Listening Comprehension Strategies of ESL Learners at Graduate Level

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of listening comprehension methods on the listening comprehension of ESL students at the graduate level at KFUEIT (Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahimyar Khan). The population for this study was drawn from the KFUEIT BS English program. Two groups of twenty ESL learners each were formed. The groups were designated as control and experimental. The control group received standard instruction without using techniques, while the experimental group received instruction employing listening comprehension strategies. This research lasted ten weeks. A pretest was administered prior to the study's execution, and a post-test was administered following the study's conclusion to both groups. Post-test results revealed that the experimental group performed much better than the control group. This indicates that the adoption of reading comprehension methods has a beneficial effect on EL students. Research objectives were achieved as well in this research.

Keywords: Listening Comprehension, Strategies, ESL, KFUEIT, BS Program

Introduction

Both teachers and students encounter various challenges while learning English as a second language. This resulted in increased study and development of innovative teaching techniques to improve English Language Learners' language competence and skills (ELLs) (De Brito, 2015). According to (Zanjani, Izadpanah, & Research, 2016), learners need to acquire required skills such as hearing, reading, writing, and speaking to be considered language learners. These four abilities are inextricably linked and cannot be employed individually. While all skills are essential, some studies emphasize writing and reading as the most significant skills compared to others. According to (Azmi Zakaria & Aziz, 2019), writing is the most essential skill in acquiring English as a second language. According to another study, reading is the most important skill in acquiring English as a second language (Aijmer, 2002). Despite being the least concerned skill, it is virtually impossible to exclude hearing in an English language class because of its importance in communication (Celik & Issues, 2017). Listening accounts for 40-50 percent of overall time spent conversing. According to (Al-Awawdeh et al. 2020,) teachers

much focus on all skills as one components to reach the goal of acquiring all language skills at the same time.

Meanwhile, speaking, reading, and writing account for 25-30%, 11-16%, and 9%, respectively ((Yildirim & Yildirim, 2016). Aside from that, the most crucial component while beginning to learn a language is to first listen in order to grasp the spoken language (Ahmadi, 2016). Listening, like reading, writing, and speaking, is a complex activity that benefits from consistent practice. It is a necessary skill that serves as the basis for successful communication and job success. It improves one's capacity to acquire and apply new information, knowledge, and skills (Samuel, 2015). Listening ability is made up of numerous major components. They distinguish sounds, recognize and understand words, identify grammatical groupings, recognize considerable phrases and utterances, associate linguistic, non-linguistic, and paralinguistic cues, predict and confirm meanings using background knowledge, and recall important details (Tyagi, 2013).

Many studies have revealed that both instructors and students have ignored listening skills, believing they may develop spontaneously without any assistance (Abdalhamid, 2012). Although English is widely utilized in the education sector, including elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, seminars, and conferences worldwide, it has received little attention in the research domain (Yükselci, 2003). Another study excludes listening and speaking skills that are classified as receptive language skills since they are not tested (Sanjana, 2014). As a result, the school system created brilliant writers, but they lack proficiency in listening and speaking abilities despite years of study in English. This should be a major worry, especially in light of the current curriculum utilized in Malaysian English instruction. It modified the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or CEFR, which focuses on strengthening students' receptive and productive abilities (Ismail, Aziz, & Sciences, 2020).

Significance of the Studies

Specifically, this study aimed to determine the influence of language learning techniques on the listening comprehension of BS students at KFUEIT.

It was anticipated that the study's outcomes would support the notion that metacognitive processes indicated by language learning techniques had the same influence on ESL listening comprehension as cognitive processing in hearing.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will be useful to English teachers who will be partnering with students to develop learning techniques to deal with their listening issues. As a pedagogical implication, the findings of the study would assist English instructors in developing methods and implementing the most effective learning methodologies in the classroom for teaching listening comprehension. It was anticipated that the findings of this study would encourage students to use language learning techniques in the classroom and continue developing learning strategies outside of the English classroom to become autonomous or independent learners. Since students may now be led to exercise comprehensive listening skills through plentiful access to learning resources on the internet and experience using the learning techniques, this has become increasingly popular.

Purpose of the Study

1. To determine the relationship between students' language learning techniques and their listening comprehension.

2. To investigate the influence of language learning techniques on students' ability to comprehend spoken language.

3. To determine the most effective language-learning techniques for engineering students in order to enhance their listening comprehension.

Listening Comprehension Strategies

According to (C. C. J. S. Goh, 2000), it is critical to teach children listening skills, and before doing so, teachers should enhance students' understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and phonology. According to (L. Vandergrift, 1999), strategy building is important for listening training because learners can direct and analyze their own knowledge and replies. Many scholars, including (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016), have said that there are three types of listening comprehension methods. They are cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective in nature. These techniques might vary depending on the level of the learners.

Previous Studies about Listening Strategies

Several types of research on the use of listening methods by students have been conducted. When dealing with cognitive techniques, (L. Vandergrift, 1999) claims that metacognitive tactics contribute to listening accomplishment. Less efficient learners used cognitive and memory methods the most and social tactics the least. The more efficient students frequently used techniques. They employed top-down and metacognitive methods linked to the trainees' listening abilities. The less efficient used bottom-up techniques rather than top-down strategies (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) researched the use of listening methods by students at five Mexican institutions. According to the data, the most often used strategy was highlighting specific facts, while taking notes and prior knowledge were the least frequently used techniques. There were no significant variations in the usage of listening methods among colleges.

(L. J. C. M. L. R. Vandergrift, 2002) conducted a structured interview to investigate the listening skills of high school French students at various course levels. Students employed metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective techniques at all levels. According to the findings of this study, cognitive strategies accounted for the greatest proportion of strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, which rose with competence level. Females were more interested than males in metacognitive techniques. Socio-affective tactics also grew as the training progressed. The significance of metacognitive awareness in listening comprehension has been underlined several times. According to (Al-Alwan, Asassfeh, & Al-Shboul, 2013), students with high levels of metacognitive consciousness are better at processing and remembering new knowledge, and learners may practice and reinforce what they have learned. According to (Osada, 2004), metacognitive techniques play an important role in the development of learners' skills. According to (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016), Metacognitive techniques engage thinking and can direct and improve learners' learning performance.

(Mohseny & Raeisi, 2009) conducted research on the link between Iranian EFL learners' language competency and their use of listening strategies. According to statistical research, there is a substantial positive link between competence level and usage of listening strategies. Cognitive methods were the most commonly used by students. (Mohseny & Raeisi, 2009) conducted research on the link between 92 Iranian EFL students' listening techniques and their listening competence. Metacognitive techniques were utilized the most frequently by learners, followed by cognitive and socio-affective strategies. Listening techniques and listening competence were shown to have a strong beneficial connection. The findings revealed that metacognitive awareness was related to the learners' listening performance in a favorable way.

(C. C. Goh & Hu, 2014) investigated the effect of metacognitive teaching on learners' knowledge of listening techniques, listening comprehension, and oral competency. According to the findings, learners who got the suggested metacognitive teaching improved their metacognitive awareness and speaking ability more than those who received traditional listening instruction without strategy training.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this systematic review is to offer a synthesis of previous research on the teaching of listening techniques in ESL classes and determine the intervention utilized in calculating such methods.

Research Questions

    i.   What listening models/strategies are used in ESL classes?
    ii.   What interventions are utilized in ESL classes to instill listening strategies?

Research Methodology

Following methodology has been employed for conducting this research.

Procedure

This study was conducted to find out the role of listening comprehension strategies on ESL learners' writing skills in KFUEIT. For this purpose, two groups of the ESL students were arranged i.e., Control Group and Experimental Group. The experimental group was treated with ESL speaking strategies. This was done by conducting specific activities related to speaking skills devised by using listening strategies. This study was carried out for 10 weeks. The researcher treated the experimental group, and control group was taught traditionally by another ESL teacher upon the request of the researcher, as for the control group no specific method or technique is used, and it was taught with the traditional method. A pretest and post-test were conducted to check the difference of the control group and the experimental group. This research method was used by (Shahzad, Panwar, & Ansari, 2021).

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was BS level programs offered by Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology (KFUEIT). 40 students were sampled from the BS English department of the second semester, and the ESL students' selection was made randomly. 20 ESL students were placed in each group.

Some Listening Comprehension Strategies

1. Establishing a goal.

According to Funk and Funk (1989), each listening activity should have a goal or purpose. By stating a purpose, students will have direction on where to focus their efforts, helping them to succeed.

2. Establishing a framework.

By asking students about their own experiences with the issue, a teacher may help them make the connection between what they already know and what they will hear in the audio description. Explain to students what they need to grasp before to listening, preview vocabulary terms, and urge them to consider relevant past information, anticipate the tale's subject, or engage in other active preparation for the story.

3. Setting the Scene.

If you're reading the story aloud to the entire class, limit distractions by keeping your house or school as quiet as possible. When possible, listen with headphones.

4. Introduce Strategies for Active Listening

Introduce instruments and methods for effective listening.

5. Note-Taking Scaffolding.

Students can use a listening organizer to assist them in focusing on key concepts and details while they listen to the tale, which will aid in their comprehension. T-charts, Venn diagrams, or a blank sheet can be used to keep track of a character's activities throughout the tale. These organizers can assist students in taking notes, focusing their listening, and teaching them methods for enhancing understanding in different situations.

6. Describe Problem-Solving Techniques.

If students do not comprehend a word or idea, they can make a guess based on hints from the tale. They can pause the audio and think or listen again as necessary to guarantee comprehension if they are listening independently. They may be referred to as "problem-solving listeners." These methods should be taught prior to kids beginning to listen, with periodic reminders.

7. Consider the Audio Story.

Engage students in the process of synthesizing what they learned while listening to the tale, with an emphasis on important understanding objectives. For instance, assign students to write replies to listening comprehension questions and then share them with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Discuss the story's central themes and urge students to draw parallels to other works or experiences. Students can reply to story-related questions in various ways, including writing, speaking in conversation, recording themselves speaking, or a mix of the three.

Data Analysis and Data Interpretation

Data analysis and data interpretations are given below.

T-Test of Pre-Tests (Control & Experimental)

Paired Samples Statistics				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CG-EG	5.50	20	1.000	.224
	5.45	20	.826	.185

Table: 1

Statistics of paired sample pretests of control groups and experimental groups in table 1 have been derived. Both the groups consist of 20 students i.e. (N=20). Mean of control group (CG) is 5.50 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 1.000 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .224. In the same way, mean value of control group (EG) is 5.45 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 0.826 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is 185. Hence, this table shows that there is a little difference

between the scores of control and experimental groups. It shows that students' performance likely to equal.

Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
CG-EG	.050	.759	.170	-.305	.405	.295	19	.772

Table: 1.2

Table 1.2 describes the paired sample t-tests differences. In paired sample t-test of control group and experimental group mean value is .050, SD value is .759, standard error mean is.170, t value is .295 difference 19, and significance is .772.

T-Test of Post-Tests (Control & Experimental)

Paired Samples Statistics				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CG-EG	12.05	20	1.395	.312
	15.65	20	1.424	.319

Table:2

Statistics of paired sample post-tests of control groups and experimental groups have been mentioned in this part. Both the groups consist of 20 students i.e. (N=20). Mean of control group (CG) is 12.05 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 1.395 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .312. In the same way, mean value of control group (EG) is 15.65 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 0.1.424 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .319. Hence, this table shows a much significant difference between the scores of control and experimental groups. Performance of experiment group in post-test is much better than the performance of control group. This shows that teaching listening skill through utilization of listening comprehension strategies is an innovative and better way of teaching compared to traditional teaching methods.

Paired Samples Test
Paired Differences

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
CG-EG	-3.60	1.875	.419	-4.478	-2.722	-8.586	19	.000

Table: 2.1

Table 2.1 describes the paired sample t-tests differences. In paired sample t-test of control group and experimental group mean value is .050, SD value is .759, standard error mean is.170, t value is .295 difference 19, and significance is .772. This shows that teaching listening skill through utilization of listening comprehension strategies is an innovative and better way of teaching as compared to traditional method of teaching.

T-Test of Pre & Post-Tests (Control Group)

Paired Samples Statistics				
Mean		N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre & Posttest CG	5.50	20	1.000	.224
	12.05	20	1.395	.312

Table: 3

Statistics of paired sample pretests and post-test of control group has been described in this section. This group consist of 20 students i.e. (N=20). Mean of control group (CG) is 5.50 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 1.000 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .224. In the same way, mean value of control group (EG) is 12.05 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 1.395 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .312. Hence, this table shows that there is not an ordinary difference between the scores of pre & post- tests of control group. The comparison of both the tests. Values of experimental group defines that student's performance is better than that of pretest.

Paired Samples Test
Paired Differences

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pre & Posttest CG	-6.55	1.731	.387	-7.360	-5.740	-16.91	19	.000

Table: 3.1

Table 4.3.2 describes the paired sample t-tests differences. In paired sample t-test of control group mean value is -6.55, SD value is 1.731, standard error mean is.387, t value is -16.91 difference 19, and significance is .000. Improvement ratio in listening skill is less.

T-Test of Pre & Post-Tests (Experimental Group)

Paired Samples Statistics				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre & Post Test EG	5.45	20	.826	.185
	15.65	20	1.424	.319

Table: 4

Statistics of paired sample pre and post-tests of experimental groups have been mentioned in this part. No. od participants are 20 in the group. (N=20). Mean of control group (CG) is 5.45 Standard Deviation (SD) value is .826 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .185. In the same way, mean value of control group (EG) is 15.65 Standard Deviation (SD) value is 1.424 and Standard error Mean (SEM) is .319. Hence, this table shows that there is a much significant difference between the scores of control and experimental groups. Performance of experiment group in post-test is much better than the performance of control group. This shows that teaching listening skill through utilization of listening comprehension strategies is an innovative and batter way of teaching as compared to traditional method of teaching.

Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pre & Posttest EG	-10.2	1.609	.360	-10.953	-9.447	-28.35	19	.000

Table: 4.1

Table 4.1 describes the paired sample t-tests differences. In paired sample t-test of experimental group mean value is -10.2, SD value is 1.609, standard error mean is .360, t value is -28.35 difference 19, and significance is .000. Major difference between the scores of pre- and post-tests of experimental group represents that student's performance is enhanced towards teaching listening skill through utilization of listening comprehension strategies in ESL classroom context.

Findings

- The first and most critical stage in enhancing learners' listening abilities was to direct their attention to colorful and engaging instructions and practices.
- The purpose of this study was to pique children' interest in developing their listening skills. Students understood effective listening strategies and recognized that their instructors should be forced to put them into practice in the classroom.
- Approaches to listening comprehension were shown to have a substantial effect on student learning.
- As a result of this widespread passion for teaching, the prospect of students making learning enjoyable and rewarding was ruled out.
- Despite the significance placed on English as a foreign language (EFL) in Pakistan, many students continue to struggle with the language.
- In Pakistan, EFL instruction fails to increase student's English skills, resulting in lower competence levels.
- Teachers continue to fall short of meeting their language objectives.
- To elevate ESL learners' position in the classroom, significant effort is necessary.
- The research questions have been explored in detail.

Recommendations

- Other academics with interest in language skills can research the influence of various replacement techniques. It would be fascinating to investigate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and student retention.
- Teachers should develop their listening comprehension abilities in preparation for upcoming new teaching trends.
- ESL teachers are motivated by this study and modify their teaching techniques from traditional to innovative ones by adding listening comprehension skills into their courses to make them more beneficial and interesting.
- Additionally, rather than focusing exclusively on students' memory of listening stuff, teachers should place a greater emphasis on instructional techniques and the development of students' listening processes that aid in their listening comprehension. This is because the instructional methods used and the activities conducted during the listening event affect the students' capacity to comprehend what they hear.
- A teacher should utilize a range of tactics and techniques in order to get the intended results.
- Students should develop an interest in listening strategies because they help learners develop problem-solving skills by connecting their techniques, their listening difficulties, and their learning process into an effective chain that helps them perform the listening job more effectively.
- The instructor should be aware of how to address listening comprehension strategies in the classroom appropriately. Through the use of listening skills practices, students are encouraged to enhance their education.
- Students also employ excitement, boldness, confidence, and self-assurance in their listening comprehension methods.
- At the undergraduate level, instructors' training should develop students' listening abilities through awareness of effective listening strategies.

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