



## A Study on Enhancing Focused Listening Skills through Technology Enabled Language Learning

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### ABSTRACT

Due to poor listening skills and poor computing skills most of the engineering students particularly with rural or semi-urban background fail at online test which is conducted for higher education and job recruitment. Since the lack of exposure and boring old curriculum practices they often ignore this important skill at the language classes. When they are introduced to the modern technological instruments at the second language classroom they are motivated and have more focused listening. This paper focuses on how the innovative method of teaching through TELL has evolved such as CALL, MALL and its uses at the ESL class room can ensure the successful acquisition of focused listening skill by the engineering students at tertiary level.

### INTRODUCTION

In this technological world the domination of computer increases day by day. Computer knowledge is necessary even for uneducated people. Communication of the present world fully depends on the technology of computer. The present education system is getting fully computerized. Not only the method of teaching but also the pattern of examination is being modified. Teaching, Learning and testing have reached their height of online. The technology of computer plays different and dominant role in English language teaching also. Particularly for enhancing the listening skills of the nonnative English learners the use of computer is very important. By using computers and other technical tools the second language learner can have a flexible learning, repetitive practice and more motivation. So they can easily manage the difficulties of understanding and pronouncing the spelling of English language.

#### Technology Enabled Language Learning

Technology use in the classroom should encourage students to develop higher levels of thinking skills. The teacher has an important role to play in the teaching/learning hypothesis shift, innovative classroom teaching facilitates the development of a higher level of cognitive skills in evaluating arguments, analysing problems and applying what is learnt.

Although teachers play an important role in the learning environment, they are often not consulted regarding changes to teaching learning procedures. In fact, the teachers needs under changing conditions have to be continuously assessed and activities to satisfy these have to be developed. So, professional development is necessary for teachers to enable them to effectively use technology to improve student learning. Hence the techno-pedagogy plays a vital role in innovating new techniques for teaching.



It is rare to find a language class that does not use some form of technology. In recent years, technology has been used to both assist and enhance language learning. Teachers have incorporated various forms of technology to support their teaching, engage students in the learning process, provide authentic examples of the target culture, and connect their classrooms. Further, some technology tools enable teachers to differentiate instruction and adapt classroom activities and homework assignments, thus enhancing the language learning experience. In addition, technology continues to grow in importance as a tool to assist teachers of foreign languages in facilitating and mediating language learning for their students. Technology can play an important role in supporting and enhancing language learning, the effectiveness of any technological tool depends on the knowledge and expertise of the qualified language teacher who manages and facilitates the language learning environment.

### **The Advent of Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The advent of technology have made it easier for teachers and learners of English language to access a wide range of resources in terms of authentic input and communication with native and non-native speakers of English around the world. From the early days of CALL. (e.g Warschauer, 1996) Technologies have become more sophisticated, the growing range of uses of technology in and out of the classroom increases the potential for enhanced motivation.

**Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)** is considered to be one of the approaches where in mobile phones or smart phones are utilized to get better progress in learning of any languages that have oral & written form in the world. In the present paper, the writer states the term MALL to refer also to Mobile learning. The advancement of mobile technologies have changed the way teaching and learning process are being conducted inevitably (Cavus, 2011)

Many researchers during the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century explored the usage of mobile technology in order to lend its hand in learning a language including the salient features of MALL such as portability, social interactivity, connectivity, individuality and immediacy. The most unique feature of it enables the users to learn a language anywhere and anytime.

Mobile devices become a tool for learning languages. Teachers and students are highly adopted in the platform of usage as quickly as possible. Besides, the rapid growth of internet enables self-learning and distance education learning all over the world.

The teenagers in this mobile technology era can perform ubiquitous learning easily. They can simply gain access to the information and content from different resources in the web. So, they have more variety of choices to obtain knowledge and information. (Kee and Samsudin, 2014)

### **Importance of Listening Skill**

Listening is not only the first but also the most important skills of LSRW. So the communication of a child starts from the listening skill. A person's communication skills depend on his listening skills. Good listening skill is necessary for a successful person. Listening is not only a complex process but also a psychological process. It is a nonlinear process. Davis' framework has summarized the three types of teaching listening in the classrooms:

1. Evaluative - hearing students' answers to decide whether or not they are correct.
2. Interpretative – trying to make sense of students' answers by asking for more information.
3. Hermeneutic – negotiating meaning with students by interacting to discuss meaning; both teacher and students can revise own knowledge through the interaction.

According to Davis framework evaluative listening is the most straightforward type of listening, but hermeneutic listening demands the most sophisticated skills. It describes that listening is active and it involves interaction with learners. Listening is not mere recognition of linguistics units and their meanings. It includes



the ability to predict information based on linguistic context, the situation and topic of the message conveyed in the speech.

Adrian Doff divides listening into two types. They are casual listening and focussed listening. If the listener has no interest or purpose of listening on a topic s/he will have casual listening with less concentration. On the other hand if the listener is attentive and concentrates on a topic s/he will have intensive listening for information or for transacting business. While using any technological tools like audio and video instruments, Interactive White Board, Computers, Laptop or online materials at the second language classroom that becomes a students' centric classroom where the students will not be mere passive listeners, they will become active participants and they will be attentive and concentrates on the topic with intensive listening for information.

**Objective:** To find out their level of motivation, active participation and focused listening skills while teaching the listening skills at the regular conventional class and at the virtual class.

**Methodology:** An experiment was conducted by the author with the first year engineering college students who have poor listening skills, English language skills and computing skills. A language lab class of 20 was divided into four groups with the relevance of four different video clippings and the students' choice.

**Materials:** Two types of materials, the printed text material used at the regular conventional classrooms and the innovative visual material used at the virtual classroom, were used and two method of teaching and testing were followed in this experiment. The material for the exercise were the four different video clippings, transcripts of those video clippings and a regular printed text material were used. The first one of the videos was advertisements, second was famous dialogues from an English movie clipping, third was a sports person's interview and the fourth was a standup comedy clipping.

**Procedure:** The exercise was conducted in two stages. The regular text material was used at the first stage commonly to all groups. The four video clippings were used at the second stage. The duration for the first stage was 25 minutes and second stage was 30 minutes. The method of listening exercise and motive of this listening practice were explained clearly to the students. They were instructed to have a close observation on the speaker's body language that would be quite helpful and supportive for easy understanding and guessing the unfamiliar words. They were free to discuss. The teacher's role would be initially like a facilitator. His active involvement is also important so he intervened then and there to help students do the task successfully.

**First Stage:** Task 1. The students were listening while the teacher read the regular text material for 5 minutes. Task 2. 10 minutes were given to the students for writing what they had understood by their listening. During that time the members of each group discussed each other, confirmed whether they had listened well, their understanding and guessing of unfamiliar words were correct. Then they wrote their final comprehension. Task 3. The copies of the regular text material that was read by the teacher were distributed to the students but many words of the copies of that regular material would not be printed which had to be filled as objective type answer in the next 5 minutes by the students. Here also they discussed each other and clear their doubts. Task 4. Finally, while the teacher was reading the same text for another 5 minutes the students were doing the self-evaluation of their objective type answer that was written in the third task. Later on they did the self-evaluation again for the second task.

**Second stage:** Task 1. The four video clippings were played separately for each group for 5 minutes. Task 2. The students were given 10 minutes and asked to type their answer in a word file what they could understand from the played video clippings. During that time the members of each group discussed each other, confirmed whether they had listened well, their understanding and guessing of unfamiliar words were correct. Then they brought their final comprehension.



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Task 3. The text file copies of the speech of the same video clippings with many missed words were displayed to the students in a different file and asked them to fill the blanks with objective type answer within 5 minutes. Here also they discussed each other and clear their doubts.

Task 4. While playing again the same video clippings for another 5 minutes the students were doing the self-evaluation of their objective type answer that was answered in the third task. Later on they did the self-evaluation again for the second task.

#### Conclusion

When the activity was conducted the students felt difficult at first to work in computer but there was a good response from the students. Their feedback showed that they could enrich their vocabulary and sentence pattern through their improved focused listening. While doing the tasks of the second stage not only their focused listening skills but also their level of motivation, active participation, computing skills and over all language skills were enhanced enormously. If the ESL teacher and the learner continue this kind of practice regularly at their language class the output will surely be great.

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