RESEARCH ARTICLE

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THE EFFECT OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL) ON LISTENING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has brought about the emphasis on the communicative aspects of the English language unlike the traditional way of looking at language. As computer technology becomes more accessible to teachers and learners of other languages, its potential as a tool to enhance listening skill becomes a practical option. It allows integration of text, graphics, audio, and motion video in a range of combinations. To meet the growing demands of the present world I, in this paper propose Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) method. This study aims to find out the effect of CALL activities on academic listening skill of English learners. The performance of the students using CALL is better than the students not using CALL. Podcast is one of the ways (materials) of CALL which is an innovative way of teaching listening English language in the classroom. It is an easy way of teaching and learning both for the instructor and learner. The free software called *ABA English course* has been used to train students in listening. Effectively integrating the technology into language learning contexts for language teaching is more valuable for learners.

Keywords*: CALL, Listening, Language Software, Classroom Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is looked as an active process in which people tend to transform words into thought with an intention of creating a meaning from the passage heard. The listening skill is the beginning for understanding and for development of other language skills. With the beginning of new technologies, including their influences on people's life aspects and education, language learning and teaching looks to have entered a new area. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and listening skill training stand considered bound together for good (Vandergrift, 2007). The goal of CALL is to provide students with resources and experiences that will provide instruction and practice in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in the target language. Thus in many ways, the

incorporation of the CALL software into the foreign language classroom to develop the listening skill is required.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Listening draws utmost attention everywhere. Therefore, people have been seeking different methods to develop listening comprehension skills. Using CALL in instruction in the teaching of language has been harnessed as an effective and interesting method of achieving goals. According to the study of Harris and Grandgenett (1993), computers were effectively used in providing help in foreign as well as native language skills, including listening comprehension. The general weakness in the development of listening comprehension which can be partially attributable to lack of or absence of using CALL in teaching which could be used to develop the listening skill. In this way, it is suggested that CALL may be essential in developing listening comprehension. Therefore, the present research seeks to find a solution to the problem of the weakness of school students in listening skills via suggesting a CALL. Hence, the problem of the research can be stated in the following question: "What is the effectiveness of using CALL in developing listening skills of school students?"

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The present research provides

1. A proposed software i.e. ABA English course to be used in CALL in order to develop the listening skills of students.
2. To enhance the communicative competence of the school students and promote their listening skills so as to enhance and improve the teaching-learning processes when learning a language.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sprayberry (1993:88-97) investigated the effectiveness of CALL in improving listening comprehension of students and they were receptive to and enthusiastic about the process and post-tests indicated significant language achievement gains. Wong (2005:25-43) in his paper argues that of the four English language skills that are often taught

separately, listening requires more efforts from both course developers and learners. Unlike courses for other skills, which are mostly paper-based, listening courses are a combination of paper-based materials in the form of a course book, and sound-based materials in the form of audio on tapes/compact discs.

CALL IN DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS
BACKGROUND

The development of the listening skill has always been of major concern to language teachers. Listening assumes increased importance as not only is it a key language and communication skill in its own right, but it also provides a channel through which new language can be received and may become "in take" (Brett, 1997:39-53). Thus, the application of CALL to develop listening skill is required. Listening skill will be discussed focusing more on the use of authentic materials along with CALL features and the benefit of these two aspects.

LISTENING SKILLS

According to James (1982) there are six components of listening comprehension which are:

1. The sonic realization or actual physical hearing of language.
2. The segmental/supra segmental form (phoneme distinction).
3. The musical pitch and rhythm.
4. Lexical phrasing.
5. The purpose of the message intended by the speaker.
6. The actualization of the message in the listener.

According to Nanda (1989:138-149) there are four essential skills involved in listening; these are:

1. Perception of sounds.
2. Accuracy of sequencing.
3. Gaining of meaning and;
4. Utilizing the meaning.

These basic listening skills are capable of elaboration in terms of some subordinate skills as follows:

a. Recalling word meaning.
b. Guessing the meaning of unknown words.
c. Following directions.

d. Distinguishing the main and subsidiary ideas.

e. Following clues to get at the attitude of the speaker, to the topic or subject concerned

f. Making inferences, deductions, and drawing conclusions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This research aims at

1. Proposing listening CALL software ABA English course that may improve the listening skills among High school students.

2. Checking the effectiveness of the software on enhancing performance on the listening skills of high school students.

QUESTION OF THE RESEARCH

The research seeks to answer the following question:

What is the effectiveness of the listening multi-media software in developing these skills mostly needed by school students?

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method that is mostly followed in this paper is qualitative research. The experiment took 6 weeks to finish. The pre-test was administered to students in the first week. Then, the experimental group was trained on the proposed software by the researcher for four weeks (one session a week). Then the post-test was administered in the sixth week. Pre-test Post-test Control Group Design method is used. This design involves one treatment group; the experimental group which receives training on some listening skills and the other group is the control group which doesn't receive any treatment. The experimental design included comparison between the control and experimental groups on the computerized pre-test of listening skills and post-test of listening skills.

SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH

The sample of this research was selected randomly from the 9th class students. It included (20) students (boys and girls) assigned randomly either to the experimental group (N=10) or the control group (N=10).

INSTRUMENTS OF THE RESEARCH

The free software called *ABA English course.*

A Pre-computerized listening skills test: In the pre-listening test the questions were prepared and given to students for answering.

A *CALL* LISTENING SOFTWARE

Listening tasks were selected to suit the secondary school students, as they have little exposure to authentic language. The tasks give them the chance to develop their listening skills. The tasks were in authentic language for focusing on comprehension rather than on structure, and requiring the learners not to focus on every word or every detail but rather to listen selectively for key information. For these reasons, the tasks focus on how to listen for: key information, idea extraction, prediction, and guessing. The software consists of various video conversations and every conversation aims at developing listening skill.

(1)Pre-Listening Stage:

In this stage, the students are introduced to the topic and the skill they will be trained for.

(2)During Listening Stage:

a. They listen to examples to guide them about the specified listening skill. The examples have an explanation to the answers. The answer explains why a certain choice is correct and why a statement is considered true or false.

b. Then they begin to listen to texts and they answer the questions given. The listening tasks could be part of talks or conversations.

c. They can listen to the listening texts more than once, just click on the icon (Listen).

e. They can check the answer and correct it themselves.

(3)Post-Listening Stage:

a- They are provided with a key answer in order to check their comprehension.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of CALL listening skills software focusing on developing specific listening skills needed by the school students. The results gave the answer to the question: "What is the effectiveness of a CALL listening skills software in developing listening skills of the school students?" So, the improvement in the performance of the

experimental group in the post-test indicates the effectiveness of the proposed software. The results of this research are in accord with some previous studies which asserted that listening skills in computer CALL environment reveal more effective comprehension compared to pen and paper and traditional methods of developing listening. (e.g., Sprayberry, 1993; Wen, 1996; Herron, 1994; Herron et al, 1995; Brett, 1995; Teichert, 1996; Jones, Linda, .2003; Nielsen,.2003; Wong, 2005).

The first step towards developing learner's skills was by raising their awareness of the differences between written and spoken language. Pauses and fillers such as (oh,yeah,um,yes) were highlighted. So the software was appropriate to the level of the subjects' comprehension. They felt that they were listening to the language as it is naturally used in real situations. The listening software developed the students' comprehension of the communicative function of the message. The subjects were allowed to listen to understand not to focus their attention on every word. The main goal of this software was comprehension. The subjects were trained on how to comprehend specific information. So their attention was directed toward the comprehension of information found in the listening message, i.e., to the proposed software:

Learners were trained to focus on the whole message not on discrete parts.

- The software that is used to help the experimental group students develop their listening comprehension.
- Using authentic materials raised students' motivation and interest.
- The CALL software made students focus on the comprehension of the communicative content of the message.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

1. The software has proved to be effective in developing some listening skills school students.
2. Shy or inhibited students can be greatly benefited by individualization; student-centered learning. Computer can offer new opportunities for better language learning.

3. The use of CALL software improves school students listening skills as well as their academic achievement.
4. The CALL software can be a useful English language tool that raises students' motivation by increasing their confidence, encouraging them and broadening their listening and oral skills.

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