisfied.

17. I felt using correct methods and techniques in listening practice are essential.

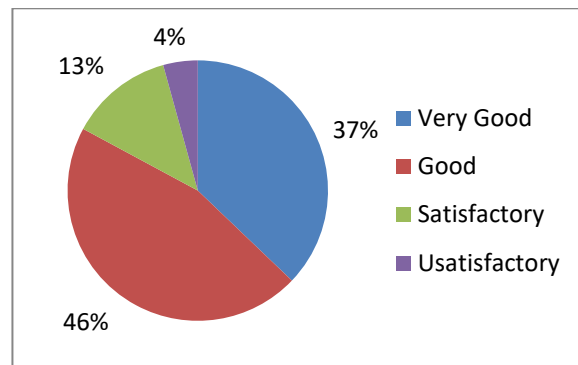


Fig-17

Out of 70 students, 37% of them acknowledged Very Good as they felt CALL provided correct methods of teaching and learning. 46% rated Good as the activities were good method of teaching. 13% were satisfied felt that methodical way helped them to make learning easier. 4% felt that methodical teaching was not necessary for efficient learning.

18. Listening practices helped me in intensive and extensive listening.

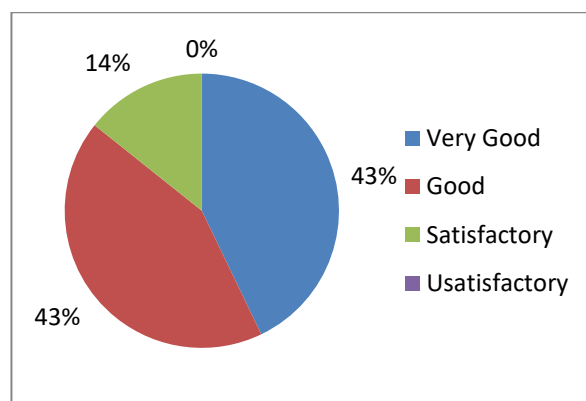


Fig-18

Out of 70 students, 43% of them rated Very Good as they made them excel in listening skills. 43% rated Good as their listening skills improved. 14% were satisfied as these activities helped them improvise their listening skills. None of them were unsatisfied.

19. Learning English language software materials through listening is more enjoyable.

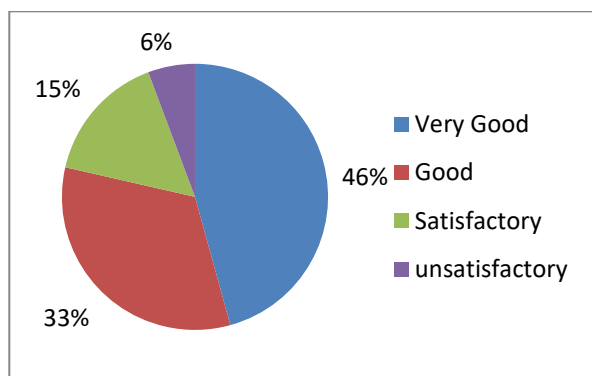


Fig-19

Out of 70 students, 46% of them acknowledged Very Good as they found listening courses very interesting and enjoyable. 33% rated Good as they felt better learning through listening activities. 15% were satisfied as they found that this course improved their language learning. 6% rated unsatisfactory as they felt that listening was boring and not effective.

20. CALL acts as a learning tool for listening.

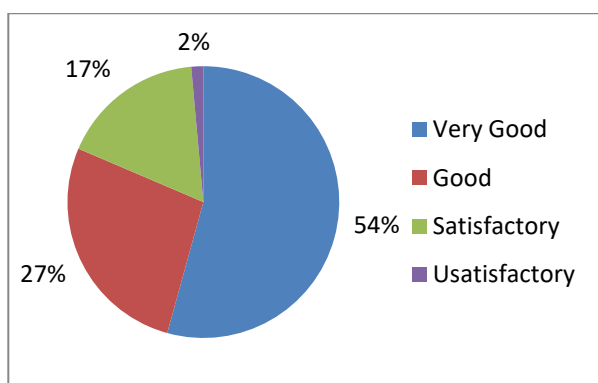


Fig-20

Out of 70 students, 54% of them acknowledged Very Good as they found CALL as a very useful tool. 27% rated Good as they felt themselves better after this course. 13% were satisfied as they found that this course improved their fluency and conversation skills. 2% rated unsatisfactory as they liked classroom teaching more than through computers.

DISCUSSION

Teachers in language classes may neglect teaching listening and neglect to address the affective factors or they do not feel it as important to be considered in a listening class. However, this study has indicated that filtering affective factors plays an important role in teaching English, particularly in

developing the listening skill. Potential language teachers may be trained in the current approaches regarding listening and to use affective filter activities. The findings of the present study can draw the attention of the academicians, the curriculum designers, material developers, teachers to shape curricula, create syllabi, and develop materials and to conduct classes accordingly.

This study investigates in examining the students' attitudes towards the use of intensive practice in developing their capacity in listening proficiency by using all means of Computer Assisted Language Learning and home practice. The students in the sample of the study expressed their positive attitudes towards this experiment. This shows that the students feel that they can improve their listening fluency and become more accurate learners of English. They have to acquire good listening practice by the use of various types of extended discourse including a wide variety of available materials most of which could be online materials. They should get good learning and teaching strategies which are also essential to guarantee the success for this practice. More software materials should be effectively utilized to achieve this goal. Therefore, CALL can provide very helpful means of education in language learning as it opens new vistas for students to benefit from the plethora of materials that it provides. It is also quite important to give the students sufficient instruction in the use of helpful listening strategies. A lot of concentration should be placed on the effect of applying CALL in English language learning and teaching for engineering students.

CONCLUSION

The study can be concluded that it confirms the previous literature on listening and affective filter activities. To enhance the listening skills of low level listeners it is essential for teachers to teach listening by diagnosing the practical problems faced by the students and adapting strategies like using the Affective Filter activities additionally by utilizing technologies and an authentic input. Integrating varieties of input with visual support and games to filter the affective factors encouraged the students to enhance the listening skill. Driving out students fear and inhibition in the second language listening class is appreciated. This study draws closer to prove this suggestion by revealing that through CALL of imparting listening with bottom up task items aid the development in listening skill, the mixed method of imparting listening helped more comparatively.

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