

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING MOBILE APPLICATIONS VERSUS YOUTUBE CHANNELS ON ENHANCING STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

● TRAN THI LE THUY

ABSTRACT:

This study aimed to find out whether English learning mobile applications or Youtube channels could help students improve their listening comprehension skills better. Online study during Covid-19 has led to a demand to discover a wide variety of ways to adapt the situation. A number of tools has been tested to apply virtual teaching and learning. The experiment was conducted at the two classes of the course Listening 1 at Van Lang University. The participants were divided into two groups: the first group was conducted with top most subscribed English learning Youtube channels; the other was carried out with highest ranking English learning mobile applications. The pre-test and post-test administered at the beginning and at the end of the experiment. Then the scores of the two classes were collected and the data was statistically analyzed. A questionnaire was delivered to the students afterwards to collect more ideas about the methods. The study shows positive gains for the two experimental group students' outcomes as a result of the integration of mobile applications and Youtube channels. Thus, it was recommended that both means of learning should be considered as an efficient tool in integrated skills.

Keywords: online learning, mobile applications, YouTube channels, listening skills.

1. Introduction

Listening course is quite a big obstacle for Vietnamese students in general due to the lack of practicing these skills since their high schools. It is even more challenging for them to study listening skills online, which means the students have to spend more time with their devices studying themselves. Fortunately, with the development of technology and digital network environment, students can easily access to a great number of available software for their needs of study. In reality, the application of hi-tech on language learning has been worldwide adopted effectively. The broad use of smart phones and different transportable and Wi-fi gadgets has converted the traditional teaching method and learning process (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2009).

This study aimed to find out whether English applications or YouTube channels could help students improve their listening skills better. To achieve the above purpose, the study sets up the following research questions:

- (1) Can English applications and YouTube channels help first-year English majored students improve their listening comprehension skills?
- (2) To what extent do English applications and YouTube channels help the students improve their listening comprehension skills?

2. Literature review

2.1. Online learning

According to Cojocariu et al. (2014), online learning is the competence in using a computer

connected to a network to learn anywhere and anytime. Online learning makes the learning process more innovative and more flexible. Students can learn independently and interact easily with teachers their peers (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Online platforms are beneficial to students because of accessible video conferences with large capacity, live forum discussions, high speed internet connections, online lessons on computers and also mobile phones, possibility of watching recorded lectures, instant feedback from both teachers and students, and taken assignments (Basilaia et al., 2020).

2.2. Listening comprehension skills

Bingol M. (2014) finds that some difficulties students may have in listening comprehension include: (1) quality of recorded materials, (2) cultural differences, (3) accent, (4) unfamiliar vocabulary, (5) length and speed of listening, (6) physical conditions, and (7) lack of concentration. Therefore, a variety of methods has been considered to support students in their listening comprehension practice. Djaborova, F. (2020) suggests some effective methods that can solve the problems are mock interview, authenticity, and other resources video tools, including short sketches, films, and dramatic and comedic materials.

2.3. The use of mobile applications for language learning

As defined in Cambridge dictionary, mobile application (apps) is a software program that runs on a mobile phone. Among the numerous apps, there is a large number of apps relating to English learning. These apps can be easily and freely downloaded by students according to their own levels and interests. As a matter of fact, the applications to improve learners' ability and motivation have attracted much notice of many researchers. The features of mobile technology such as portability and information accessibility play a major role in the enhancement of English language teaching and learning (El-Hussein & Cronje (2010)). Liu & Xuan He (2014) assert that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can not only enhance students' English ability but also increase students' learning motivation. It is helpful and efficient for college students using mobile devices to learn English by themselves.

2.4. The use of channels on Youtube for language learning

YouTube, which started in 2005, is classified as the third most visited website on the Internet (Alzyoud & Kabilan, 2012). This site is considered as a huge library for English educators with a number

of ways of ranking. Alimemaj (2010) mentions that YouTube videos help students practice their verbal communication and listening skills. Obviously, authentic videos can be some of the best resources for learning English. For example, learners can hear how the words are spoken, helping them to improve their pronunciation and listening skills. At the same time, they can see the words or images on screen, which is perfect for a "visual" learner. Moreover, the best videos are also interesting and fun to watch, which makes the information easier to remember. YouTube is also a free-of-charge resource for EFL videos and there are thousands of different channels to choose from. According to Paulsen (2001), the effectiveness of using online materials may provide positive spin-offs for learners much same as if they were immersed in the language and culture while studying abroad. Therefore, YouTube seems to be the great unlimited sources for students themselves to discover the world through English channels. Using videos in language learning is one of the most useful tools of cognitive processing and memory (Anyagre & Anyagree, (2009).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Participants of this study included 30 freshmen from the class K26N07, and other 30 from K26N08 of the course Listening 1. As in the current course outline, the curriculum consisted of 30 periods. The researcher is also the teacher of the two experiment classes. The participants were divided into two groups: the first group is conducted with the top most subscribed YouTube channels; the other is carried out with the highest ranking mobile applications.

3.2. Research design

To measure and validate the effectiveness of the tools in helping students improve their listening and speaking skills, the experiment used a pretest-posttest experimental group design. In the design, the subjects were randomly assigned to two groups. The treatment administered to the two experiment groups. The treatment consists of five top most subscribed YouTube channels and five highest ranking mobile applications designed by the researcher to teach listening to the first-year students for thirty periods. The experiment gave the researcher valuable data for judging and comparing the changes in the scores between the two groups in the pre-test and post-test. The comparison of the results of the two groups helped the researcher clarify how the treatment has affected the subject's final scores. This study which involved basically with quantitative and quantitative method aimed at

a full analysis of the data related to students' test scores and questionnaire, and judgment towards the effectiveness of the two approaches in English listening skills.

3.3. Instrumentation

3.3.1. Test

The main instrument was the two tests: pre- and post-test. The pre-test and post-test administered at the beginning and at the end of the experiment to measure the result and thus can judge the effectiveness of the treatment on students' listening competence.

3.3.2. Youtube channels

The researcher used top five most subscribed English learning channels on YouTube to conduct the experiment with class K26N07: Learn English American with 100 million subscribers, Ted Talks with 19.5 million subscribers, Ted-ed with 14 million subscribers, English with Lucy with 6,12 million subscribers and Business Insider with 4.77 million subscribers.

3.3.3. Mobile applications

Top five highest ranking English learning apps on educational app store were used for class K26N08: Learn English Podcast (Android/ iOS - Free) - 4.8 stars, Learn American English Podcast (Android/ iOS - Free) - 4.8 stars, ESL English Listening Test (Android/ iOS - Free) - 4.8 stars, 4English (Android/ iOS - Free) - 4.8 stars, and VOA Special English Listening (Android/ iOS - Free) - 4.8 stars.

3.3.4. The experiment

The experiment was conducted at the two classes K26N07 and K26N08. After the pre-test, the two classes were randomly divided into two experimental groups. The class K26N07 accesses to the five most subscribers on YouTube channels,

and class K26N08 downloads five highest ranking mobile applications. For each six-period session, the teacher instructed the students to apply one channel/ one app. The teacher guided them how to use and practice learning with these tools, and also encouraged them to self-study at home. After thirty sessions, the post-test was delivered to the two groups. Then the scores of the two classes were collected and the data was statistical to give the researcher some conclusion.

3.3.5. Questionnaire

After the experiment, the researcher delivered a questionnaire to the two groups to collect students' perception and attitudes towards the approaches. The analyst gave researcher a comprehensive look of the two tools to teach listening comprehension skills.

4. Results and conclusion

4.1. Pre-test versus Post-test results

As observed from the above figure, the students from class K26N07 got a remarkable improvement in their scores. In the pre-test, most of the students were at average level (60%), and about a quarter of them were below average (26.7%). Meanwhile, in the post-test, none of the students got weak scores. More than half could achieve fair level, and even 10% scored excellent marks.

Similarly, the scores of class K26N08 increased significantly. From 53% of average in the pre-test, most of the students gained fair scores (70%). To sum up, the data from the test results showed that both Mobile Apps and YouTube channel could help students improve their listening comprehension skills.

4.2. Mobile apps vs. YouTube's channels results

As seen in the above figure, class K26N07

Figure 1: Pre-test vs. Post-test results of K26N07 class



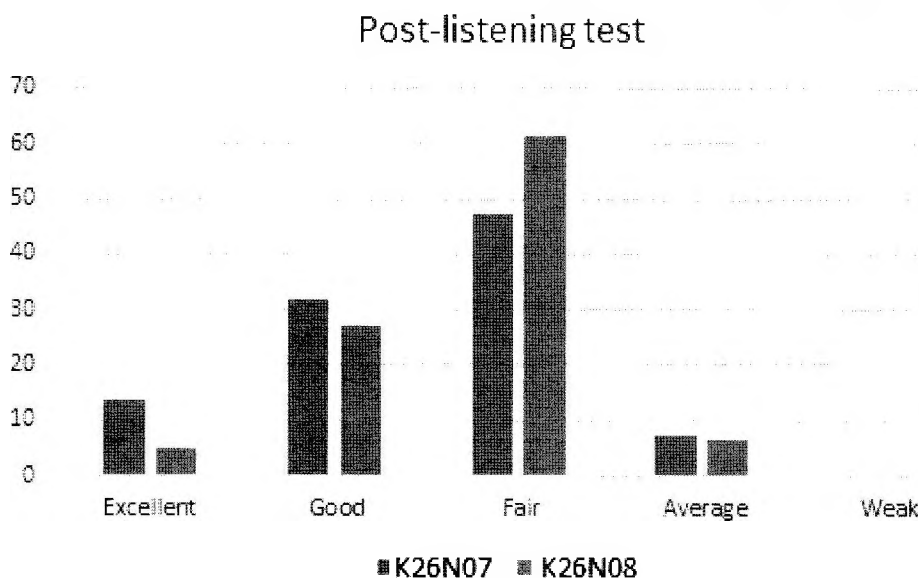
Source: Author (2021)

Figure 2: Pre-test vs. Post-test results of K26N08 class



Source: Author (2021)

Figure 3: Listening test result of K26N07 vs. K26N08



Source: Author (2021)

with the help of YouTube channels achieved more improvement in listening than the group K26N08 who were supported by Mobile Apps. Especially, there was a dramatic change in the scale from good to excellent.

4.3. Results of Questionnaire

To investigate the extent of the effectiveness of the two approaches, a questionnaire was conveyed to collect (1) students' attitudes towards the methods, (2) students' ways of learning with the tools, and (3) students' perception of learning listening with the tools.

As presented in Table 1, students showed their interests in learning listening skills through

YouTube channels and Mobile applications (M=1.9). Furthermore, they recognized that those ways could make their listening comprehension skills better (M=1.6).

Table 2 showed the ways students exploited the resources to practice their listening comprehension skills. They learned vocabulary visually in context through watching videos, news, or other kinds (M=1.6). They could access to authentic materials with subtitles to practice their listening skills (M=1.7; M=1.8, M=1.6). Through these approaches, they also practiced their pronunciation (M=1.9). What is more, they enjoyed the lessons by playing games to learn this skill (M=1.8).

Table 1. Student's attitudes towards learning listening skills through Mobile applications and YouTube channels

Themes	The choices of the students					Mean
	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	
What is listening learning through Mobile applications and YouTube channels like?						
1. I have interesting lessons with different topics.	21	39	0	0	0	1.7
2. They make me more concentrated in the lessons.	35	23	2	0	0	1.4
3. They provide me with a number of benefits.	31	27	2	0	0	1.5
4. They help me improve my listening skill more effectively.	23	36	1	0	0	1.6
5. It is the best ways to support me in my listening comprehension practice.	26	24	3	1	0	1.4
6. I can easily access to these means.	18	34	5	3	0	1.9
7. I am interested in learning listening skills through Mobile applications and YouTube channels.	5	54	1	0	0	1.9

Source: Author (2021)

Table 2. Student's ways of learning listening skills through Mobile applications and YouTube channels

Themes	The choices of the students					Mean
	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	
How do you learn listening skill with Mobile applications and YouTube?						
1. I learn new words in context/ with pictures.	24	36	0	0	0	1.6
2. I watch short sketches, films, and dramatic and comedic materials.	18	42	0	0	0	1.7
3. I watch authentic conversations/ live presentations by native speakers.	12	48	0	0	0	1.8
4. I practice listening comprehension skills at any time.	29	30	1	0	0	1.5
5. I learn the ways to practice English pronunciation.	6	54	0	0	0	1.9
6. I watch news/ listen to articles with English subtitles.	23	36	1	0	0	1.6
7. I play funny games.	13	47	1	0	0	1.8

Source: Author (2021)

The results in Table 3 indicated some benefits that students got from the two methods. They got used to English intonation and different English accents, then improve their pronunciation (M=1.6; M=1.5 M=1.7). These apps and channels opened up their knowledge to apply in real life situations (M=1.8; M=1.7).

To sum up, students' attitudes towards these methods were positive. By practicing with these authentic materials, their listening comprehension skills improve remarkably.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Answer to the first question

The first question is: Can English applications and YouTube channels help first-year English majored students improve their listening comprehension skills?

Basing on the results of the post-test, it shows positive gains for the two experimental group students' outcomes as a result of the integration of Mobile applications and YouTube channels. Moreover, the test results showed that the group

Table 3. Student's perception towards learning listening skills through Mobile applications and YouTube channels

Themes	The choices of the students					Mean
	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	
What do Mobile applications and YouTube help you in your listening comprehension skills?						
1. I get used to English intonation.	17	36	2	1	0	1.6
2. They make my pronunciation more accurate.	12	48	0	0	0	1.8
3. I feel more confident in my English communication with others.	12	42	2	0	0	1.7
4. I can understand different English accents.	21	30	3	0	0	1.5
5. I am able to use various types of vocabulary in communicating and writing.	2	48	3	1	0	1.8
6. I can expand my knowledge from various topics/cultures.	3	54	1	0	0	1.9

Source: Author (2021)

learning with YouTube's channels got higher scores than the group practicing with Mobile application. Thus, it was recommended that English learning YouTube channels is more effective instructional tool than Mobile applications for enhancing listening skills of EFL college students and as an important teaching resource in classrooms.

5.2. Answer to the second question

The second question is: To what extent do English applications and YouTube channels help the students improve their listening comprehension skills?

As pointed in the results of the questionnaire, most of the students strongly agree that both of the tools are beneficial to them. YouTube channels and Mobile applications can help students enhance their listening comprehension skills in the ways of increasing their stock of vocabulary, getting acquainted to English

intonation and different English accents, expanding their knowledge on different topics and cultures, improving their pronunciation and becoming more confident in communication.

5.3. Recommendations

In the light of the results of this study, future research can be generalized to a larger population. It can be applied to different years and various majors of students. What is more, the present study focused on listening comprehension skills, future studies can examine the effectiveness of the two tools to teach integrated skills to see more clearly about how their contribution to the learning. Moreover, in addition to five YouTube channels and five Mobile applications employed in this study, future research can use other channels and apps to teach listening comprehension skills■

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Received date: May 2, 2021

Reviewed date: May 20, 2021

Accepted date: June 5, 2021

Author Information:

TRAN THI LE THUY

Van Lang University

MỨC ĐỘ HIỆU QUẢ CỦA VIỆC NÂNG CAO TRÌNH ĐỘ NGHE HIỂU TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN QUA CÁC ỨNG DỤNG TRÊN ĐIỆN THOẠI SO VỚI QUA CÁC KÊNH TRÊN YOUTUBE

● TRẦN THỊ LỆ THỦY

Trường Đại học Văn Lang

Tóm tắt

Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu xem các ứng dụng học tiếng Anh trên điện thoại hoặc các kênh trên Youtube có thể giúp học sinh cải thiện kỹ năng nghe hiểu của mình tốt hơn hay không. Các thí nghiệm của nghiên cứu được thực hiện tại hai lớp của môn Listening 1 tại Trường Đại học Văn Lang. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy việc sử dụng các ứng dụng di động và các kênh trên Youtube có tác động tích cực đến kỹ năng nghe hiểu của sinh viên. Những kết quả này cũng cho thấy các kênh trên Youtube có tác động tốt hơn các ứng dụng di động trong việc nâng cao kỹ năng nghe hiểu của sinh viên thuộc các lớp học tiếng Anh.

Từ khoá: học trực tuyến, ứng dụng điện thoại, kênh Youtube, các kỹ năng nghe.