

Effect of Power Point Enhanced Teaching (Visual Input) on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension Ability

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Abstract

The present investigation was an attempt to study on the effect of power point enhanced teaching (visual input) on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. To that end, a null hypothesis was formulated as power point enhanced teaching (visual input) has no effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. The participants of the study were 100 students at Kish language institute. After administrating an OPT test, 40 intermediate students were randomly selected and divided into control and experimental groups. Both groups participated in pretest of listening comprehension. The purpose of such a test was to measure the initial subject knowledge of participants in listening comprehension ability in both groups. Then the control group received no treatment while the experimental group received treatment based on power point enhanced teaching (visual input). The whole project took for 8 sessions. Finally both groups sat for the post test of listening comprehension ability. In the analysis phase of the study, the data collected from the control and experimental group was analyzed through SPSS software. ANCOVA was run to compare the results to find out whether there was any significant difference among the scores of two

groups or not. It was found that students in experimental group performed significantly better than control group. So the null hypothesis as power-point enhanced teaching (visual input) does not have effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability was rejected. The result showed that power point enhanced teaching (visual input) had impact on subjects' listening comprehension ability. The findings of the present study are of value to all those involved in developing and designing listening materials for EFL learners, besides teachers, testers, and curriculum planners.

Keywords: Power point enhanced teaching, Listening comprehension

1. Introduction

Listening plays a significant role in the lives of people. Of the four major areas of communication skills and language development—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—the one that is the most basic is listening. It is evident that children listen and respond to language before they learn to talk. When it is time for children to learn to read, they still have to listen so that they gain knowledge and information to follow directions. In the classroom, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall. Listening is not only the first of the language arts skills developed, it is also the skill most frequently used in both the classroom and daily life. Clearly, much of the educational process is based on skills in listening. Students have to spend most of the time listening to what the teacher says, for instance, giving lectures, asking questions, or telling directions. In a language classroom, listening ability plays a significant role in the development of other language arts skills. When students first learn a language, they generally have to listen to the words several times before they are able to recognize and pronounce those words. Listening can also help students build vocabulary, develop language proficiency, and improve language usage (Barker, 1971). Cayer, Green, and Baker (1971) find that students' ability to comprehend written material through reading as well as to express themselves through speaking and written communication are directly related to students' maturity in the listening phase of language development. Dunkel (1986) asserts that developing proficiency in listening comprehension is the key to achieving proficiency in speaking. Not only are listening skills the basis for the development of all other skills, they are also the main channel through which students make initial contact with the target language and its culture (Curtain & Pesola, 1988).

Despite the importance of listening practice in language instruction, English language classes in many countries still emphasize only the skills of reading and writing. This is especially the case of an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) situation in which the English language is taught as a subject at school and used only inside, but not outside, the classroom. EFL students are studying English in their home countries where English is not the dominant native language. Students who are from environments where English is not the language of the country have very few opportunities to hear the real language; these students therefore are not accustomed to hearing the language as it is produced by native speakers for native speakers. Consequently, students from the countries in which

English is taught as a foreign language frequently have great difficulty understanding English spoken to them when they come into contact with native speakers of the language. A few problems that hinder listening comprehension are as follows: unfamiliarity of topics/texts, lack of socio-cultural, factual and contextual knowledge of the target language.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Listening Comprehension

Listening plays an important role in communication as it is said that, of the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, about 9% (Mendelsohn, 1994). Although the teaching of listening comprehension has long been somewhat neglected and poorly taught aspect of English in many EFL programs (Mendelsohn, 1994, p. 9), listening is now regarded as much more important in both EFL classrooms and SLA research. Listening involves an active process of deciphering and constructing meaning from both verbal and non-verbal messages (Nunan, 1998). Thus, the label of passive skill applied to listening is a misnomer. This misunderstanding may stem from the fact that superficially learners seem to only sit in a language lab quietly, listen to pre-recorded dialogues, and write the answers to some questions related to the oral stimulus. It is evident, then, that listening is not as passive as it has been claimed to be as it demands a number of complicated processes on the part of the learners. There are two subsuming cognitive processes: bottom-up (data-driven) and top-down (conceptually-driven). The bottom-up processing involves constructing meaning from the smallest unit of the spoken language to the largest one in a linear mode (Nunan, 1998). Thus, the learners attempt to understand a spoken discourse by decoding a number of sounds to form words. Next, a nexus of words are linked to form phrases, which make up sentences. These sentences build a complete text, the meaning of which is then constructed by the listeners. In addition to the grammatical relationships, such suprasegmental phonemes as stress, rhythm and intonation also substantially contribute to this data-driven processing (van Duzer, 1997). Learners can be trained to perform this processing, for instance, by activities that require them to discriminate two sounds or distinguish rising and falling intonations. The top-down processing, on the other hand, refers to interpreting meaning as intended by the speakers by means of schemata or structures of knowledge in the mind (Nunan, 1998). This view emphasizes the prominence of background knowledge already possessed by the learners in making sense of the information they hear. In the aural perception, the prior knowledge may facilitate their attempt to grasp the incoming information by relating the familiar with the new one, and significant lack of such knowledge can hamper their efforts to comprehend a particular utterance. It is, therefore, essential that learners are accustomed to performing this processing, usually by extracting the gist of the exchange they listen to.

Due to the fact that the communicative approach is increasingly used in EFL situation, we, therefore, stress the importance of students' communicative competence. The need for competence in listening in EFL English language learners is increasing, so that listening teaching has attracted considerable attention. Unfortunately, the teaching of listening skills is

still neglected in the English language teaching process. EFL learners have serious problems in English listening comprehension due to the fact that universities pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not important parts of many course books or curricula and teachers do not seem to pay attention to these skills while designing their lessons. EFL English language learners have limited listening comprehension. Listening levels of learners are different from each other, because listening is affected by crucial factors. The most important factors that should be emphasized are: the significance of listening, the study of listening teaching theory and use of the most advanced listening teaching methods. In many English language classes, grammar-translation method is used for teaching. This method has been found inadequate to the demands for producing efficient English speakers and listeners. So a new teaching method should be used to meet the needs of students. This new method is called communicative approach. English must be taught as a tool for communication. It is now widely accepted that students' listening ability must be at the core of teaching practice, and it is the area in which teachers need to concentrate their own efforts to improve their teaching. This is a significant challenge for English teachers; however, it is crucial in the development of English language communicative competence. The purpose of this approach is to improve the students' English overall linguistic capability and oral and aural competence. The researchers attempt to discuss the definition of listening, importance of listening. Then, they review the process of listening comprehension, strategies of listening comprehension. Analysis of listening comprehension problems is reviewed. Then, teaching methods for listening comprehension and teaching listening activities will be discussed. Finally, general principles in teaching listening comprehension are discussed. Findings of this study will be beneficial to EFL learners to improve their English language listening comprehension ability.

2.2 The Application of Power Point Benefits

It is becoming common that modern language instruction relies more and more on the use of technology in order to convey ideas and messages with the help of images, symbols, and sounds. A convenient and practical medium of presenting these ideas is PowerPoint. PowerPoint has become one the most common tools used in different areas, and the foreign language field is not an exception. However, the use of PowerPoint in university classes is ubiquitous yet understudied in empirical pedagogical research (James, Burke, & Hutchins, 2006). Adams (2006) suggested that PowerPoint supports a cognitive and pedagogical style. Additionally, PowerPoint usage among educators seems to be relatively unreflective and taken for granted

Therefore, power point visual input presentation can be used in tandem or as a medium for knowledge dissemination in different classroom settings specially in listening comprehension.

2.3 Purpose of the Study

Traditionally, texts for L2 listening have been delivered through the auditory channel with a tape recorder or with the teacher reading the listening text without any additional materials or support. The purpose of this study is to provide implications and implementations for

classroom teaching of L2 listening comprehension using PowerPoint presentation for pre-, during-, and post-listening activities.

Additionally, the purpose of providing support for Intermediate Iranian learners is not simply to help them get better listening grades. It is rather to encourage them to persist in their efforts to develop their listening proficiency in English. The present investigation is also viewed as an extension of previous studies in visually supported listening by Bransford and Johnson (1972), Mueller (1980), and Kim (2003). So the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of visuals, in this case PowerPoint enhanced teaching, on listening comprehension. The study is also aimed at contributing to the body of literature related to L2 visually assisted listening, to investigate if there is more empirical evidence to support the consensus among language researchers that nonverbal information is useful for L2 listeners in constructing meaning from a spoken text, and how it may affect students' outcomes.

2.4 Research Question and Hypothesis

In order to tackle the problem of the research in a consolidated way, the following research question has been formulated as follows:

RQ: Does power point enhanced teaching (visual input) have effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability?

In order to answer the research question, the following null hypothesis has been formulated as follows:

H0: power-point enhanced teaching (visual input) does not have effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability.

3. Method

As it was said earlier in the previous chapter this study was conducted to ameliorate the effect of power point enhanced teaching (visual input) on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability.

According to the hypothesis of this study, it is believed that power point enhanced teaching (visual input) will enhance listening comprehension ability. To examine the above research question the following corresponding null hypothesis was formulated:

Power-point enhanced teaching (visual input) does not have effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability

Following experiment was designed to investigate the hypothesis:

About 100 learners of English at Kish Language Institute participated in the study. These students were all studying English as a foreign language. There were two groups of students: group A, and group B in their Intermediate level.

3.1 Instrument

To conduct the present investigation and to implement the process of data collection, the researcher used various tools including the OPT test of English language proficiency in order to measure the subjects' current status of proficiency level. A pre-test of listening comprehension was given to the subjects to measure the subjects' initial differences in listening comprehension ability. And finally a post test of listening comprehension was administered to both groups to find out the effectiveness of the treatment.

3.2 Procedure

The participants of the study were 100 learners which homogenized by an OPT test. This test was divided into 3 parts, cloze test, structure, and vocabulary proficiency. Part one begins with questions 1 to 40, Part two from questions 41 to 60. For questions, 1 to 5 students are supposed to mark one letter A, B or C on their answer sheet. From questions, 6 to 10 students must choose the word, which best fits each space in the text. From questions, 11 to 20 students are supposed to choose the word in the space provided in the passage. From questions 21 to 40 students must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence. From questions, 41 to 50 students are given a passage to fill in by choosing the best word or phrase. From questions, 51 to 60 students are supposed to mark one letter A, B, C, or D, which best complete each sentence. 40 students were selected and they were randomly divided into two groups, control and experimental. Each group embraced 20 students. Then a pre-test of listening comprehension test was run in order to check the learners' initial subject knowledge of listening comprehension ability. The whole research project took place in almost 8 sessions, each session for 1 hour. The experimental group received treatment based on power point enhanced teaching (visual input). The PET slides in the pre-, during-, and post-listening stages contain pictures and photographs, depending on the listening activity proposed by the English textbook. Most of them were scanned from English textbook. Each listening activity was taken from the textbook and took 15 to 25 minutes of class time. These listening activities is part of the aural practice done in class to develop students' listening proficiency and was not be taken into consideration when calculating students' grades. There are a total of six listening activities from the textbook. However, the control group received no treatment, and approached the traditional way of teaching listening. At the end of the sessions, listening comprehension of the learners in both groups were tested using the post-test. Then based on this test the efficacy of listening comprehension development and improvement of learners in each group were determined.

4. Data Analysis and Results

This study investigates the effect of power point enhanced teaching (visual input) on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. The researcher tries to find out power point enhanced teaching (visual input) has any effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability or not. In this part the descriptive statistics was used through measuring mean and standard deviation (SD). Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Before starting the treatment, a test of OPT was employed to establish the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of language proficiency. It consisted of three parts: Cloze tests, structure and vocabulary. Initially, 100 male and female students participated in the study.

After administration of OPT test, 40 intermediate students whose scores were between 31 and 50 were selected. Then they were randomly classified into two groups. One of them was considered as the control group and the other one as the experimental group.

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT test. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the proficiency test

N	Mean	SD
100	32	10.32

Table 2 shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2. Number of students participated in pre-test and post-test

Cases	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Pre-test*group	40	100.0%	0	0%	40	100.0%
Post-test*group	40	100.0%	0	0%	40	100.0%

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the pre-test and post-test

Group		Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	Mean	59.9	68.4
	N	20	20
	SD.	4.8	4.7
Control	Mean	58.45	58.1
	N	20	20
	SD	5.64	5.2
Total	Mean	59.15	63.25
	N	40	40
	SD	5.216	7.121

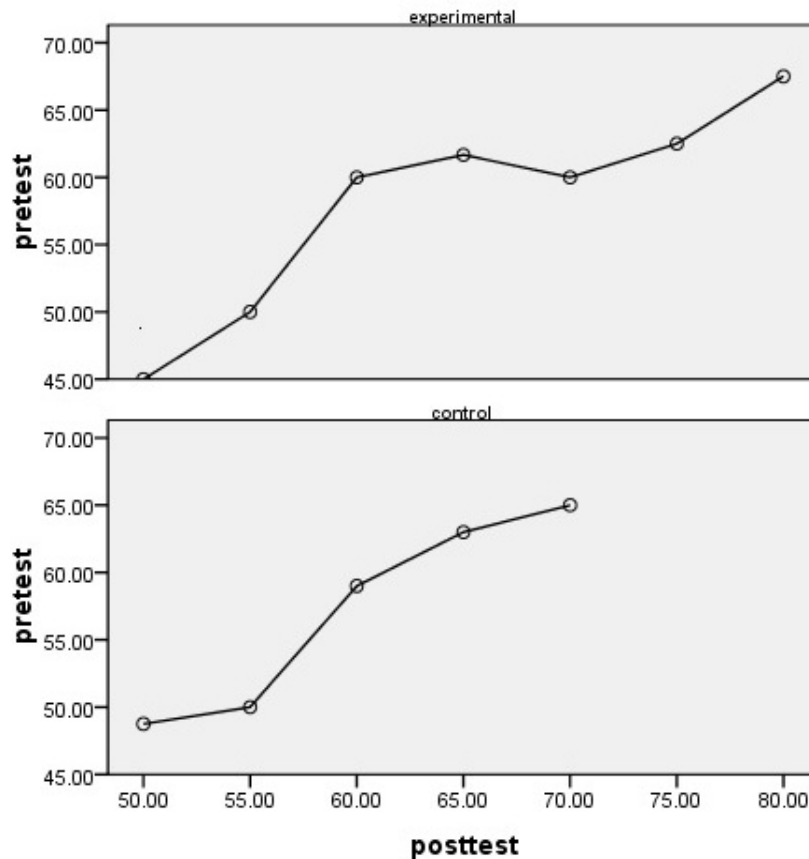
4.2 Interpretive Statistics

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on a pre-test or other initial variable. In this case the effects of the pre-test and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of the post-test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated.

In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis "power point enhanced teaching (visual input) has no effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability", the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA. Before running ANCOVA, the following hypotheses were examined:

- (i) Linear relationship between variables (pre-test and post-test);
- (ii) Equality of variances;
- (iii) Homogeneity of regression.

(1) The linear relationship between pre-test and post-test was examined through spread plot, Graph 1:



Graph 1. The relationship between pre-test and post-test (markers/lines show mean)

As Graph 1 shows, because the regression lines are parallel, so there is a linear relationship between the two variables, pre-test and post-test. It means that the relationship between the two variables in both groups is the same.

(2) In order to examine the equality of variances, Levin's test of equality of error variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 5. Levine's test of equality of error variances

F	df1	df2	Sig
0.26	1	38	0.61

According to Table 5 the calculated F is not meaningful. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.

(3) The data in Table 6 are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

Table 6. Tests of between-subjects effects

Source	Type III Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1879.82	3	626.61	230.95	.00
Group (a)	17.86	1	17.86	6.6	.015
Pretest(b)	802.97	1	802	295.95	.00
Group*pretest(a*b)	.41	1	.41	.15	.7
Error	97.68	36	2.71		
Total	46200	40			

As Table 6 shows, between-subjects effect (a*b) is not significance ($F = 0.15$, $Sig = 0.7$). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between-subjects effect of post-test and group to show whether mean scores of two groups are the same or not. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in Table 7.

Table 7. Mean and corrected mean of listening comprehension ability

Source	Post-test		Corrected Mean	
	M	SD	M	SE
Experimental	38.4	4.7	37.77	.36
Control	28.1	5.11	28.72	.36

Table 7 shows the corrected means of dependent variable Listening comprehension ability. The data demonstrate that the means of experimental group are upper than control group.

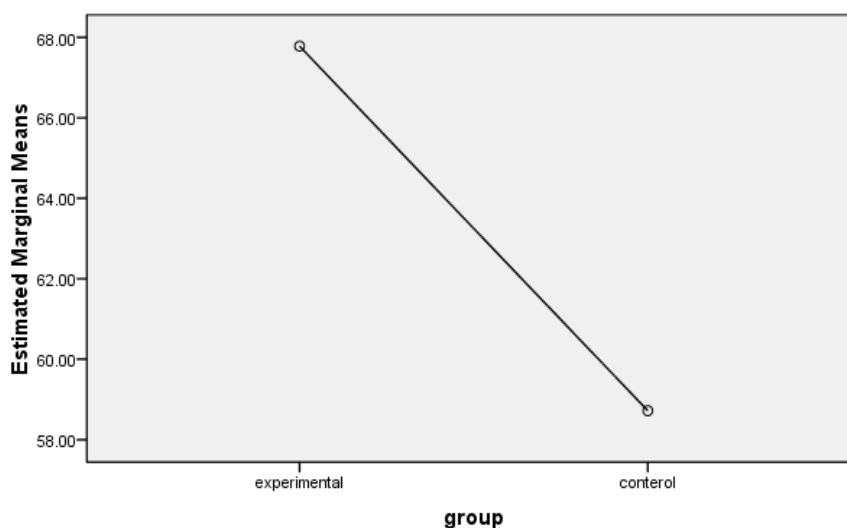
Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of listening comprehension ability in experimental and control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in Table 8:

Table 8. Sum of analysis of covariance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1879.415	2	939.71	354.48	.00	.95
Pre-test	818.52	1	818.52	308.76	.00	.89
Group	805.48	1	805.48	303.84	.00	.89
Error	98.08	37	2.65			
Total	46200	40				

As it can be seen, the corrected model ($f = .00$, $F = 354.48$) is statistically significant. The results ($F = 303.84$, $f = .00$, $\eta^2 = .89$) shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significance difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis “power point enhanced teaching (visual input) has no effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners’ listening comprehension ability” was rejected, so it can be concluded that power point enhanced teaching (visual input) has an effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners’ listening comprehension ability.

To clarify the result, the data will be demonstrated in Graph 2. The vertical axis represents the post-test and the horizontal axis represent experimental and control group.



Graph 2. The relationship between listening comprehension ability of experimental and control group

The graph shows that there is a significant difference between listening comprehension ability of experimental and control group. It clearly shows that the experimental group who received treatment on the basis of power point enhanced teaching (visual input) had better

scores on post-test.

5. Conclusion

If teachers use power point enhanced teaching (visual input) smartly and wisely to assist their teaching, they will find that it adds more dynamism to their classroom activities, as well as tackle the interest of many student. However, they are advised to vary their methods, techniques and ways of teaching, according to their students' needs and interests. They are also advised to use the technology-assisted teaching method more intensively and more frequently. Importantly, they should consider carefully if technology-assisted teaching is more effective than the traditional teaching listening method to the students' listening skill because it is the author's belief that educators should not use technology in the classroom just for the sake of using it. Instead, educators should strive to develop innovative teaching strategies that increase student learning and comprehension of listening skill. If the use of technology can help achieve this goal, then it should be considered for implementation in teaching listening skill.

The application of Power point enhanced teaching (visual input) in listening lessons seems to be an effective way to help students comprehend the content of the listening text, which had a contribution to the students' listening improvement, interest in in-class activities as well as the listening lessons. As a result, the application of Power point enhanced teaching (visual input) in listening lessons encouraged the full participation of the students in the given tasks and made the classroom atmosphere more exciting. Besides, the analysis also showed the positive reaction of the students towards the application of Power point enhanced teaching (visual input) in listening lessons. Most of them confirmed the benefits of the application of Power point enhanced teaching (visual input) in listening lessons on their listening comprehension, their motivation and their comprehension to listening in English and would like their teachers to apply the Power point enhanced teaching (visual input) in listening lessons.

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