

THE USE OF SKYPE IN TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

This paper shows the ELT educational trend has recently been gaining in significance in education systems throughout the world. English Language Teaching (ELT) has tremendously changed over the last one decade. Living in a world where technology is omnipresent. Technology in education has become the buzz word in every educational environment. The classroom environment today, is completely different from the traditional classroom. The traditional methods which are mainly based on lecturing and rote learning. Whereas, technologies like internet, skype, you tube, tweeter, Mobile phones and many more have added not only stimulus but also learners' engagement and true interactivity with the classroom. The internet has had a tremendous impact on learning and brought new opportunities for learners to find and retrieve information, access learning resources, as well as to connect with other learners. Internet appeared to be entering a new phase of development with a newer range of applications, tools and services. Teachers and learners are able to use technological tools such as: quizzes to test knowledge; search tools to retrieve information online, as well as discussion boards, email and life chart, which facilitated communication. These tools certainly has the potential to enhance the learning process by offering more flexible access to the curriculum and providing opportunities for support outside the classroom. One widespread method online teaching involves the use of skype, a powerful application that provides users with free internet voice chatting service. This paper is focused on analyzing the impact of Skype on students' listening comprehension for a group of 21 students of fourth semester of FKIP UIR Pekanbaru in academic year 2014/2015. This study used classroom action research. The researcher collaborated with one of the English lecturer who teaches at English language of FKIP UIR. The instruments of this research were tests, observation, interview, and field notes. The data collection was accomplished by means of students' reflection questionnaires posterior to the Skype, field notes of the investigator, and comprehension tests. The finding shows that the use of Skype can improve students' listening comprehension. It can be seen from the increasing of mean score of the tests, includes: base score was 46.19, cycle I was 69.52, and cycle II was 71.43.

Key words: Language Teaching, networking, skype, technology, and trend

Introduction

This paper stresses on the need to make English language lessons easy and enjoyable through innovative English Language Teaching methods. Learning English as a foreign language has become an essential part of our lives. In teaching practice there are some difficulties such classes contain more students that it would be ideal for teaching languages such as and this leads into another problem that in these large classes there are learners with a lot of different learning styles and diverse needs. Since listening comprehension belongs among the most difficult skills it is crucial for teachers to help their students to learn good listening strategies, because without proper understanding can not contribute to various discussions and more over listening provide exposure to the target language. To solve those problems the researcher used one of the social media that presented trough internet. It provides numerous opportunity for English teacher of all backgrounds to teach ESL or EFL. One of trend E' learning is the use Skype, Skype's ability to instantaneously connect people worldwide makes it useful tool for ESL or EFL teachers looking to search a broad student body. Unlike traditional teaching jobs, using skype to teach English gives teacher the freedom to set their own schedule curriculum and fees.

Review of Related Theories

Listening Comprehension

Listening is one of the important language skills. Traditionally, listening skills have been taught in isolation or they were sometimes combined with speaking task. However, the nature of real-life interaction modes of language practice. Listening activities are designed to give the learner practice in identifying correctly different sounds, sounds combination, and intonation patterns. One of the aspects of listening that a listener should concern about is comprehension. Comprehension is the mind's act of power of understanding (Oxford Learners' Dictionary, 1990:81). In the other hand, comprehension means the action or capability of understanding something. Comprehension involves using context clues and thinking critically to better

understand the information being received. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) in Lidyu explain that listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using clues from contextual information and existing knowledge while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement. Listening requires the utilization of both systemic and schematic knowledge (Widdowson, 1983, Buck, 2001). In order to interpret the discourse, the listener must have a sufficient knowledge of the language system (i.e. an understanding of the phonological, syntactic and semantic knowledge) as well as general knowledge of the world.

The importance of listening in language learning has changed over the past years. Listening used to be overlooked and educators supposed that listening abilities would be acquired during the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice (Hedge). This was quite surprising as abilities to listen play an equal role as abilities to speak in successful communication.

There are a lot of reasons why educators are now focused on the ability to understand and contribute to communication. Firstly, pupils at the basic schools are encouraged to develop good listening abilities in their mother tongue so that they can be successful in everyday communication. Secondly, students have to develop effective listening strategies or use trends media that will enable them to learn to learn another language.

As Underwood in Potosi, A. (1989:1) points out that listening is an activity of paying attention to the speaker and subsequent attempt to understand what we hear. Even though listening may be seen as a passive process it is not true because we as listeners have to concentrate on the message to be able to decode it. Underwood argues that hearing can be thought of as a passive condition, listening is always an active process (1989:2). Saha(2008) expresses that even though listening and hearing are related, listening involves an active process, which requires an analysis of sounds. In contrast to hearing that only perceives sounds in a passive way. In the same way, Harmer (2001) expresses that listening as a "receptive skill" where people obtain the main idea according to what they hear. Besides, Helgenes (2003) supports that listening helps learner to be flexible listeners", to know how to listen in order to get the general idea or the specific information needed to understand the speaker. Similarly, Richard & Rubin (1997) argue that "although listening is passive skill it is very much an active process of selecting and interpreting information from auditory and visual clues". These theoreticians make a distinction between hearing and listening, in which listening could be understood as a receptive and passive skill, where the role of the listener is to understand the message rather than just perceiving sounds as hearing does, making listening an active process.

Listening is considered the most important skill for ESL/EFL learners as "it internalizes the rules of language and facilitates the emergence of other language skills" (Vandergrift 2011 p.435). Listening is also considered the most difficult skill to learn because of its temporal nature, the complexity of the listening processes and the special features of spoken language Ur (1984). Fortunately, although listening has been most neglected and least taught in L2 classrooms, now teachers and researchers are centering their attention on how to best teach this important skill (Thorn 2009). In fact, the traditional approach to teaching ESL/EFL listening, known as the Comprehensive Approach (C.A.), has lately been challenged as it mainly focuses on testing comprehension rather than teaching listening skills

Purposes of Listening

In real situation we rarely listen to somebody without any expectations what we are going to hear. This means that we usually have preconceived idea of the content (Ur 1984:3) and these ideas are based on our knowledge about the heard information. These expectations are usually connected with the purpose of listening e.g. if we want to know what the time is we have to ask somebody. According to Ur the heard information they can use either verbal or nonverbal ways of expressing their opinions. But this is not a case of classroom recordings since they consist of long parts of speech and the response to them is demanded at the end rather than between individual parts and Ur argues that listening tasks should consist of short parts demanding immediate answer. In everyday situations there are a great number of reasons for listening. Brown and Yule in Lady Juana at al divided the purposes into main categories interactional and transactional. Interactional purpose convey social reasons of communication such as chatting at the party whereas transactional is used to express exchange of information such as to follow instruction.

Skype in Language Learning and Teaching

Traditionally, teaching of listening has taken place within formal classroom settings. Recently, with the rapid growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), computers and internet-based technologies play a more relevant role in the teaching of English listening skill and English in general. Thus, more and more English language teachers have opted for incorporating such emerging technologies into their everyday teaching practices as such "technologies can empower them as teachers and improve their teaching as well" Smith & Barber, 2007: 11) in Romana Correa.Y (2015). Therefore, technology affords language

instructors a sea of new material in a wide range of formats that can be used to enrich lesson plans and keep students engaged. Thankfully, language instructors today have access to more evaluable teaching resources than ever before. Online language-learning solutions like the use of *skype*. Learning English is now more accessible than it has ever been for people in countries all over the world. With the internet the opportunity of learning of learning English online is only a matter of finding the right company to be taught by. Skype is an online service that allows its users to engage in screen sharing. As well as file transfer and in instant messaging. Skype use calls with three individuals or more, and make video calls and voice calls to anyone else who uses Skype.

Skype is a common type of video chat system that many people use. There are a few, clear cut lessons with a reputable business. They are learning English from the same native speaker every lesson, spend money on the actual lesson instead of on software, and learn conversational English through role-playing and one-one one chats. There are two ways to learn a language which are from someone who speaks English and someone who is a native English speaker. There are pros and cons to each approach, but if you are learning conversational English, learning through a native English speaker will guarantee correct pronunciations and word usage. There are businesses that will provide you with the same teacher for every lesson. With the same teacher you do not have to concentrate on filling in a new teacher each lesson or telling them that you already learned something. Skype online English lessons bring native English teachers within your reach.

Method

The research design was classroom action research. This research conducted into two cycles, each cycle consist of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. Refers to Kemmis (1992: 1-2) states that action as any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher as a researcher to gather information about the ways that particular school operates, how the teacher teach, and how well their students learn. The information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment and on educational practice in general, and improving students' outcomes. The researcher collaborated with one of the English lecturer who teaches at English language of FKIP UIR. The instruments of this research were. The first instrument of the research was test. It was intended to measure the students' ability in listening comprehension. The second instrument of this research was observation. It was conducted by researcher and one of the English teacher during action research. The result of observation used to know the implementation of the Skype on students' listening comprehension. The fourth instrument was interview. It was used to find out information from the students relate to the students' ability on listening comprehension before and after the implementation of the Skype. The last instrument was field note. The function of field note was as a cross check data. Field note considered of important data from the observation. Some aspect of teaching and learning that recorded such as class situation, class mastery, interaction between teacher and students, all research activities, comment and suggest from the observer.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After calculating base score test, cycle I test and cycle II test. It can be seen that the students' listening comprehension improved by using skype. The improvement of the students' score can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Students' Score for Each Indicator of Listening Comprehension

| No. | Indicators | Test | | |
|------|---------------|------------|---------|----------|
| | | Base Score | Cycle I | Cycle II |
| 1 | Vocabulary | 52.38 | 80.95 | 82.86 |
| 2 | Grammar | 46.67 | 69.52 | 72.38 |
| 3 | Sound | 60 | 64.76 | 65.71 |
| 4 | Comprehension | 42.86 | 62.86 | 64.76 |
| MEAN | | 46.19 | 69.52 | 71.43 |

Based on table 1 above, it can be seen that the students' listening comprehension increased for each test. Students' listening comprehension on vocabulary indicated that base score was 52.38 (poor), cycle I was 80.95 (good), and cycle II was 82.86 (very good). Students' listening comprehension on grammar indicated that base score was 46.67 (poor), cycle I was 69.52 (fair), and on cycle II was 72.38 (good). Students' listening comprehension on sound indicated that based score was 60 (fair), cycle I was 64.76 (fair), and cycle II was 65.71 (fair). The last indicator of students' listening comprehension was comprehension test indicated that the base score was 42.86 (poor), cycle I was 62.86 (fair) and cycle II was 64.76 (fair). The

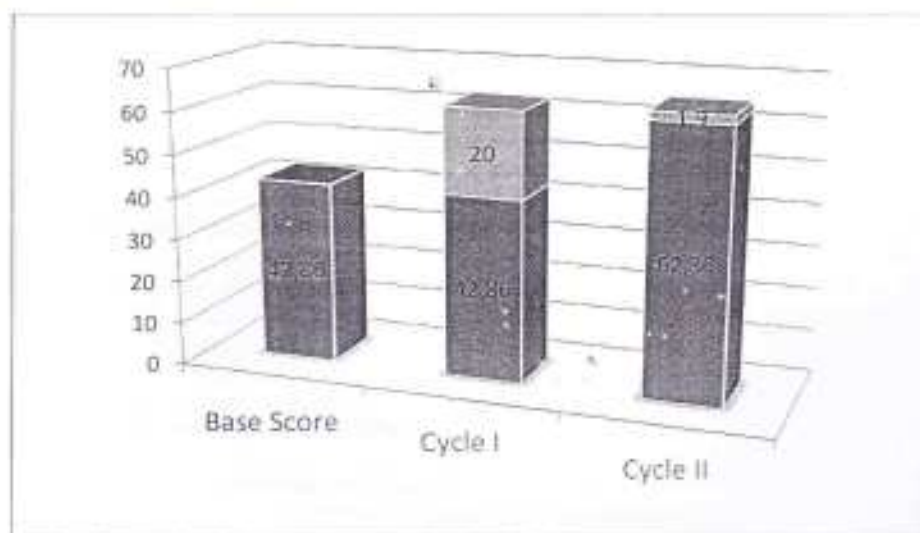
mean of all indicators on base score was 46.19 (poor), on cycle I was 69.52 (fair), and on cycle II was 71.43 (good).

Table 2. Mean Score of Students' Listening Comprehension

| Base Score | Cycle I | Cycle 2 |
|------------|---------|---------|
| 46.19 | 69.52 | 71.43 |

Chart 1

Students' Score on Listening Comprehension



As mentioned above that this action research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle had four meetings including a test at the end of the cycles. It was 90 minutes for each meeting. This research has been done at the fourth semester students of English Language of FKIP UIR – Pekanbaru. Before carrying out this research, the researcher gave the students test to know the students' base core and after analyzing the test, it was indicated that the students' listening comprehension is low. It can be seen from the base core. In order to overcome the students' problem on listening comprehension, the researcher used Skype as a new trend teaching. It was supported by the result of the students' test in each cycle, observation sheets, field notes and interview.

The findings of this study provide insights about the listening comprehension development among the students and the increase of their awareness about English language features, such as pronunciation, stress, and intonation. In addition, our findings provide information about the implement of Skype in English class. After seven sessions of exposure trough the Skype with natural conversations in a TEFL context, students bettered their listening comprehension skill. The researcher interprets that the participants had a positive results in their listening comprehension because, through the Skype allow students to access natural conversations performed by native speakers which make the learners more aware of their listening learning process, since students identify the components of a real conversation. In this study, most participants reported having started to notice aspects of language from natural conversations, such the plural words, the sound of new phonemes, and the sound of the past tense in regular English verbs.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the result of the study it can be concluded that : The use of Skype as a new trend teaching on listening comprehension is an effective to improve students' listening comprehension. Students become more active and motivated in teaching and learning process. They can improve their achievement through the Skype. It can be seen from the score of students based on the data analysis. It be can see from the average score of base score was 46.19, the result of test on cycle I was 69.29, and on cycle II was 71.49. The students' listening comprehension of the fourth semester of English students of FKIP UIR Pekanbaru in academic year 2014/2015 improved by using the Skype. In other words, the use of Skype in teaching listening can improve students' listening comprehension.

The introduction of social interaction technologies has helped the internet to reflect the real world with its rich social connections and interactions more closely. It is not a secret that those social connections have been greatly impacted by the use of new technologies and computer-mediated communication tools

such as Skype. Therefore, the shift from more traditional social interaction settings such as the language classroom to a more computer-driven learning environment might represent a challenge for both language teachers and learners.

Any English language researcher, instructor, or learner who decides to implement Skype with the main purpose of promoting social interaction skills towards English language learning, should take into account these recommendations: The participants in this study suggested that the smaller the number of people participating in the online Skype, the better they are as they could have more time to practice their English language knowledge and skills. They also suggested that the Skype could be implemented through other subject matters in the curriculum with academic and pedagogic purposes. It is suggested that teachers and learners from any subject matter from the curriculum could arrange to have Skype (join the Skype) with different purposes; for example, to delve deeper into specific classroom contents, to revise and conclude with unfinished classroom topics, or simply to provide feedback on any homework or assignment from the face-to-face sessions. It is also recommended asking students to be on hand half an hour or a minimum of fifteen minutes before the actual time of the Skype, so that any technical or technological problems can be solved before listening.

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