

Abstract

This descriptive study sought to establish the listening competence in English of primary teacher trainees in Kenya. The study correlated the social variables of sex, age, performance in Mid- course examination, entry behaviour and the college type and the listening competences of the teacher trainees. It also established the teacher trainees' attitudes towards listening skills. The Affective Filter of „The Monitor Model“ by Krashen was used in the study to investigate the attitude of teacher trainees towards listening skills. Interactive Processing as propounded by Richards also informed the study on the processes used in the listening process and on importance of context in the listening event. A sample of two Teacher Training Colleges was used for the study. The colleges were purposively sampled so that one of them was drawn from the public sector and the other from the private sector. Simple random sampling was used to pick one class in each of the colleges for the study. The respondents were put into three strata using their performance in Mid-course examination namely: The above average trainees, the average trainees and the below average trainees. A test comprising three tasks: dictation, cloze test and listening comprehension were used to elicit data on the listening competences of the teacher trainees. Measures of central tendency were used to analyse the data. One way ANOVA was used to establish the differences in means between and within groups. Correlations between performances by the different groups were established using correlation coefficients and results presented in tables. A questionnaire was also administered to the teacher trainees to seek their views on the listening lessons and the importance of listening skills. The findings indicated that the trainees lacked the desired competence levels in listening skills. However, the teacher trainees had the minimum competence levels in the listening comprehension and in the dictation but not in the cloze test. The trainees in the public college performed better than teacher trainees in the private college in all the listening tasks. The female trainees performed better than their male counterparts. Teacher trainees with strong entry behavior performed better than the teacher trainees with weak entry behavior. The younger teacher trainees performed better than the older teacher trainees. Performance in the Mid-course Examination also influenced the listening competences of the teacher trainees. The study recommended that there should be a set minimum entry behaviour of the trainees joining training colleges. Majority of the teacher trainees were found to have a positive attitude towards the listening skill. Though majority of the trainees thought that listening skill has been given enough emphasis in the Primary Teacher Education syllabus, a large percentage thought otherwise. Most of the teacher trainees rated their listening quality as moderate. There is therefore a need to lower the affective filter of the teacher trainees by helping them cultivate a more positive attitude towards listening skills, eliminating noise in the listening contexts and giving in-service trainings to primary school teachers in order to improve their speaking skills.