

The Impact of Audio Input Tasks on ESL Learners Belonging to Government Higher Secondary School, Anaikkarai

S. Murali, Dr. S. Shanmugasundaram

Ph.D Research Scholar (Part Time) Rajah Serfoji Government
College, Thanjavur -5 (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University,
Tiruchirappalli), Tamil Nadu, India.

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Rajah Serfoji Govt Arts
College (Autonomous),

(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli) Thanjavur, Tamil
Nadu, India.

Corresponding author: S. Murali

Ph.D Research Scholar (Part Time) Rajah Serfoji Government
College, Thanjavur -5 (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University,
Tiruchirappalli), Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

ESL practitioners all over the world work on to improve the Listening Skill of second or foreign language learners through various tasks and activities. This paper makes use of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). This paper, "The Impact of Audio Input Tasks on ESL Learners belonging to Government Higher Secondary School, Anaikkarai" attempts to study listening skill of the learners who use audio clippings from the You Tube. The central idea of this study is to assist the learner to comprehend by focusing on form and meaning. This is done by making use of tasks, specifically designed for this purpose. When Learners listen, they struggle to continue to comprehend. It is in this context Listening Comprehension based tasks simply allow them to continue to comprehend, without worrying about their misunderstandings. Every time the students struggle to understand, their Comprehensive level of understanding is supported with some assistance. This study makes use of 'Audio Clippings" downloaded from the You Tube on various interesting topics, so that the learners are allowed to listen to audios and to comprehend on their own without worrying about their discontinuity in their comprehension. They are given scores for their performance and these scores are analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics.

Keywords: Listening Comprehension, Audio Clippings, Descriptive statistics, CALL, ESL

1. Introduction

Learning a second language has always been a challenging task. Over a period of time Teaching Listening Skill has emerged as an important area of study. In L2 listening learners are trained to achieve Listening Skill. Though it is a challenging skill to be taught it is considered as the most useful in the ESL classroom. Many tasks are used in L2 listening to help the learners to have a better learning experience, by involving themselves in various tasks chosen from interesting situations.

To administer the said task, the following materials are used.

1. Audio Clippings from the You Tube.
2. Expressions, Glossaries, Phrases.
3. Work Sheets/ Assistance Sheets (prepared specifically for each task).
4. Transcription.

2. Research Question

Does assisting with Audio Clippings from the You Tube help the learners to improve their listening skill?

3. Objectives

- To find out whether Listening Skill improves with the use of Assistance Sheets for the Audio-cum Video Clippings.
- Whether the students are able to comprehend based on the audio input they listen to.
- As they listen whether the learners are able to comprehend and remember their points/ideas while listening in L2.

4. Materials used for this Study

Various audio clippings from the You Tube and their transcripts are used with comprehension questions and assistance sheets. Each Audio clipping is played repeatedly as per the participant's requirement. In addition to that a worksheet containing transcript and a frame work of the listening input with important words, phrases and expressions are given.

5. Students Profile

Ten ESL learners studying in Government Higher Secondary School, Anaikkarai, Thanjavur, Tamilnadu were chosen for this study. They were aged between 14 and 15. Their language capacity could be termed as intermediate level (as per the ACTFL 2012). These students had been studying in Regional medium, government schools. Besides all of them were from villages, a typical environment where the chances of using English was quiet remote. They never had reading and listening habits nor did their parents support in terms of providing them with English Newspapers.

6. Methodology

The rural area students from Government Higher Secondary School, Anaikkarai, Thanjavur were introduced about the study and they were given an orientation about the task and they were motivated about the benefits of the study. A baseline test was conducted to know the listening level of the students, with reference to listening skill in L2. Students who scored more than 60 percentage of marks were chosen for the study after knowing about their interest to participate in the present study.

Scores of Baseline Test

S.No	Name	Father's Name	Roll No	Baseline Test Scores (10)
1	J. Nivetha	Mr.jayabal	9201	07
2	M. Keerthana	Mr.murugan	9202	06
3	P.Raja	Mr.Panneer	9203	05
4	S. Sahana	Mr.Senthilkumar	9204	06
5	B. Ramya	Mr.Baalu	9205	08
6	R. Ranjana	Mr.Regupathy	9206	07
7	J. Jaya Sri	Mr.Jayakumar	9207	06
8	S. Sripan	Mr.Sankar	9208	07
9	R. Vignesh	Mr.Rajamanickam	9209	05
10	J. Sriram	Mr.Jayaraman	9210	05

The selected students for this study were almost homogeneous and they were divided into two groups, i.e, Control Group mentioned as (A) and Experimental Group mentioned as (B). The group was allotted a few contact hours for coaching. In the first contact hour of the control group they were introduced to certain listening input tasks along with transcripts. A set of comprehension questions were given to them for reference and were asked to perform the task. Once they completed their task they were given scores based on their performance.

The students selected for the Experimental group were introduced to certain listening input tasks with assistance sheets. These audio-cum-video clippings were downloaded from the "You Tube" and played to them. Students were allowed to listen to the audio for two or three times with the help of assistance sheets besides they were given meanings for the hard words and some important expressions. Then they were asked to attend the task one by one and their score was noted and they were given marks.

As could be seen from the marks scored (mean 6.2) in the Baseline Test, they may be considered as a Homogeneous group.

7. Criteria for the Assessment

The following criteria were chosen.

- Scanning for a single message or a word.
- Listening to the main idea.
- Over all comprehension.

8. Tools used for the Study

The following tools were used for the study.

- Audio Clippings from the You Tube.
- Listening Comprehension Test

9. Results

Control Group A.

S. No	Roll Number	Listening Input	Scanning for a single message or a word.	Listening to the main idea.	Over all comprehension.	Total Marks Scored (Max-10)
1	9201	Wild Hare	1.5	1	2	4.5
2	9202	Elephant	1.5	1.5	2	5
3	9203	Peacock	1	1	1	3
4	9204	Bengal Tiger	0	1	2	3
5	9205	Indian Vulture	1.5	2	2	5.5

Experimental Group B.

S. No	Roll Number	Listening Input	Scanning for a single message or a word.	Listening to the main idea.	Over all comprehension.	Total Marks Scored (Max-10)
1	9206	Bengal Tiger	2	2.5	4	8.5
2	9207	Wild hare	2	2	4	8
3	9208	Indian Vulture	1.5	2	3	6.5
4	9209	Elephant	2.5	2.5	4	9
5	9210	Peacock	2	2	3	7

10. Discussion

- Overall there was a significance difference between these two groups with reference to listening in L2.
- The performance of the experimental group of students was far better than the control group of students.
- The Audio Clippings from the You Tube along with assistance sheets had played a major role in their ability to listen to in the second language. In fact it was served as a proper framework for their listening comprehension as well as a motivational tool.
- Since the framework for their listening was in their hands it was easy for them to continue to comprehend logically. This had helped them to listen coherently also.
- Another advantage was that they didn't have to concentrate on all points, they simply continued with their listening, retaining all the points related to the topic. Another notable point was that, when they were continued to listen their confidence level improved to a great deal.

- Whereas the control group of students struggled a lot without assistance sheets to read and understand the transcript. Psychologically they were demotivated and felt quite inferior and scored less marks.
- As the control group of students did not have a framework for listening (Assistance Sheets). They performed poorly.

11. Limitations

- This study is restricted to only one school.
- Sample size is small therefore it may not be generalized.
- Number of contact hours allotted for the coaching of the learners was quite restricted.

12. Conclusion

Thus, there is a significant difference in the performance between these two groups. The students from the control group found it difficult to remember their points on the related topic and also to answer it since they did not have assistance sheets for reference (while listening). Whereas the students from the experimental group using the audio input from the You Tube could perform better with the help of assistance sheets (while listening). They also comprehended well with reference to the following criteria (i) scanning for a single message or a word (ii) listening to the main idea (iii) over all comprehension. The result of this small experiment shows that if a task is designed/created in tune with the level of the students, it can assist learners to comprehend in the second language. It also shows that the interest/motivation level of the students from the experimental group is also quite high (as they comprehended well with the help of assistance sheets).

Thus, the experiment proves that “if the listening environment is made easy with the help of assistance sheets, the comprehension level of the ESL learners does improve in a significant manner”.

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