THE APPLICATION OF ICT TO ENHANCE STUDENTS’ LISTENING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims at discussing the role of videocasts in improving the listening skill of the students at English Department Udayana State University. This class action research (CAR) is carried out to see the improvement of the students’ skill in listening while most teachers applied the former method using cassette from a recorder and that the students seem have less access to the authentic language use situation.

The CAR was implemented to the third semester students academic year 2007/2008. There were 50 students from tree classes involved in the program, while previously they had attended listening subject in the first and the second semester. The aim of the implementing videocasts is to improve their listening skill. However, since internet access is a problem for the students, the videocasts were downloaded and pooled into the computer in the laboratory so that they were available for the students without internet access. The students were free to listen and they could copy the files in their portable MP3.

After applying the videocasts for half semester (six meetings), it showed a significant improvement of the students’ skill in listening compared to their previous score average in the second semester in a half semester period.

Key words: Videocast, Listening, and Internet use.

1. Introduction

English Department Faculty of Letter Udayana State University of Bali has the missions of improving the students’ skills in EFL (English as Foreign Language) in Under Graduate Program, as their major is English Language and Literature. At the beginning from the first up to the forth semester they were focused more on the learning of Skills in EFL (listening, writing, reading and speaking), before they proceed to more advance knowledge in comprehending English literature and linguistics.

Regarding the recent curriculum, in order to yield qualified outputs, the English Department has the mission to achieve competent under graduate in EFL, in the field of: knowledge and skill in English language and knowledge in linguistics and English literature. Listening as one of EFL skills is the main focus in this paper, which is applied to the students of third semester by applying videocasts (videocassettes) download from internet which is a different method from the regular one (using tape recorder). In the videocasts the students can see and listen to a more real situation of the language use in practice.
The videocasts were downloaded and pooled into the computer in the language laboratory so they are available for the students without internet access. There were six different topics given to the students to be copied in their MP3 so they can listen any time they want to.

Viewing on the previous result of their achievement in the second semester, there are some revisions should be implemented to the procedures and the material of teaching listening. Therefore this class research was conducted in order to see if there are any improvements by applying materials download from ICT to give the students the real use of language in practice on various topics so they can get more exposure to the real use of language. In the hope that they can improve their skill in listening, concerning on the skills of: identifying key words, listening to numbers and percent, summarizing by outlining, understanding the purpose of the passage, getting the main ideas. Regarding the background of the condition the students at English Department especially for third semester students, there are some problems to be discussed.

**Students Achievement in Listening II**

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd Semester 2008 Academic Year</th>
<th>The Average Score</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Number of Students get the final score under 65</th>
<th>The percentage of those get under 65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>67.94</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>67.29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>63.94</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (N=50)</td>
<td>66.39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRQ</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>FRQ</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>88.24%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (N)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table above can be identified that the percentage of student achievement on grade 2 (average) is 15.93% while the rest of the students achievement on grade 3 (good) is 84.07%. None of the students gets grade 1 (bad) or grade 4 (excellent).

2. Problems

The main problems concerning this development program that the students had less exposure to real use of spoken language by native speaker in actual use, as the previous teacher only applied the technique by giving tape recorder to listen in the language laboratory. Some students conveyed that they had hard effort in understanding the passage being spoken in the recorder particularly when they have to find out specific details on the passage (as well as comprehending main ideas that were expressed in the passage). The following are the main problems to be discussed in the implementation of the action research.

(1) Students` independent self-learning
The low motivation to improve the listening skill independently outside the classroom was suspected to contribute in the relatively low achievement of the students.

(2) Students` exposure to spoken English
The students’ lack of exposure was the basic assumption dealing with the relatively low achievement of the students in the previous semester.

(3) Students` self-reflection
Regarding other weaknesses, it is difficult to trace the development of self-reflection either on students or teachers in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore self-reflection on the students should be addressed in the teaching learning development.

3. Review of Related Literature

Concerning on the discussion of the related problems, some ideas proposed by experts should be reviewed in order to give clear comprehension on the research; focusing on the area of listening comprehension which covers the process of teaching listening, materials for listening and testing listening. The discussion is related to the work of Harmer (2007), Wong (2008). Harmer states that by giving various materials not only in class but also outside class related to intensive and extensive listening will give more privilege to the students in improving their skill in listening with most updated materials. Wong states that many teachers of English as EFL still apply the material given in the language laboratory while the students only provided by the workbook and the recording is kept in the language laboratory. This traditional way of teaching listening allows less advantage for the students to improve their skill. He proposed that by the advance of technology (ICT) there are various topics can be downloaded from the internet to give the students more exposure to the actual spoken language to uptake the advances in developing the students` skill in listening.
(1) The Nature of Listening

The thorough definition of listening includes at least five factors: receptive, constructive, collaborative, or transformative (Rost, 2002: 7). Receptive means receiving what the speaker actually says while constructive suggests constructing and representing meaning. Collaborative, on the other hand, shows negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding while transformative requires creating meaning through involvement, imagination, and empathy.

Listening covers extensive and intensive matters in comprehending the spoken language. Extensive listening usually takes place outside the classroom in students’ homes or on personal MP3 players. The motivational power on such extensive activities can increase the students’ skill in listening because they can choose from many sources of topics (Harmer, 2007). Intensive listening usually conducted in the classroom or in a language laboratory guided by the teacher on certain topics through recorded material (tape recorder/CD).

(2) Listening for EFL Learners

The theory to understand the nature of listening and teaching-learning processes of listening for EFL learners is mainly referred to The Practice of English Language Teaching (Jeremy Harmer: 2007). Talking about the practices of teaching listening to EFL learners, Harmer has reviewed the development of teaching listening up to discourse and genre types of materials. Further, he lists many tasks for listening activities in the classroom, for instance in live listening (by reading aloud, story telling, interviews, and conversations), audio material (CD and tape recording), and film and video (videocasts: resource from many topics of spoken language in natural way and songs).

(3) Materials for Listening Comprehension

Inputs are central in learning a foreign language. Enlightened by the process of first language acquisition, suggests the importance of comprehensible input for EFL learners that should be a little beyond the learners’ present ability. The inputs a little beyond the learners’ ability brings about the learners to be challenged to go upward without letting them have the feeling of lose and incompetent in the target language.

Some others theories related to the application of modern devices in the listening class are also important. In this case, the application of movie (Harmer, 2007) and podcast of the source of listening materials (Santosa, 2008) contribute to the types of materials used for listening. Movies are generally interesting and entertaining for independent learning. Similarly, podcast from the internet offer a wide range of topics and authentic materials for listening.

(4) Testing Listening

Harmer (2007:385) states there are ways of testing listening: completing charts with facts and figures from the listening text, identifying which of a number of objects (pictured on the test paper) is being described, identifying who (out of two or three speakers) says what, identifying whether speakers are enthusiastic, encouraging, in
disagreement or amused, following directions on a map and identifying the correct house or place. There some other ways of giving test to listening on comprehension of the passage

4. Methods
To address the problems dealing with listening project, the development procedures were:
planning and developing material, setting up standard procedure on the involvement of
the participants, implementation, data gathering and reporting.

(1) Participants
The participants of this development project were the teachers and the students of
Listening III (3rd semester academic year 2008/2009). Three teachers handled three
classes.

(2) Instrument and Data Collection
The type of instrument applied in collecting the data comprises a set of test
covering completion of facts, figures, objects being spoken in the videocasts related to
the topic and comprehension test on finding several main ideas and the purpose of the
passage.
In order to emphasize whether the videocasts provided significant improvement to the
students, some students were being interviewed to find out what are their opinion on the
material given to them comparing with the previous procedures conducted by the
teachers.

(3) Data Analysis
All the data gathered using the instrument above was analyzed in terms of qualitative-
descriptive analysis. It was qualitative because it recalls the process of the research of
teaching learning of listening and making a self assessment. Descriptive means it gives
descriptive account on the result of the development project and the students` perception
and opinion concerning what they have done and what they have been through in the
previous listening subject (Listening II).

5. Implementation
The implementation of the project covered two major steps: implementing
classroom material in classroom activities and assigning the student outside class
activities.

(1) Laboratory activities
The focus of Class Action Research (CAR) is on the materials that are used in class
(language laboratory). The students are trained to improve their listening skill such as
identifying topics, places, numbers and names of speakers.
The students are given 100 minutes a week on the Listening subject in laboratory. This
covers the structure of laboratory activities: Introduction to the topic, listen to the topic of
the day (answer some questions, discussion, and language focus) then sometimes inserted with the exercise of TOEFL for approximately 20 minutes.

(2) Assignments
The assignments given outside the classroom covers workbook that consists of listening by watching videocasts, self reflection and self evaluation. In each of the topic of the videocasts consist of two types of test: first, completing the missing figures and names and comprehension test on getting the main ideas and the purpose of the spoken passage. The students were given a CD containing the videocasts that were previously downloaded from internet and worksheet so that the students could easily play any time and anywhere they want. The students were given six different topics in half semester they could complete the assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Video Clips</th>
<th>Language focus/skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>American Culture</td>
<td>Getting the mean idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Understanding the purpose of the passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Global Economic Crisis</td>
<td>Identifying keyword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rice Price in Asia</td>
<td>Listening to numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Financial Crisis Explain</td>
<td>Getting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>U.S Organic Farming</td>
<td>Identifying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students assignments were the main point to be concerned to in other to find out whether there are significant improvement after a half of semester listening to audiovisual (videocasts) of the real use of English language. From the assignments we can observed their improvement on the grade they achieved.

(3) Evaluation
The students’ achievement can be assed after completing their previous practices in listening through various topic by applying listening test in the laboratory and listening to a certain conversation and lectures by applying completion of the answer sheets and comprehension test in getting main ideas and the purpose of the passage. The completion of the worksheet test and the comprehension test were used to measure the students achievement by comparing of their grade to the previous semester (second semester)
The students’ performance are identified into four categories: 1 (bad), 2 (average), 3 (good) and 4(excellent)
The Result of Evaluation

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>GROUP A</th>
<th>GROUP B</th>
<th>GROUP C</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FRQ</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>FRQ</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL(N)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Discussion

The result on the development can be summarized from the scores of the Students achievements on the following table 4. It showed that the students achievement average overall score from 6% of the students achievement grade 3 (average), 38% grade 3 (good) and 56% grade 4 (excellent) this showed a very significant improvement on their skill in listening as well drowing the interest of student in their effort of learning listening from videocasts and they can get many different topics and more exposure the practical language use. These can be obtained from the student point of view on the interview of how are their perception toward the material of listening provided to them.

(1) Students’ Score

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average of Group A`s Score</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>COMP.T</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>86.30</td>
<td>79.59</td>
<td>82.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Group B`s Score</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80.35</td>
<td>77.03</td>
<td>78.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Group C`s Score</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.63</td>
<td>69.47</td>
<td>73.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of overall scores</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>81.10</td>
<td>75.36</td>
<td>78.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
N = Number of Students
COMP. T = Completion Test
CT = Comprehension Test
FS = Final Scores
(2) Students Perception

Perception of the students can be summed up in four aspects: Students` effort, Students` weakness, students perception on the material and students` interest.

After the test session the student were interviewed randomly in order to view their perception on the listening class.

As a matter of concern on the students` effort it can be seen on the seriousness in the classroom and in doing their assignments. Some student said on the interview on their effort; **Good efforts:**

In the listening subject I have tried my best but sometime I feel not so confident on what the speakers` points of view or what has been uttered by the speaker.

**Less Effort:**

My effort is on average and I don`t do much effort

**Students` awareness on their weakness can be drawn from the interview:**

Some vocabulary I don`t understand from the listening task I have to look at dictionary.

Problem in listening when the speakers speak fast.

Some word can`t be heard clearly as I have never heard it before

Need more than one time two play the recording in order to understand the passage

**Students perception on the materials:**

I think videocast is very interesting

I can see and listen how the native speaker speak and see the movement of the Mouth when the speak so I can learn to pronounce word correctly

Vediocast is provided in many different topics are very interesting

**Student` interest**

The give reflection on what they found interesting and uninteresting:

Listening to the topic of family is very interesting

Vediocast should be given in listening it is easier to understand

Toefl test is not interesting

7. Conclusion and Suggestion

From the discussion of the CAR (class action research) result on the listening III of the third semester students some conclusion can be drawn out as follows:

(1) The student low motivation on independent self-learning should be motivated by guided assignment outside class-room by providing audiovisual materials
The material of listening should be varied and more focus on the exposure of students to spoken English in practical use.
(3) The students’ reflection should be monitor to get their progress in the skill of listening
(4) It was found that using vediocast from internet give significant improvement on the students listening seen from the result of their assessment.

There are a number of suggestions can be proposed to the implementation of teaching listening to the lecturer:
(1) To up grade their materials from time to time
(2) Providing the students with more real exposure to actual spoken English in many different topic from the ICT and always be relevant to the current issues in teaching and learning by benefiting the ICT.
(3) Conducting CAR to give reflection on the progress of teaching-learning

References