

Effects of Audio-Video Listening Comprehension Exercises on Improving Listening Comprehension of Chinese College Students

Wang Shuhang¹ / Surachai Piyanukool² / Saowarot Ruangpaisan³

¹English Language Teaching Program, Department of Education, Buriram Rajabhat University, Buriram, Thailand

E-mail: 660426028002@bru.ac.th

²English Language Teaching Program, Department of Education, Buriram Rajabhat University, Buriram, Thailand

E-mail: surachai.py@bru.ac.th

³English Language Teaching Program, Department of Education, Buriram Rajabhat University, Buriram, Thailand

E-mail: saowarot.rp@bru.ac.th

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Abstract

The objectives of this quasi-experimental research were 1) to study the effects of audio-video listening exercises on Chinese college students' listening comprehension skills, and 2) to investigate the students' level of satisfaction towards listening practice by audio-video listening comprehension exercises. The samples were 30 first year students at Boda College of Jilin Normal University, Jilin Province, People's Republic of China. They were selected by Cluster Random Sampling technique. The research instruments consisted of 6 audio-video listening exercises, 6 lesson plans, 40-item listening comprehension tests, and a satisfaction questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the data were mean, standard deviation, and dependent samples t-test. The study found that 1) the audio-video listening exercises significantly improved students' listening comprehension; and 2) the level of the students' satisfaction towards the audio-video listening exercises was at the most satisfactory level.

Keywords: audio-video listening exercises, Chinese college students, listening comprehension, listening skills development

Introduction

In this section, background of the research problem is clarified. A review of relevant literature is conducted. Furthermore, teaching listening, listening theories, audio-video listening exercises and benefits, and previous studies are also explored.

Background of the Research Problem

This study attempts to find out effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises on listening comprehension of Boda College students at Jilin Normal University, Peoples' Republic of China. For students who major in English Language Teaching (ELT) program in China, learning English well is not only a matter of academic achievement, but also a necessary skill for future work and communication, especially mastering listening skills. Listening is crucial for ELT

college students as it assists in language acquisition, communication, and understanding native accents, enhancing productivity, and relationships (Ahmed & Yaqoob, 2015). Traditional teaching methods in China prioritize rote memorization and grammar instruction, neglect practical skills needed for real-world communication. As a result, students struggle to comprehend spoken English in authentic contexts, hindering their academic and professional advancement. Adjusting the defects in pronunciation through the combination of listening and speaking helps to improve students' pronunciation and speaking ability (Harmer, 2007). It's not worth training without either one. Thus, the listening training plays a very significant role in English learning.

After the researcher has investigated listening grades of English Language Teaching (ELT) program students, the researcher found that their grades were low. According to the report of the Academic Office, in 2023 the majority of the students' grade was D, in 2022 it was D, and in 2021 it was C (Academic Office of Boda College, 2024). The reasons maybe they have practiced listening only one class per semester from Chinese teachers and they do not have the opportunity to use English outside the classroom and communicate with native speakers in real-life conversations. With this problem, the researcher must look for some effective methods to help the students improve in English listening comprehension.

To build listening skills, effective content utilized in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes is an essential component of the teaching process (Tyagi, 2013). The use of audio-video exercises is a key strategy for helping students enhances their listening abilities and is an integral part of teaching. According to Chen, Wang, and Xu (2014), multimedia is transforming the way students learn languages by providing various presentation modes such as audio, video, video subtitles, and so on. These multimedia tools improve learners' English skills. Audio-video listening comprehension exercises were used as a teaching tool to enhance listening comprehension. When combined with cooperative learning, audio-visual materials such as movies and lectures help students concentrate better and understand what they are hearing during listening activities, which improves their general listening abilities in classrooms (Hardiah, 2019). Pangaribuan, Sinaga and Sipayung (2017) postulate that the most effective strategy is utilizing multimedia applications like audio-video exercises, to enhance students' listening comprehension in educational settings.

Literature Review

Listening

Listening is a complicated cognitive and behavioral activity that includes not only receiving auditory signals, but also actively engaging with and interpreting them. Bodie (2023) defines listening as a dynamic process that involves feedback and adjustment, indicating that it is not merely passive but rather an interactive exchange that fosters deeper understanding. O' Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1989) define listening comprehension as a multidimensional process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, vocabulary, grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what has been gathered, and interpret it within the immediate and larger social-cultural context of the utterance.

Listening is an important part of communication that is frequently forgotten in various contexts. Swain, Friehe and Harring (2004) emphasize the necessity of teaching listening methods in the inclusive classroom for better literacy and learning results. In the context of language learning, Yıldırım and Yıldırım (2016) discuss the importance of listening in developing communicative and cognitive skills, noting that addressing listening comprehension problems is crucial for successful language acquisition.

Brenner (2017) states the importance of context and emotional intelligence in listening, suggesting that these factors significantly influence how messages are received and interpreted. Tias and Putri (2021) explored the relationship between the frequency of listening, vocabulary mastery, and listening ability in students, emphasizing the importance of these factors in language learning.

With this significance of listening, teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) should train their students to be able to effectively receive the information they heard and give feedback appropriately and correctly.

Listening Comprehension Theories

The listening comprehension process entails an active and conscious effort, whereby listeners construct meaning by using cues from contextual information and drawing upon existing knowledge, while relying on multiple strategic resources to fulfill the requirements of the task (O'Malley, Chamot & Kupper, 1989). These "strategic resources" can be divided into three theories: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive theories.

Bottom-Up Theory refers to students first understand the fundamental building blocks of information (such as facts or simple concepts) before progressing to more complicated theories or ideas. This strategy focuses on fundamental information and skills before incorporating them into a broader perspective. Khuziakhmetov and Porchesku (2016) mention that Bottom-up processing describes how learners employ linguistic signals from speech to improve comprehension, particularly at lower levels of language competency. Top-down Theory refers to incorporating the student's prior knowledge about the subject and connecting it with what they hear during the listening process (Newton & Nation, 2020). Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) assert that listeners actively develop or reconstruct the speaker's original meaning by engaging it with their background knowledge of the listening situation in order to understand what was heard. The interactive process occurs when listeners use both top-down and bottom-up processing.

According to Graham (2017), more successful listeners use a greater range of flexible methods and are more likely to strategically employ both top-down and bottom-up processing. Thus, the more effective learners took a top-down approach, focusing on bottom-up processing only when necessary.

Audio-video Listening Exercises and Teaching

Audio-video listening exercises are instructional activities that incorporate both auditory and visual information to improve listening abilities. These exercises combine the qualities of both modalities to promote comprehension and engagement in language learning settings. Therefore, it has been defined in a number of ways. Arjulayana (2018) points that videos are an effective tool for accommodating students' diverse learning methods. The visual components of films assist students understand the context and emotions expressed in spoken language, which is especially useful for visual learners. This adaptability is essential in a classroom with a diverse student population. Droad and Asl (2016) state that audio-visual gadgets enable consumers to access more authentic material. The use of media can help both instructed and non-instructed learners strengthen their language skills. Nowadays, video and audio recordings are increasingly used. Gebhard (1996) posits that authentic listening-viewing materials such as TV advertisements, game shows, TV news, movies, audio books, radio commercials, and music tracks are appropriate to use for listening practice.

One of the challenges in teaching listening is finding appropriate listening material (Renukadevi, 2014). The issue concerns the quality of listening materials as well as their compliance to the curriculum. Speed and sound clarity are important aspects of listening materials' quality. Hardiah (2019) posits that audio-visual media can assist students enhance their listening comprehension significantly. This strategy dramatically improves students' understanding of spoken English, which is critical for those learning it as a foreign language.

English as a Foreign Language teachers are increasingly using video resources to improve listening comprehension (Shahid & Ali, 2017). Many studies indicate that these multimedia tools help with language acquisition by offering authentic listening experiences that are essential for improving comprehension abilities.

Enhancing listening comprehension by providing well-designed multimedia audio-video materials improved L2 listening comprehension more than other styles of presentation (Chen, Wang & Xu, 2014). Alivi and Suharyono (2016) point out that using audio-video materials for listening exercises improves comprehension by offering more context, minimizing monotony, and sparking imagination, resulting in better understanding than audio-only methods.

Increasing engagement and motivation by applying proper methods, techniques, media, and materials for the main subject can boost students' interest and motivation in studying English, causing them to feel interested and pay attention to the subject (Kurniawati, 2016). The author also points out that video can be an effective method for teaching a variety of foreign language skills. Video can help learners improve their speech, listening, and pronunciation abilities while also encouraging the creation of authentic vocabulary.

Related Research

From 2017 to 2022, there were researchers investigating the effects of audio listening exercises and video listening exercises as follows: Sulaiman et al. (2017) investigated the differences in terms of Malaysian university students' perception towards traditional (audio-only) listening tests and video media listening tests. The study discovered that when using video material instead of audio solely, the majority of students scored higher. As a result, it is known that using video as an evaluation method can help students perform better because it uses realistic, meaningful, and real-life situation contexts and terminology. When teaching and testing listening abilities in a second language (L2) classroom, instructors should employ more genuine texts and materials. Situmeang, Manihuruk and Munteh (2023) determined the effectiveness of audio-visual teaching media in increasing students' listening comprehension. The participants were grade 8 Indonesian students. The sample size of 44 students was chosen via purposive sampling. The experimental group was instructed utilizing audio-visual teaching media, notably movie clips in the listening lesson, whereas the control group was taught using audio-recording material. This study demonstrated that audio-visual teaching media can be used effectively as a teaching strategy to improve students' listening comprehension abilities. Hao and Liu (2022) conducted the study to enhance students listening abilities by actual video listening activities. The population was 300 students, 60 samples were chosen randomly to take part in actual video listening tasks. They were students at a Chinese university and the samples were divided into two groups: control group and traditional group. Pre-tests, post-tests, and questionnaire surveys were among the study procedures. The findings demonstrated the effectiveness of the teaching method and how it enhanced students' listening comprehension of English. Students were satisfied with using real video listening activities. Shaojie, Samad and Ismail (2022) studied the effects of visual input and text types on the listening comprehension of English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in China. The visual materials were content videos, context videos, and audios. Their subjects were 30 non-English major students in Chinese Universities. It was a quantitative study. The researchers had the students listen to monologue and dialogue which were on the form of listening comprehension online tests. They found that videos and text types, texts used in teaching listening comprehension, significantly affect students' listening scores. Overall, these previous studies indicated that listening and watching video materials better improved students' listening skill than listening to audio solely. There were no studies applied both audio and video listening material in a classroom.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were to investigate the effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises on Chinese college students' listening skills and to examine the students' satisfaction with audio-video listening comprehension exercises.

Methodology

Research Design

The design used for this study is quasi-experimental research with one-group pretest and posttest. The data was obtained from the scores of the pretest, posttest, and satisfaction questionnaire.

Population and Samples

The populations of this study included 120 first year students in 4 classrooms who were studying in English Language Teaching (ELT) program at a private university, named Boda College of Jilin Normal University, Jilin Province, People's Republic of China. The researcher selected these students as population because their program was ELT and they will be teachers who teach English. They study English skills, teaching methodologies, and other classes relating to English language teaching.

The samples of this study were 30 students in one of those 4 classrooms. They were selected by Cluster Random Sampling technique because the students in the 4 classrooms of the population had the same mixed ability: smart, moderate, and weak. Then the researcher selected the students in one of the 4 classrooms to be the participants of this study. These students study an English listening class which the researcher intended to employ the audio-video exercises to enhance their listening comprehension ability. These were the limitations concerning the Population and Samples.

Research Instruments

Lesson plans, listening comprehension pre-posttests, audio-video listening exercises, and a 5-point rating scale questionnaire were the four research instruments used in this study. These instruments were evaluated their quality by 3 experts. The lesson plans were evaluated by a 5- point rating scale of appropriateness, and their appropriateness levels were the most appropriate. The pre-posttests' reliability value was 0.853 and the discrimination power was 0.25-0.75. The audio-video listening exercises and the satisfaction questionnaire were evaluated their congruence of the tools with the research objectives. The results revealed that both instruments' items were well congruent with the purposes of the study. Prior to receiving treatment, student's listening ability was assessed by pretests. There were forty multiple-choice questions in all. The students received treatment after completing the pretest. In six weeks, the treatment was completed. After that the students were asked to complete a posttest consisting of the same pretest questions. Following the posttest, the students answered a questionnaire concerning how satisfied they were with the use of audio-video listening comprehension exercises to enhance their English listening comprehension skills.

Data Collection

The study was conducted in the second semester, starting from March 2025 until the end of April 2025. The teaching and learning activities took place at Boda College of Jilin Normal University. A pretest was administered by the researcher before the lesson plans were put into action. The six lesson plans were then taught for six weeks, for a total of nine hours of teaching. Each lesson plan, the audio-video listening exercises were applied to practice listening comprehension. The listening comprehension exercises included 1) videos describing picture, the students see picture, listen to describing picture in a form of 4 choices, and students select the correct describing, 2) short listening audios, students listen to question and select the answer from 3 answers, and 3 long listening audios, students listen to conversation between 2 or 3 persons followed by 3 questions, and select answers from 4 choices. Before the intervention, the researcher taught the students some new vocabulary and expressions the students will hear from audio-video exercises. The students practiced pronunciation, learned meanings, and sentence examples. This knowledge of vocabulary, basic expressions, and spoken words, help learners to comprehend listening (Nation, 2022; Tias & Putri, 2021,). At the final stages of listening activities, the researcher had students practice describing pictures relating to their daily life. This encouraged students to apply words and expressions learned from listening to speak. Following completion of six lesson plans, the researchers administered a posttest, identical to the pretest. Lastly, students were asked to fill out an anonymous paper form to determine their level of satisfaction.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researchers analyzed the data based on the two research objectives and hypotheses concerning 1) to study the effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises; and 2) to study the students' satisfaction towards learning listening comprehension by audio-video exercises. Data analysis was divided into two main parts: 1) Score analysis includes descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage. Paired sample t-test was used to determine whether the score after testing was significantly higher than the score before testing, and 2) satisfaction analysis included descriptive statistics, namely mean and standard deviation were used to describe the overall level of student satisfaction as well as satisfaction in each aspect of the questionnaire.

Results

The researcher presented the results of the study in accordance with the objectives and research questions: 1) to investigate the effects of audio-video listening exercises on improving the students' listening comprehension, and 2) to explore the students' satisfaction towards the exercises. To find the answer of number 1, the researcher compared the pretest and posttest scores as shown in Table 1. After finding the differences, the researcher tested the significant difference and presented in Table 2. For analyzing the level of the students' satisfaction, the 5- rating scale was employed, and the results were shown in Table 3.

Table 1

The Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores

	Pretest Scores (40)	Posttest Scores (40)	Difference (D)
Total	587	1042	455
\bar{X}	19.57	34.73	15.16
SD	3.67	1.91	3.23

As revealed in Table 1, the students who learned English listening through audio-video listening comprehension exercises obtained posttest mean score much more than the pretest mean score.

The next table showed whether the differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level or not.

Table 2

The Significant Difference between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores

Means	SD	Mean Differences	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
19.57	3.67	15.16	29	25.735*	.000
34.73	1.91				

*p ≤ .05

Table 2 showed the difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores. The paired sample t-test revealed the difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. That is, learning listening by audio-video listening comprehension exercises improved significantly the students' listening scores.

The next table presented the level of the students' satisfaction towards practice listening to the audio-video listening exercises.

Table 3

Students' Satisfactions toward Audio-video Listening Comprehension Exercises

No.	Items	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1	The audio-video exercises improved my listening skills.	4.83	.38	The most satisfactory	1
8	The audio-video exercises are beneficial in learning English.	4.70	.54	The most satisfactory	2
6	The audio-video exercises improved my spoken phrases.	4.67	.48	The most satisfactory	3
5	The audio-video exercises improved my English vocabulary.	4.63	.56	The most satisfactory	4
7	The audio-video exercises improved my self-confidence in listening and speaking English.	4.60	.50	The most satisfactory	5

Table 3 presented the top 5 of students' satisfactions out of the total 12 items. The level of all top 5 satisfaction was the most satisfactory ($\bar{X} = 4.60 - 4.83$). The students were satisfied at the most satisfactory level because the audio-video exercises improved their listening and speaking skills, were beneficial in learning English, increased vocabulary knowledge and self-confidence.

Discussion

The study found the audio-video listening exercises had high effects on the students' listening comprehension and the students were most satisfied towards the exercises. The causes of listening improvement may be from the following issues:

The pre-teaching activities

Before listening practice, the researcher taught new words and expressions the students will hear from the exercises. The students listened to pronunciation of each word and practiced until being able to pronounce them correctly. For the meanings, the teacher taught them by providing context for students to guess and learn the meanings. These activities were conducted because the researcher is aware of the benefit of vocabulary knowledge. People can communicate successfully because they know vocabulary and use it effectively (Nation, 2022). Having background knowledge of vocabulary, know what they are going to listen to, and know the purposes of listening are crucial for students' listening comprehension (Frost, 2025; Goh & Vandergrift, 2022; Kilickaya, 2024).

Repetition

The second activity that improved the students' listening comprehension was repetition. In this study, the researcher had students repeated vocabulary pronunciation and practiced listening through videos describing pictures, short audios, and long conversation audios for 6 weeks, 90 minutes each. This kind of repetitions develop students' listening comprehension (Imura, 2007; Pashler, Rohrer, Cepeda & Carpenter, 2007; Rmelah & Pornwiriyakit, 2023).

Advantages of Audio-video Listening Comprehension Exercises

This study aims to study the effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises and the researcher found the high effect on the students' listening comprehension because of these advantages: 1) The conversations heard from the exercises are from native or native like speakers and the contents of listening relate to students' environment such as university, cities, traffic, restaurants, or working offices. They are authentic that make students feel like they are listening to the real situations (Drood & Asl, 2016). 2) Audio-video listening exercises are good motivation. Generally, the samples listen to teachers and learned the contents available in their workbook. For this experiment, the students heard the sounds and saw pictures. They recalled their experiences about those and could comprehend what they were being heard and seen (Hardia, 2019). Chen, Wang, and Xu (2014), Pangaribuan, Sinaga and Sipayung (2017) postulated that the most effective listening strategy is utilizing multimedia applications like audio-video exercises, to enhance students' listening comprehension in educational settings.

The second objective of this study was to investigate the students' satisfaction towards audio-video listening comprehension exercises. The researcher found that the students were satisfied at the most satisfactory level ($\bar{X} = 4.57$, S.D. = .58). They reported that the audio-video exercises improved their listening skills, spoken phrases, and vocabulary. They were familiar with the pronunciation of words they had learned before listening to the exercises. They learned meanings and usages of spoken words in various situations. This finding was supported by the study of Arjulayana (2018) who found that most students enjoyed learning through audio-video listening exercises in a variety of ways, including improving vocabulary and phrases.

Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this study might be pro and con of this study. 1) The first limitation is the similarity of the pretest and the posttest. The students gained higher posttest scores because they might remember some questions of the tests. 2) There was no control group, therefore, no comparison. The researcher cannot see the differences between the students who practice listening by audio-video exercises and the students who were trained by other materials. 3) The findings of this study can be generalized to only the population of this study because the population and samples were small numbers.

Recommendations

Implications

The researcher encourages teachers who teach English to students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) to employ audio-video exercises to practice listening. Teachers have to select media and content that are suitable for students' level. The content should be related to their daily lives and be beneficial for them. Audio material is good for practice listening to different accents of speakers, identifying the similar sound of different words, and learning new words. Videos help students see the pictures or situations, the knowledge of vocabulary and pronunciation skill improve the students' comprehension. Therefore, applying both audios and videos in listening practice is beneficial. Before teaching, teachers should activate students' background knowledge: teach vocabulary, expressions, practice pronunciation until students can say them correctly and learn all meanings of those vocabulary. After practice listening, teachers should have students talk to each other by setting situations for them to do role playing. These teaching activities will improve students' listening, speaking, and their vocabulary knowledge.

Further Studies

Researchers may conduct a study to compare the effects of audio-video material on students' listening and speaking skills. Comparing learning vocabulary by listening to music audios and music videos with lyric. Finally, researchers may conduct an experimental study to see the effects of audio-video exercises on students' communication ability.

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Authors

Wang Shuhang is a master student of English Language Teaching program, Buriram Rajabhat University. She has been working as Chief of the External Cooperation and Exchange Section, Academic Affairs Office, Boda College, Jilin Normal University, People's Republic of China for 5 years. Her bachelor's degree is Bachelor of Arts in English earned from College of Humanities, Northeast Normal University, Jilin province. She has pursued her master's degree at Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand since 2023. She is interested in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Assistant Professor Dr. Surachai Piyanukool is Wang Shuhang's major advisor. He is an executive committee of English Language Teaching, a master's program, Buriram Rajabhat University. His expertise is teaching English reading and teaching English as a Foreign Language. He conducted studies concerning teaching reading and teaching English skills, for examples, Effects of Teaching Reading through Discussion of Text Structures, Comparing the Effects of DRA and DRTA Reading Strategies on Students' Reading Comprehension, and Testing the Effectiveness of KWL Plus and Language Games on Students' Reading Ability.

Dr.Saowarat Ruangpaisan is Wang Shuhang' co-advisor and she is one of English Language Teaching program administrative committees of Buriram Rajabhat University. Her expertise is English as an International Language. She conducted empirical research on teaching English skills such as Effects of Game-based Learning on Students' Collocational Knowledge, Developing a Writing Essay Model for Undergraduate Students, and Increasing Students' Listening Comprehension Competence by Employing Audio-video Listening Exercise.