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Effects of Computer Assisted Task Based Listening Learning on Ethiopian Students' Listening skills development

Pengaruh Pembelajaran Mendengarkan Berbasis Tugas Berbantuan Komputer pada Pengembangan keterampilan Menyimak Siswa Ethiopia

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Abstract

This paper examined effects of computer-assisted task based listening learning (CATBLL) on students' listening skills development. The participants were freshman students of Adama Science and Technology University in the 2019/2020 academic year. The experimental group was treated with computer-assisted task-based listening skills instruction approach while the conventional method was employed for the control group. Teacher-made tests and students' self-reflection journal were the data collection instruments used in this study. For the analyses of numerical data, paired sample t-test and independent samples t-test were computed. Qualitative analyses were done for the data obtained through students' self-reflection journals. Based on the findings, the proposed approach resulted in a strong and significant effect on students' listening skills development. A statistically significant difference was confirmed between the experimental group and the control group in terms of their listening achievement score. The results of qualitative analyses depict that the majority of the students in computer-assisted group showed positive feelings towards the approach; they also reflected that they relatively improved their listening skills. This implies that computer-assisted task-based listening skills learning approach appeared to facilitate individual learning, and increase students' concentration. Thus, one can conclude that computer-assisted task-based listening skills learning approach facilitated students' listening skills development than the conventional one. Hence, it is advised to incorporate CATBLL in English language education is valuable in the digital world.

Keywords: CATBLL, Listening skill

Abstrak

Artikel ini meneliti efek pembelajaran menyimak berbasis tugas komputer (CATBLL) pada pengembangan keterampilan menyimak siswa. Pesertanya adalah mahasiswa baru Universitas Sains dan Teknologi Adama tahun ajaran 2019/2020. Kelompok eksperimen diperlakukan dengan pendekatan instruksi keterampilan mendengarkan berbasis tugas yang dibantu komputer sementara metode konvensional



digunakan untuk kelompok kontrol. Tes buatan guru dan jurnal refleksi diri siswa merupakan instrumen pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Untuk analisis data numerik, uji-t sampel berpasangan dan uji-t sampel independen dihitung. Analisis kualitatif dilakukan terhadap data yang diperoleh melalui jurnal refleksi diri siswa. Berdasarkan temuan, pendekatan yang diusulkan menghasilkan pengaruh yang kuat dan signifikan terhadap pengembangan keterampilan menyimak siswa. Sebuah perbedaan yang signifikan secara statistik dikonfirmasi antara kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol dalam hal skor pencapaian menyimak mereka. Hasil analisis kualitatif menggambarkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa dalam kelompok berbantuan komputer menunjukkan perasaan positif terhadap pendekatan; mereka juga mencerminkan bahwa mereka relatif meningkatkan keterampilan menyimak mereka. Ini menyiratkan bahwa pendekatan pembelajaran keterampilan menyimak berbasis tugas berbasis komputer muncul untuk memfasilitasi pembelajaran individu, dan meningkatkan konsentrasi siswa. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa pendekatan pembelajaran keterampilan menyimak berbasis tugas komputer memfasilitasi pengembangan keterampilan menyimak siswa daripada yang konvensional. Oleh karena itu, disarankan untuk memasukkan CATBLL dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris yang berharga di dunia digital.

Kata kunci: CATBLL, Pengembangan Keterampilan Menyimak

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a broad concept and a very important skill that ought to be considered in the English language teaching process. However, as some studies reveal, students' learning of the skills is inadequately implemented. For instance, the results of studies in Ethiopia by Mikiyas(2015) and Muluken (2008) on the practice of teaching listening skills depicted that the teaching of listening skills is inadequately supported by teaching resources such as educational technologies, audio and contextualized texts. Besides, inappropriate pedagogical procedures, lack of exposure to native speakers of English and inconvenience of the listening environment were also some problems that EFL students faced when learning listening skills. This implies that the student's learning of listening skills was not accompanied by educational technologies to attain the listening skills instruction objectives.

Nowadays, there is an attempt of making learning free from the constraints such as time and place in education system because of the growing of language learning technologies. Printed books and then much later, computers and other innovations were the first technologies employed to make learning free from these constraints. Thus, at the end of the 20th century computers and web-based applications greatly facilitated flexible access and opportunity to language learning materials (Burston, 2013).

On the bases of this, for example, as Altun (2015) indicates, many effective strategies in the learning process can be provided via technology-based foreign language teaching. Incorporating technology in language teaching also leads students to perform a good communication in the target language easily. So, learners can obtain a better environment of developing their foreign language skills if their learning is aided with technology; therefore, technology-supported learning environment is a key facilitating factor that motivates the learners to achieve their learning objectives.

Lai and Li (2011) also assert that there is the mutual contributions of technology and Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for the teaching and learning

of foreign language. Technology can contribute to the development of language skills especially if carefully situated within TBL framework.

Among several technologies, computer is a valuable tool that can assist and can create a new language learning environment for the learning of English language skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing in general (Blake, 2016). Recently, researchers have conducted researches that deal with computer-assisted language learning to suggest ways in which the computer-mediated language instruction can improve students' language learning.

For instance, one local study was conducted by Mulu and Menna (2016) to determine whether or not blended learning had an impact in developing' writing skills of students in Hawassa University. According to this study, blended learning here refers to the combination of computer-assisted and other language teaching approaches. The study found out that students that were treated by the blended learning approach outperformed the control groups that were taught by the conventional approach. And the study concluded that blended learning appeared to result in students' better development of writing skills.

The research by Ghalami and Ahangari (2012) also investigated to check whether or not computer-assisted language learning had impact on EFL students' listening skills in Iranian context. Based on the results of the study, it was confirmed that the computer-assisted language learning has a positive impact on EFL learners' listening learning.

They also concluded that computers and language learning are closely interrelated. Computers can be a very important source for providing authentic materials as inputs that help maintain and increase learners' motivation (Morley, 2001). Supporting this, Jones (2008) also suggests that computer-based listening instruction is effective in enhancing students' listening skills if appropriately utilized.

Other study on computer-assisted versus classroom instruction by Kamberi (2012) found out that at the time of students' learning idiomatic expressions in the EFL classrooms, the CALL environment was better in giving more opportunity than classroom instruction to students; there was also significant difference between computer-assisted and classroom instruction on the bases of facilitating idiomatic expression learning, Based on this finding the researcher suggested that teachers are encouraged to incorporate CALL in their everyday teaching for the CALL environment provides students the opportunity to learn an obtain knowledge.

Besides, CALL has enormous advantages in improving the quality of language teaching and learning through playing a mediating role in the digital world. That is why CALL is becoming more popular in language learning and teaching nowadays. Han (2008) and Dina and Cironei (2013) in Golshan and Tafazoli (2014) stated that language learners have the option to study English language at anytime and anywhere; this is for the reason that CALL can facilitate learning a foreign language independently. Therefore, CALL can be wonderful mediator for English language learning, and it can promote language learners' interaction. It can promote language interaction between teacher-learners and learner-learner as well. Similarly, Bani Hani (2014) argue for the advantage of CALL due to the following points:

... (1) The computer may be an appropriate technology that provokes meaningful classroom tasks that contribute to the learning of the four language skills, (2) CALL can facilitates students' learning both in the classrooms and outside the classrooms, (3) individualized, continuous and authentic teaching tasks might also be provided by the use of CALL (4) it increases learners' concern and learners' involvement during the

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learning process. Thus, learner-centered pedagogical approach can be assisted by CALL (5) the integration of the four skills teaching may also be realized via CALL(6) immediate or on spot feedback can be facilitated for learners with the help of computer (p, 1611).

However, in assessing the impact of technology on foreign language learning, (Kern 2006 in Evans, 2009) argues that, computers are becoming less noticeable to teachers and learners. Computers in foreign-language learning have not yet reached the level that textbooks have achieved. Warschauer (1999 in Motteram, 2013), who playfully use the term 'BALL' (book-assisted language learning) demonstrates that teachers and learners rarely make explicit reference to technology, but they make explicit reference to books. According to him, the acronym CALL is an outdated conceptualization of the computer; it is as an outside instrument rather than as part of the ecology of language learning use.

Despite CALL's limitation, as Lai and Li (2011) reveal technology (computer) assisted task based language learning played a paramount role in facilitating language learning. What does task-based mean in this paper then? It is a relevant approach in syllabus designing process, classroom teaching situation and learner assessment practices (Nunan, 2004). Task-based language learning can be considered as an important approach in classroom listening skills teaching and learner's assessment, and task-based instruction is one of the elements that help realize the Communicative Language Teaching philosophy: it facilitates as one means to achieve the goal of communicative language teaching to develop learners' communicative competence (Nunan, 2004).

Richards (2006) further mentions that task-based is believed to best facilitates language learning for it is process-based approach, and it focuses on creating classroom practice opportunity that help learners involve in language learning process. This can be achieved through creating appropriate interactional processes in language classrooms, and the best way to create these is to use specially designed instructional tasks that are carried out at different phases (stages).

As Willis' 1996 and Ellis, 2003 cited in Nunan (2004) indicate, the framework of TBL includes pre-task (before listening), in-task (while listening), and post-task (after listening). Therefore, the task-based listening skills instruction approach, which is proposed for this study as an independent variable considered these frameworks during intervention.

Though the aforementioned works of literature reveal the general advantage of technology for language teaching, the specific contribution of computer assisted task-based listening skills learning is not indicated in Ethiopian context. Hence, this paper aimed to investigate whether or not computer device alongside task based language learning contributes to the learning of listening skills through addressing the following research questions:

- 1. Does computer-assisted TBLL have a significant effect on students' listening development?
- 2. Is there any significant difference between computer-assisted TBLL group and control group in their listening development?
- 3. How do the participants reflect their observation and feeling about the approach?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The study adopted a sequential mixed-method research approach (QUAN->qual) in which quantitative data are followed by qualitative data(Creswell, 2012). The main data were quantitative whereas qualitative approach played a supportive role in supplementing and triangulating aspects of the quantitative data, and provided greater insight into the results. A quantitative research approach also provided the advantage of being able to measure and compares the performance of the participants in different groups before and after intervention. Qualitative information from the participants' self-reflection journal was required to supplement the quantitative data.

Therefore, a mixed-method research approach was adopted so that the numerical data from the quantitative approach and the qualitative data from the qualitative approach could complement each other for greater insight into, and for better understanding of the research problem.

With regard to the research design, a quasi-experimental non-randomized control group pretest-posttest research design was adapted. Hence, the following table depicts a quasi-experimental non-randomized control group pretest-posttest design that was adapted from (Levy & Ellis, 2011, p. 157).

Table 1: Research design. Time (t)

		<u> </u>	- (1)	t ₁	t 2	t ₃
				Measure	Treatment	Measure
Non-randomly assigned	Group group)	1	(experimental	M_1t_1	T _x	M_1t_3
	Group group)	2	(experimental	M_2t_1	Tx	M_2t_3
In an ideal case	desired	obs	No sig.	-	Significant	
Differences				difference		Difference
In an ideal case	-graphical	rep	1			
			Z			

This design shows the experimental group (Group 1), is the group that undergo the treatment (Tx), where as the control group (Group 2), is the group that received no treatment at all and served as the benchmarking point of comparison. At the beginning of the treatment all groups $(M_1t_1 \text{ and } M_2t_1)$ might show similar results in the pre-test; however, in the post test measure $(M_1t_3\text{and } M_2t_3 M_3t_3)$ the groups may (may not) show differences.

Participants and sampling technique

The first year undergraduate Pre Engineering students taking Communicative English Skills in Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) were involved in this study. Two groups such as G3 and G26 that have 30 students each were taken as data sources; these sections were sampled as a computer-assisted TBLL group and control group using non random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

As this study requires both quantitative and qualitative data, involving data collection instruments that can be used to gather both quantitative and qualitative information is crucial. Hence data collection tools that were employed in this research consist of teacher made listening tests and students' self-reflection journal.

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Materials

Computers, listening texts, audios and tasks were the materials used during the study. For the experimental group, computers in the university's laboratory were used to assist individual's listening skills learning. Concerning the listening tasks, texts that suit TBLL were adapted and converted into audio using text to audio converter software considering the contents of the existing materials that is used for control group in order to prepare similar materials.

The material for the control group was the existing listening skills instructional material that was assisted by the conventional teaching devices (speakers) and the contents of the materials that was used for control group was similar with the contents of the materials that were adapted for experimental groups.

Pilot study

To check the reliability of the testes, a test-retest was conducted during the pilot study. As Muijs (2004, p. 73) suggests, one to two weeks time gap is often recommended as an optimal time to run test and retest to the same respondents. Based on this, test-retest was administered within two weeks intervals to other group students who were not considered for the study. To ascertain the strength of the relationship between the scores on the instrument at the two time points, Pearson's correlation was computed for both pretests and post tests independently.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation test-retest result for pretreatment tests

		Pretest score	Retest score
	Pearson Correlation	1	.811**
Pretest score	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	27	27
	Pearson Correlation	.811**	1
Retest score	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	27	27

As table 2 shows, the test reliability was conducted to students who were not considered as both experimental groups and control group. The reliability correlation coefficient of the test-retest for pretreatment tests was calculated using Pearson correlation, and it was found to be 0.811 which can be considered as suitable from a statistical point of view.

Table 3: Pearson's correlation test-retest result for post treatment tests

		Posttest score	Retest score
	Pearson Correlation	1	.797**
Posttest score	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	28	28
	Pearson Correlation	.797**	1
Retest score	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	28	28

Similarly, the repeated measurement (test-retest) reliability checking technique for post-treatments was also conducted to other students who were not chosen as the study population. As can be seen from table 3, the reliability correlation coefficient of

the test-retest was calculated using Pearson correlation following the administration. And the correlation coefficient indicates 0.797 which can be considered for research purpose from a statistical assumption.

Besides, before conducting the study, students' self-reflection journal format and the material that was used for intervention were reviewed by scholar in the area to ascertain their validity. The relevance of the material and tasks, their suitability to the research goals and objectives and arrangement of questions, was commented by these scholars. Finally, taking their suggestion and comments into consideration, the necessary modifications were made before applying the material and the data gathering instruments during the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

The study deals with both quantitative and qualitative data. To analyze numerical data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS21) software was employed. Inferential statistical such as paired samples t-tests and independent samples t-tests were computed to determine the effects of CATBLL on students' listening skills development. In order to test the first research question, paired sample t-test was calculated, the results of which are reported in table 5. An Independent sample t-test was also computed to check the initial homogeneity. This statistical tool was computed as well to test the second research question, the results of which are indicated in table 4.

To investigate the third research question, open coding' (Punch, 2014) data anal yses process was employed. This helped to identify and tentatively name the conceptual categories into which the observed phenomena would be grouped. This involved some steps such as exploring the data through reading students' self-reflection reports; coding some sentences and phrases which are relevant to research questions; categorizing similar codes together, and coming up with different themes based on the research questions.

Results

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test to test initial homogeneity and differences of experimental group and control group

Levene's Test for Equality of					t-test for Equality of Means					
	Variances									
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-	Mean	Std.	95% Co	onfidence
						tailed)	D/ce	Error	Interval o	of the D/ce
								D/ce	Lower	Upper
Pre test score	Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	.811	58	.421	1.38667	1.70961	-2.03550	4.80883
Post test score	Equal variances assumed	2.925	.093	2.400	58	.020	4.73633	1.97352	.78591	8.68676

The independent samples test results in Table 4 depicts (P= 0.421, t=0.811, df= 58); from this it was confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental group and control groupat 0.05 of alpha level. Therefore, it can be noted that the experimental and control group performance in the pre-test is similar at the entry level since p-value reveals (0.421) which is greater than 0.05.

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However, the independent samples t-test result of post test score shows (P=0.020, t=2.400, df=58) which indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups meaning, p-value (0.020) is less than the 0.05 alpha levels, Hence, there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups in their post-test listening test scores. From the results of the test analysis, listening development of students in the experimental group increased significantly; while, the development of listening skills of the students in the control group is insignificant because the students in control group did not get the exposure to CATBLL.

Table 5: Paired Sample T-test results about effects of computer assisted TBLL on students' listening development

Paired Sample Test									
	Paired Differences					t	D	Sig. (2-	
		Mean	Std. Dv/n	sd Err		95%		f	tailed)
				M/n	Co	onfidence			
					Inter	val of the			
						D/ce			
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest score - Pre	9.04767	7.64567	1.39590	6.1927	11.9026	6.48	29	.000
rail 1	test score				3	1	2		

Paired sample T-test was computed to check the effect of computer assisted TBLL on the students' listening development. The pre treatment test scores and the post treatment test scores of the computer assisted TBLLgroup were considered to confirm this. The statistical figures in Table 5,depict(P=0.000, t=6.482, df=29). Meaning, the p-value reveals 0.000, which is less than 0.05. In the light of this, it can be said that computer-assisted TBLL approach has a significant effect on listening development of the computer-assisted TBLL group students.

However, recognizing the significant effect based on p-value (0.000) does not specify whether this effect is strong or weak. Hence, to determine the strength or the effect size *Cohen's D* was calculated based on the output statistics in Table 6below.

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation to check the effects size (strength) that computer assisted TBLL had on students' listening development

Paired Sample Statistics							
Mean N Std. Deviation Std. Error Mean							
Pair 1	Post test score	70.7623	30	6.81270	1.24382		
rall I	Pre test score	61.7147	30	6.41020	1.17034		

Table 6 demonstrates mean and standard deviation that help to calculate the effect size; from these data, Cohen's D is calculated as follows.

D= M1 - M_2 / s_{pooled} , where M_1 is mean score of post test and M_2 is mean score of pretest

- spooled is Std. Deviation₁ + Std. Deviation₂/2

Therefore,
$$70.7623 - 61.71470/6.81270 + 6.41020/2 = \frac{9.0476}{13.2229} = 0.68$$

Thus, based on the calculated Cohen's D, which is 0.68, computer assisted TBLL resulted in the moderate effect on the students' listening skills development of the computer assisted TBLL group.

ANALYSES AND FINDINGS OF COMPUTER-ASSISTED GROUP STUDENTS' SELF-REFLECTION JOURNAL

The students' self-reflection (SR) journal format sought information on how students reflect their feeling, observed changes, positive things observed and problems that they encountered during the intervention.

With regard to the level of students' feeling about listening skills learning with the computer device, the majority of students in computer-assisted TBLL group appeared to feel highly interested, positive and enjoyable as their reflection report indicate. For instance, SR 01, SR 02, SR 03SR12, SR 16, SR 21, SR25, SR 26, SR 28 ... reflected that they felt interested and positive in learning listening skills that was assisted by a computer device. According to the respondents' reflection, they were even curious to attend listening skills that was assisted by computer. This was because as their reports indicate, the approach seemed to make listening skills learning easy and enjoyable to them(SR04, SR 06, SR 07, SR20 and SR 30).

The other issue that required the students in this group was to reflect the important lesson that they gained from audios and tasks. Concerning this, informants such as SR 04, SR 10, SR 11, SR 27... reported that students of computer-assisted TBLL group gained insights about the description of how certain technology works. For example, according to these informants, they obtained insights about how wind pump works to pump water from underground; they also reflected as they learned the usage of present active in describing the steps that wind pump machine works to pump water from underground.

Furthermore, students learned the meaning and pronunciation of some words that are related to technology. In support of this some students reflected:

... I learned the meaning and pronunciation of some new words that are related to technology from the listening audios and tasks so that I became familiar with some technology words ... This helped me to develop an experience of analysing even faster speech (SR01, SR03, SR 06, SR 08, SR 09, SR 11 and SR 14).

Regarding the observed changes on students' listening skills after intervention, students' of the computer-assisted TBLL group reported that there was improvement on their listening development in understanding meaning and pronunciation of some technology words as compared to their previous performance. Their listening development is better than the previous one. For example, as SR01, SR07, SR20, and SR26reflected, it seemed that students of this group improved their listening skills. For instance, one self-reflection which is common for most students says "I improved my listening skills as compared to my previous performance". In addition, according to some self-reflection report, there were also change of students in understanding meaning and pronunciation of some technology-related words. The reflection that says "I developed my understanding of listening skills, and this helped me to understand meaning and pronunciation of some technological words... this made me to be interested in listening and speaking(SR 04, SR 12, SR 17, SR 30)" can be taken as an example for these. These reflections reveal that students of this group showed improvement on their listening skills, in understanding meaning and pronunciation of

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some technology words, and this contributed not only for the development of their listening skills but also for the improvement of their speaking skills.

Students were also asked to make self-reflection regarding their observation on something that they could consider as advantageous when computer-assisted TBLL was in practice. From their reflection, advantages such as improving pronunciation, opportunity to learn individually, being motivated for further listening, not being disturbed by the surrounding noises were identified. For instance, some informants reflected:

- ... Learning listening skills with computer device created the opportunity of improving my word-pronunciation (SR01 SR07, SR09 and SR22).
- ... Availability of computers for individual student was the observed advantages. ... This gave us an opportunity to listen and understand without others help. ... It benefits us in learning the skills individually with concentration (SR 04, SR 08, SR 23, SR 26, SR 29 and SR 30).

Besides, other key informants further described the positive things observed saying:

... Learning listening skills with computer increased my motivation and concentration; because of this I was engaged in doing tasks (SR12, SR16, and SR 24).

Similarly, students in the computer assisted TBLL group reflected on another advantages that they observed during treatment. The noises around the classroom did not disturb them for the headphone helped them to clear-out (avoid) the noises while listening skills was listened via the computer device (SR10, SR 11, SR 29 and SR 30).

The self-reflection journal format also asked the students to reflect on the problems they encountered when computer assisted TBLL was implemented. According to the students' reflection, even though most students reflected as there was no problem during treatment; a few problems that students encountered were identified. These include less quality of some headphones, lack of experience for learning listening skills (SR05, SR 22, SR17 and SR25).

DISCUSSIONS

The results reveal that computer-assisted TBLL approach resulted in moderate and significant effect on students' listening development as Cohen's D (0.68)and p-value (0.000) respectively indicate. There is also a statistically significant difference between computer-assisted TBLL group and control group in terms of their listening development for p-value (0.020) is less than 0.05. Students also felt positive and enjoyable towards the CATBLL. This was because the approach facilitated individual learning and increased students' concentration by clearing-out the incoming noises. Therefore, this findings coincide with several findings; this includes Jones 's (2008) view that claims computer-based listening instruction is effective in enhancing students' listening skills. The finding also confirmed an idea that says computer-based foreign language lesson provision appeared to support the development of listening skills of the learners as well (Jakobsdóttir & Hooper, 1995; Kamberi, 2012). This results also match Morley's (2001) view that claims computers and language learning are closely inter-related; computers can be a very important source in providing input, and this increase learners' motivation and their language learning.

On the other hand, the result of this study appeared to contradict the view that says computer is an outside instrument rather than as part of the ecology of language learning use (Warschauer 1999 in Motteram, 2013). However, it can be used as an instrument that assist listening skills instruction and it can be a part of ecology of language learning as the study results depict. Hence, computer device can also be used as an additional alternative for listening skills learning.

Task based listening instruction approach that was used alongside computer device had also contributions in enhancing students' listening comprehension. Learning listening skills with a computer device could result in listening development together with the task-based listening instruction approach. This means the finding of computer-assisted task-based listening instruction approach realized the concept that claims computer assisted language learning is advantageous in improving learners language skills (Lai & Li, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

As clearly reported above, computer-assisted TBLL approach brought strong and significant effect on students' listening development. Based on this, it can be implied that the approach appeared to contribute for the development of students listening skills because the approach may meet students' learning need as they are students of digital world. Thus, employing computer-assisted TBLL for listening skills development is appeared to be an option in which students' listening skills learning is improved. Furthermore, confirming the language learning advantages of computer-assisted TBLL is an indicator that leads language educators to design a package of listening skills learning platform that involve computer device as educational technology so as todevelop students' listening skills.

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