

The Effects of Audio-visual Recorded and Audio Recorded Listening Tasks on the Accuracy of Iranian EFL Learners' Oral Production

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Abstract

The ways in which task in classrooms has developed and proceeded have receive great attention in the field of language teaching and learning in the sense that they draw attention of learners to the competing features such as accuracy, fluency, and complexity. English audiovisual and audio recorded materials have been widely used by teachers and students, and have been the important resources of teaching and self-study. Nowadays, the environment we are living in is abundant with audio visual input and we as teachers ,thus, should be aware of the fact that environment can change students' behavior towards language and language learning .What effects do these materials have on English speaking ability? The objective of this study is to find out whether there is difference in Iranian EFL learners' accuracy in both audiovisual recorded (videos, movies ,etc.) and audio recorded tasks. For this purpose, 40 students of intermediate level were chosen and then were randomly assigned into two experimental and control groups each of which was under different listening tasks. (Audio visual- and audio only). Data analysis showed that the group which was trained under AV listening tasks showed different effects on students' accuracy, compared to the other group positioned using audio recorded. Based on the results of this study, it is imperative that teachers consider the types of activities and methods that can have influence over language learners' speaking ability.

Keywords: audio visual listening, audio recorded listening, accuracy

1. Introduction

As the use of multi- media increases in language learning settings, especially English language, the more realistic and more vivid foreign language learning classrooms become, accordingly. Consequently, language learners extend their language learning apparatuses to obtain their language learning resources, like English programs of news, broadcasts, documentary, film, interviews, etc. Audio- visual devices make it possible for people to have access to more authentic material. Language learning can be better developed for both instructed and non- instructed learners via using of media (Cortier & Nunan, 2001). Nowadays, there is an increase in using of video and audio recorded materials. The consistent need for cross- cultural communication has forced people of many different places and origins to come together. It is in these circumstances that teaching English as the current "dominant lingua franca" (Byram, 2006) has increasingly become an important profession.

1.1 Why Do We Use Materials?

Students, a teacher, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation are important components taken for granted in classroom. Allwright (1990) argued that for students the taught materials should be like resource books for ideas and activities for learning whatever they do in class, teachers need rationale. Learning is a sophisticated phenomenon which can be defined as changes in disposition, behavior over time and this is brought by experience.

1.2 Input, Interaction and Output

These three factors have been taken a great amount of weight in language learning setting, especially English classrooms. Using negotiation , attention of learners can be drawn to a gap that exists between what he/ she knows about materials of the L2 and what L2 is or to areas about which language learners has little or no information unknown parts in language are said to be the topics of interaction (Gass & Torres, 2005) . But what these researches and findings can't to some extent provide is that if there is a change in the speaking ability of the language learners.

Iranian English teachers, trying to teach spoken English, don't heed to effect of the way they provide teaching materials. That is to say, most Iranian English teachers ignore the way they provide input for students in order to understand and speak. As a result, the type of speaking which a language learner yields doesn't show his/her true ability in listening.

1.3 Research Question and Hypothesis

The present study attempted to answer the question raised about the impact of 'using audio visual recorded materials and audio recorded tapes on Iranian EFL learners' oral performance. The objective of the study can be expressed in the following question:

Do using audiovisual recorded materials improve the "accuracy" of Iranian EFL learners' speech as compared to audio recorded tapes?

According to the above question, the following research hypothesis was developed. The negative counterpart was the null one.

Using audio visual materials in classroom doesn't improve the "accuracy" of Iranian EFL learners' speech as compared to audio recorded tapes.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

Participants in this study were 40 male English language learners of intermediate level. The sample was selected out of a population of 70 intermediate students using the Preliminary English Test (PET). Those whose scores ranged from 50-60 out of 65 were selected to participate in the study.

2.2 Instrumentations

The Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to see if two groups are homogeneous in terms of their second language proficiency.

After ensuring the initial homogeneity of the groups in general language proficiency, the pretest including four speaking tasks was administered, and students were assigned into two groups on the basis of scores obtained from pre-test.

Computers, cassettes, tape recorder, and microphones were other key instruments for recording the oral production of all the participants of the study.

2.3 Procedure

At the beginning of the program the PET exam including three sections of listening, reading and writing was administered to assure initial homogeneity of the groups in terms of their L2 proficiency, then pre-test including five speaking tasks was administered. All oral answers were taped-recorded and then transcribed. For oral pre-test data to be rated, raters listened to each audio-tape recording and then transcribed it. Accuracy' measurement was achieved by measuring percentage of error-free clauses in the total number of clauses.

Students received treatment for five sessions, each of which lasted approximately 30 minutes. In first group, students were watching audio visual materials. Second group were listening to the audio recorded tapes and cd's. When the training program was finished, the participants in both groups were post- tested. Post- testing procedure was exactly the same as pre-testing. Five speaking tasks were administered. The procedure for scoring the post-test was the same as the pre-test. Speeches of the participants in second performance were transcribed by the researcher in order to measure. The transcriptions were coded, and evaluated in terms of accuracy.

2.4 Measure

In order to score the data the measures used by Foster and Skehan (1997) were adapted for scoring the 'accuracy of the participants' performance. Accuracy' measurement was operationalized as the percentage of error-free clauses.

2.5 Design

This study employed an experimental design, in which participants in the one group received audio visual materials, and participants in the other group received the audio recorded materials. Participants in the study were 40 adult learners of English at the intermediate level.

2.6 Statistical Procedures

For this study, the following statistical analysis and procedures were utilized in order to analyze the collected

data:

- 1). Independent samples test was utilized to compare the means of each group's PET examination scores to see the homogeneity of two groups, and
- 2). Independent samples test was utilized to compare the means of each group's task response characteristics in pre-test and post-tests in terms of accuracy.

3. Results

In the following sections, discussion of descriptive statistics employed for comparing the means for research question of study, and the Levene's test for equality of variances in both participants' PET examination will be explained.

3.1 Investigating the Homogeneity of Groups

In order to investigate the homogeneity of two groups, the researcher utilized an independent sample test to compare the means for each group's PET scores. Table 1 depicts the results of descriptive statistics and an independent t-test. The necessary condition for comparison of the means is the equality of variance in both groups, which is shown by Levene's test for equality of variances.

Table 1. Independent samples test for the homogeneity of groups

| | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | |
|------------|----------|----|--------|----------------|---|------|------------------------------|----|-----------------|
| | | | | | F | Sig. | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| PET scores | AV group | 20 | 54.800 | 3.054 | 1.293 | .263 | .507 | 38 | .615 |
| | A group | 20 | 54.350 | 2.540 | | | | | |

As the results of Table 1 show, regarding the significance level of Levene's test (.263), which is more than 0.05, equality of variances is verified.

The mean score of the PET test in AV group is (54.80), and in A group is (54.35). Significance of the t-test was calculated, (.615). Because the significance of t-test is higher than 0.05, therefore equality of PET scores' means in two groups is not rejected. As a result, the means of PET scores in both groups do not have meaningful difference, so these two groups are homogeneous.

3.2 Results of the Pre-test

The results of descriptive analysis for the accuracy of discourse produced by the (AV) group and (A) group are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the pre-test results

| | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------------|-------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test Accuracy | AV | 20 | 79.8305 | 3.93532 | .87996 |
| | A | 20 | 79.8310 | 3.93817 | .88060 |

Table 3. Independent samples t- test for the comparison of ‘accuracy’ means in pre-test

| | | Levene’s test for equality of variances | | | | T-test for equality of means | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------|--------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|---------|
| | | f | sig. | t | df | sig.(2-tailed) | mean difference | Std.error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | lower | upper | |
| Pre-test Accuracy | Equal variances assumed | .000 | .997 | .000 | 38 | 1.000 | -.00050 | 1.24491 | -2.52068 | 2.51968 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | 38.000 | 1.000 | -.00050 | 1.24491 | -2.52068 | 2.51968 |

Independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the accuracy of two groups. Table 3 shows the result of t-test for equality of means in pretest. Levene’s test for equality of variances was utilized to compare the variances. As the results of Table 3 show, regarding the significance level of Levene’s test (.997) which is more than 0.05, equality of variances is verified. In this table mean difference, t value, degrees of freedom and 2-tailed probability are shown. The mean score of the accuracy in AV group is (M=79.83, SD=3.93), and in A group is (M=79.83, SD=3.93). Significance of the t-test was calculated (1.00). Because the significance of t-test is higher than 0.05, therefore equality of accuracy scores’ means in two groups in pretest is not rejected. As a result, there doesn’t seem a meaningful difference between the accuracy score of AV group and V group in pretest. This difference is not statistically significant.

3.3 Results of the Post-test

The results of descriptive analysis for the accuracy of discourse produced by the group 1 (AV) group, and group 2 (V) group in performing a listening task are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the post- test results

| | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---------------------|-------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Post- test accuracy | (AV) | 20 | 85.8870 | 7.15729 | 1.60042 |
| | (V) | 20 | 80.8600 | 3.66934 | .82049 |

Table 5. Independent samples t- test for the comparison of ‘accuracy’ means in post- test

| | | Levene’s test for equality of variances | | | | T-test for equality of means | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|-------|--------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|---------|
| | | f | sig. | t | df | sig.(2-tailed) | mean difference | Std.error difference | 95% Confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | lower | upper | |
| Post-test accuracy | Equal variances assumed | .655 | .424 | 2.795 | 38 | .008 | 5.02700 | 1.79848 | 1.38616 | 8.66784 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.795 | 28.342 | .009 | 5.02700 | 1.79848 | 1.34498 | 8.70902 |

Independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the accuracy of two groups. Again the necessary condition for comparing the mean differences is the equality of variances of the both groups. Therefore, Levene's test for equality of variances was utilized to compare the variances of two groups. As the results of Table 5 show, regarding the significance level of Leven's test ($P > 0.05$, $df = 38$, $t = 2.79$), (sig. .424) which is more than 0.05, equality of variances is verified.

Mean scores of accuracy in group 1 is ($M = 85.88$, $SD = 7.15$), and in group 2 is ($M = 80.86$, $SD = 3.66$). Significance of the t-test is 0.008. Because the significance of t-test is smaller than 0.05, therefore Null Hypothesis (equality of accuracy mean scores in two groups) is rejected. Consequently, mean scores of accuracy in group 1(AV) is meaningfully higher than the accuracy in group 2(A) in post -test.

4. Discussion

The immediate study focused on the effects of Audio- visual and audio recorded listening tasks on intermediate EFL learners 'oral performance. The underlying reason in this study is that Iranian English teachers, trying to teach spoken English, don't pay enough attention to effects these two different types can have on the speech production. Dependent variable measured was 'accuracy' (operationalized as percentage of error free clauses).

From the findings of this study it was indicated that the impact of audiovisual listening tasks is different from that of Audio recorded listening tasks. Agreeing with this, Dike (1989) stated that not only do audio-visual resources increase teachers' and learners' motivation, but clarity of topic being taught is increased. According to Ode and Omokaro (2007), audiovisual resources encourages learners to make abstract ideas more concrete. The above findings significantly bear credence to the study by Balogun (1976) on the importance of audiovisual materials which emphasized that a well-chosen AV materials will promote better understanding, create emotional balance and allow learners share experiences of other cultures, and make individualized learning possible through their programmed instructions; and provide concrete basis for conceptual thinking .

5. Conclusion

According to Ellis (2003), a task- based classroom activity focuses on motivating language use, and providing students with learning opportunities. With regard to the discrepancy among the researchers, it seems that it will be better for both the teachers and researchers to explore various ways of improving L2 production, particularly on accuracy. Thus the main concern of this study was to investigate the probability of enhancing the accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' task-based oral performance through listening tasks. The findings of the present study indicated that the experimental group performance in terms of accuracy was more accurate than the control group's accuracy.

6. Pedagogical Implication

The most important contribution of this study is that it provides learners and L2 educators with a clear explanation of how using audio –visual listening tasks affected the L2 learners' performance in terms of accuracy of their speech. Regarding the results of the study, it is predicated that the type of a task is an important factor which contributes to the decision as to provide speech.

There are certain likely implications taken from this study for language teachers and material preparation experts. Teachers can include audio –visual listening tasks more in their daily teaching of listening tasks. Providing students with the opportunity to watch listening materials is well worthwhile. Listening and interaction with teacher or with other students enable learners to work with a language problem in a reasonably stable site.

In terms of research methodology, investigation of the data revealed that categories of analysis can be extended beyond the global measure of, accuracy. Discoursal features, lexical selection, collocations of the speech can also be investigated.

7. Suggestions for further Research

In order to permit greater confidence in the results, the following areas for further research are suggested:

- 1) Replication of the study for male vs. female learners;
- 2) Replication of the study with different age group;
- 3) Replication of the study with tasks other than the ones employed in this study

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