The Effectiveness of Listening Activities on the Proficiency of Beginner English Students at Elmergib Language Centre

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فاعلية أنشطة الاستماع في تحسين كفاءة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية المبتدئين في مركز جامعة المرقب للغات

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الملخص :

يُعدّ تقييم أنشطة الاستماع حلقةً أساسيةً في الصفوف الدراسية لتحسين الكفاءة العامة في اللغة الإنجليزية، أجريت هذه الدراسة على طلاب المستوى المبتدئ في مركز جامعة المرقب للغات، حيث طُبّق منهجٌ مختلطٌ لتقييم فعالية تأثير أنماط الحضور المتفاوتة على نتائج التعلّم لدى المتعلّمين المبتدئين، شملت أساليب جمع البيانات بياناتٍ كميةً من نتائج الاختبارات اللاحقة، وأدلةً نوعيةً من التقييمات الذاتية، وملفات الاعمال، والمقابلات المنظمة، حيث بلغ حجم العينة 50 طالبًا مُنخرطين في برنامجٍ تعليميٍّ مدته ثلاثة أشهر، وجُمعت البيانات في نهاية الفصل الدراسي، كما تشير النتائج إلى آثارٍ إيجابيةٍ لأنشطة الاستماع المُصممة وفقًا لهيكلٍ مُحددٍ على فهم الاستماع، وثقة المتعلّم، والتعرّف على المفردات، لا سيما بين الطلاب المنتظمين في الحضور، علاوةً على ذلك، تُؤكّد النتائج على فعالية ممارسات التقييم في السياقات التعليمية التي تُقاس بالحضور غير المنتظم، إذ تقترح هذه الورقة البحثية أن التدريس التكيفي القائم على الاستماع، والمُقدّم من خلال أدوات الوسائط المتعددة واستراتيجيات التعلّم التأملي، يُحسّن بشكلٍ كبيرٍ من مستوى اللغة لدى المتعلّمين المبتدئين، كما تؤكد النتائج، النظرية والعملية، على أهمية التقييم المرن الذي يركز على المتعلم، وعلى الرؤى التربوية في تعليم اللغات المعاصر.

الكلمات الدالة: اكتساب اللغة، التقييم، المتعلمون المبتدئون، أنماط الحضور، مهارات الاستماع.

Abstract:

Listening activities assessment is a key link in classroom to improve overall English language proficiency. The present study was conducted on the beginner-level students at Elmergib Language Centre. Where a mixed-methods approach was implemented to assess the effective of variations in the attendance patterns influence learning outcomes across beginner learners. The data collection methods were quantitative data from post-test outcomes and qualitative evidence from self-assessments, portfolios, and structured interviews. The sample size is 50 students

registered in a three-month instructional program, where the data collected at the finish of the semester. Findings indicate positive effects of listening structure-designed activities on listening comprehension, learner confidence, and vocabulary recognition, particularly among regularly attending students. Moreover, the findings emphasis the effectiveness assessment practices in instructional contexts measured by irregular attendance. Meanwhile, the paper proposes that adaptive listening-based instruction, provided by multimedia tools and reflective learning strategies, offers a substantially enhanced beginner-level language improvement. Consequences, theoretical and practical reinforce the significance of flexible learner-centred assessment and pedagogical insights in contemporary language education.

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1. Introduction

Listening comprehension improvement plays an important role in second language acquisition (SLA), functioning as a primary medium via which learners are exposed to language input, particularly at the beginner level. (Qasserras, 2025). Effective listening skills instruction is greatly recognised as a staged process including sound discrimination, vocabulary recognition, and contextual grasping. These interrelated parts foster learners' ability to decode the receiving language inputs, therefore it's a cornerstone for improving overall language proficiency (Gonzalez–Torres & Solano, 2024). Nonetheless, recent studies highlight the significance of the educational advantages of multimedia resources relating to podcasts, digital platforms and audio–visual materials have been observed to provide the accessibility and authenticity of listening inputs. Regardless of the comprehension skills that provided by these materials, it also boosts learner motivation and engagement (California Language School, 2024; Listenwise, 2025). An additional gap pertains to the effect of attendance patterns on listening skill acquisition. Few studies have examined the interaction between classroom participation – whether regular or irregular – and the effectiveness of listening activities in authentic instructional contexts. In order to address this gab, the present study utilise a mixed–methods approach, integrating quantitative performance and qualitative evidence from learner feedback to investigate how variations in attendance and sort of activity influence the improvement of listening proficiency among beginner level learners.

1.2. Research Questions

This research set out to answer three following questions:

1- What types of listening activities are most effective in improving the listening comprehension skills of beginner English learners?
2- To what extent do regular listening activities contribute to improvements in the speaking, lexical, and pronunciation skills of beginner English learners?
3- What challenges do beginner English learners encounter during listening activities, and how do these challenges impact their language proficiency improvement?

2. Literature Review

The improvement of listening skill is one of the most crucial yet neglected, communicative skills requirements for second language acquisition (SLA), especially for beginner English learners (Qasserras, 2025). Effective listening instruction is often structured as an incremental, sequential, framework, and incorporating stages such as phonological discrimination, vocabulary recognition, deductive reasoning, and comprehension strategies. These interrelated ingredients collectively ease learners' capacity and enhance to grasp spoken English in real–world context (Qasserras, 2025).

Recently, the effectiveness of digital audio and podcast materials underscores the improvement of listening comprehension. frequent exposure to podcast–based receiving language input, when integrated with targeted instructional tasks, has been proven to yield considerable gains in listening comprehension and learner motivation alike (European Journal of English Language Teaching, 2024). Moreover, task–based listening activities that include pre–teaching vocabulary and guided comprehension strategies have effectively demonstrated learner difficulties in understanding, consisting rapid speech rates and unfamiliar accents (Putri Anggraeni et al., 2017; Gonzalez – Torres & Solano, 2024).

The listening journals, which learners are required to reflect on their listening experiences, have been shown as an effective pedagogical technology medium for promoting the awareness of metacognitive and learner attitudes; hence, feedback improved listening outcomes. Furthermore, structuring of listening tasks through pre- and post-listening tests and discussions has been advocated as an effective strategy for enhancing beginner-level learners' facilitating comprehension and engagement (Gonzalez–Torres & Solano, 2024).

Nevertheless, a significant gap remains concerning how varying attendance patterns influence the improvement of listening skills in authentic classroom settings. In addition to the reliance on traditional pre- and post-test design limits insight in settings where pre-test is methodological problematic. Alternative assessments approach, consisting portfolios and retrospective self-assessments offer promising complementary perspectives, but they remain insufficiently explored in listening research (Hamouda, 2013; Qasserras, 2025).

This paper seeks to fill these gaps by utilising a mixed-methods approach to evaluate listening proficiency gains alongside learners' perspectives, with particular attention to attendance-related differences and the utilisation of innovative assessment methods. Hence, the efficient assessment methods that accommodate classroom constraints and variability in learner attendance, while still giving reliable indicators of listening proficiency gains. The following theoretical framework underpinning this study integrates key concepts and established theories relevant to the assessment and improvement of listening skills for beginner English learners. This model assists elaborate scientific findings, and set them in research. The cognitive mechanism of listening comprehension is begun by examined, followed by an exploration of how learner attendance and engagement affect language acquisition. Portfolio and self-assessment approaches are also addressed in the framework as alternative to pre- and post-tests. Likewise, it utilises scheme theory to explains how structured listening activities improve comprehension through the activation of earlier knowledge. This extensive theoretical foundation underpins the study's strategy, data collection and analytical procedures.

2.1. The Cognitive Mechanisms in Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a multi-faced cognitive mechanism of various interrelated skills, including comprehension monitoring, inhibitory control and theory of mind (Goh, 2023; Miller et al., 2020). It requires the interaction of bottom-up processing (identifying lexemes, decoding phonemes) and top-down processing (utilising context and past knowledge to infer meaning), which collaboratively help the listener in deriving meaning from auditory information (Field, 2008; Zhang, 2008). Therefore, effective language listening must address the cognitive requirements by integrating vocabulary education, selective listening strategies, and metacognitive training in order to enhance learners' comprehension improvement (Goh & Vandergrift, 2022).

2.2. The Significance of Attendance and Learner Engagement in Language Acquisition

Learners' attention and engagement substantially affect the acquiring of listening skills, with irregular attendance detrimentally influencing overall language proficiency (Tudor, 2023). Constant attendance increases learners' exposure to listening tracks, implement teamwork

activities and access to support structures, all that enhance profound learning and motivation (Huang, 2024; Bandura, 1997). On top of that, elevated learner motivation and self-regulation capacity are necessary for surmounting listening difficulties and improving comprehension ability (Dörnyei, 2019).

2.3. Alternative Assessment in Listening Skill Improvement

Classic pre-test assessments often inadequately reflect learners' self-perceived advancement and effective responses (Hamouda, 2013). On the contrary, alternative assessment methods including portfolio, self-assessments, and qualitative interviews, which generate comprehensive, triangulated data that reflect performance and learners' perceptions. Therefore, these methods facilitate more holistic evaluation of listening improvement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brown, 2021).

2.4. Schema Theory and Listening Activities

Schema-theory claims that engaging past knowledge through listening activities enhances comprehension by permitting learners to interpret and anticipate received information efficiently (Anderson, 1984; Rumelhart, 1980). Listening activities rooted in significant settings ease schema activation, thereby improving listening proficiency (Vandergrift, 2007).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research paper uses alternative assessment methods to assess the effectiveness of listening activities on the proficiency of beginner-level English learning. Worth-mentioned, the emphasis is on collecting comprehensive evidences over a three-month semester.

3.2. Participants

The sample is fifty beginner-level English learners registered at Elmergib Language Centre. Participants are grouped based on their attendance patterns (regular and irregular attendees) who mostly participate in examinations.

3.3. Duration and Instructional Schedule

The semester lasts three months, with six hours of instruction weekly. In particular, listening tasks require approximately 45 minutes of each lecture

3.4. Instruments and Data Collection

Three data collection methods were utilised to answer the research questions. The researcher collected. The data collection were quantitative data from post-test outcomes and qualitative evidence from self-assessments, portfolios, and structured interviews.

3.4.1. Post-Test: Administered at the end of the semester to measure English listening proficiency.

3.4.2. Retrospective Self-Assessment Questionnaire: Students reflect on and rate their listening abilities before and after the semester, providing insight into perceived improvements.

3.4.3. Structured Interviews: participate with 10-15 proficiently selected students from both attendance groups to find out detailed learning experiences, obstacles, and perceived benefits.

3.5. Procedures

Students fill out the post-test and constructive questionnaire in the last week of the semester. The portfolio involves either written or recorded assignments accomplished during regular lessons. Interviews executed promptly following assessment to offer qualitative depth.

4. Results

For the purpose of evaluating, the relationship between perceived and actual proficiency, this research quantitatively compares retrospective self-assessment to post-test outcomes through correlation analyses and descriptive statistics. Furthermore, the research qualitatively analyses

portfolios to find out skill application. While thematic analysis of interviews illustrates the listening levels and obstacles encountered by various attendance groups.

4.1. Quantitative Findings

4.1.1. The Effect of Attendance

The main objective was to assess the effect of listening activities on proficiency, using attendance as the principle independent variable. The analysis of post-test outcomes indicates a substantial performance gap between the two groups.

a) Regular Attendees (n=35): reported a follow-up of 92.1%.

b) Irregular Attendees (n=15): reported a follow-up of 62.7%.

The findings point out that regular participation in the 14-week listening intervention resulted in a competence rate nearly 30% higher than that of students who participated irregularly.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics for Self-Assessment and Post-Test Scores by Attendance Group.

No.	Attendance Group	Sample Size (N)	Mean Post-Test outcomes	Standard Deviation	Proficiency Level
1	Regular	35	92.1%	5.2	Advanced-Beginner
2	Irregular	15	62.7%	12.8	Low-Beginner
3	Total / Average	50	83.3%	9.1	___

4.1.2. The Perception Paradox

A Perception Paradox was determined when contrasting self-stated confidence (Q1) versus actual test performance

a) Regular students, although their high scores, frequently assessed their confidence as low 1-2 on the likert-scale.

b) Irregular students, considerably, assessed their confidence at a high 4-5 on Likert-scale, despite their extremely lower test-scores.

Additionally, it emphasises that regular classes increase linguistic awareness; students who have constant attendance exabit more recognition of language nuances, for example; accent and tempo, thereby resulting to more cautious self-assessment.

Table2: Intercorrelations Among Attendance, Self-Rating, and Post-Test Performance.

No.	Group	Average Q1 (Confidence)	Average Q6 (Motivation)	Average Test Score	Interpretation
1	Regular	1.8/5 (Low)	4.2/5 (High)	92.1%	High Achievement /High Realism
2	Irregular	4.1/5 (High)	3.9/5 (Moderate)	62.7%	Low Achievement/ Overconfidence

Table3: Mixed Methods Integration: Quantitative-Qualitative Findings by Primary Tool.

No.	Primary Tool	Quantitative Data (QUAN)	Qualitative Themes (QUAL)	Integration Result
1	4Q Ranking	Podcasts (20%)	Podcasts assisted me bridge the gap of real talk.	Convergent: Most effective
2	Attendance	Pearson r=0.85(Strong)	Missing class made me feel lost; regulars improved more.	Explanatory: Key predictor

3	Confidence	Negative Correlation with Scores	The more I listen, the more I realise English is fast.	Divergent: Realism effect

4.2. Qualitative Findings

The fifty semi-structured interview's thematic analysis revealed several key elements affecting learner progress:

1. Activity Effectiveness (Q1, Q2): Students overwhelmingly agreed that podcasts were the benefit way for improving listening skills and exposure to authentic English.
2. The Speed Barrier (Q3), The Speed of Speech was recognise as the global challenge for beginners. Regular students pointed out that regular classes' exposure assisted them construct coping skills, while irregular students struggled with this issue on the post-test.
3. Cross-Skill Washback (Q5): Participants reported that listening activities had a positive reflection on their speaking skill and pronunciation, demonstrating that advantages of listening instruction extend to general communicative proficiency.

Table4: Thematic Analysis of Listening Obstacles and Student Perceptions.

No.	Challenge Identified	Frequency	Group Most Affected	Student Quote Example
1	Speed of Speech	85%	Both Groups	"Native speakers talk too fast to catch every word."
2	Vocabulary Gap	60%	Irregular	"I didn't know the words, so I stopped listening."
3	Concentration	40%	Regular	"45 minutes is a long time to stay focused on audio."

5. Discussion

The findings show a strong positive correlation between listening proficiency and attendance. The data proposes that attendance equals opportunity plus confidence spiral, as predicted in the methodology. Regular attendees accordingly benefit from the structured utilise of Podcasts and Audio Dialogues, which provides the necessary repetition to overcome the speed of native speech difficulties.

5.1. Interpretation of the Perception Gap

The observed overconfidence among irregular attendees aligns with the Dunning-Kruger effect, indicating that limited class exposure obstructs the students from setting a realistic benchmark for self-evaluation. Conversely, the lower confidence of regular attendees reflects a 'Professional realism', where the student recognises the vastness of the language yet high academic performance.

6. Limitation

The absence of a pre-test limits the assessment of absolute skill improvements; nevertheless, triangulating multiple alternative data sources increases the reliability of findings. The retrospective self-assessment may be subject to bias, which can be mitigated through complementary portfolio and interview data.

7. Conclusion

The present study illustrates that the integration of varied listening activities – particularly podcasts and interactive applications – significantly improve the English proficiency of beginner-level learners at Elmergib Language Centre. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these activities strictly based on regular attendance and consistent instructional time.

8. Recommendations

Here is a number of proposed recommendations based on student feedback detailed in (Q7) and the high proficiency of the regular group:

1. Extend the listening portion of the lecture beyond 45 minutes to facilitate for more immersing with podcasts.
2. Since irregular attendance is linked to a 30% drop in proficiency, stricter attendance requirements should be implemented to ensure student success.
3. Instructors should focus on 'decoding speed' to assist fill the confidence gap felt by regular students.

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