
The effects of videos with English subtitles on EFL learners' listening comprehension skills

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Abstract:

This study investigated the effects of videos with English subtitles or no subtitles on the listening comprehension of pre-intermediate level EFL learners. 80 freshmen college students (pre-intermediate level) participated in the study. The students were split up into two groups the experimental group and the controlled group and tested before the experiment. The controlled group was taught differently without subtitles and the experimental group was taught with videos with English subtitles and tested after the programme to test listening comprehension skills. The data was collected, analyzed and a comparison between the results was made.

Keywords: English subtitles, Captions, EFL learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Listening is a key language skill to the language learning. It stimulates awareness of the language as it is a receptive skill that first develops in a human being. Learning to listen to the target language improves language ability. The sound, rhythm, intonation, and stress of the language can only be perfectly adapted through listening. To understand the nuances of a particular language, one must be able to listen. As we get to understand spoken language by listening it is easier to improve the other skills and gain confidence.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical background

(Krashen 1982) suggested that we acquire language by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input. (CI) is essential environmental ingredient in language acquisition but it is not sufficient. The acquirer must open to the input and ready to acquire.

According to Nunan (2001: 23) Listening is a six-staged process, consisting of Hearing, Attending, Understanding, Remembering, Evaluating, and Responding. These stages occur in sequence and rapid succession.

There are three primary modalities through which people take in information visual, auditory and tactile.

Silverman (2006) relates these three modalities to how students process information, deriving three basic learning styles: visual-spatial, auditory sequential and tactile-kinesthetic. Visual-spatial learners take in new information through visualization of the whole concept and think in holistic, often three-dimensional, images. Auditory-sequential learners, by contrast, think in words, processed auditorily, and generally learn in a sequential, step-by-step process. Finally, tactile-kinesthetic learners take in information through physical touch and sensation, and they benefit from demonstration or application more than from verbal explanations.

(Mayer, 2001) considered that a video is a form of multimedia that conveys information through two simultaneous sensory channels: aural and visual. It often uses multiple presentation modes, such as verbal and pictorial representations in case of on-screen print and closed-captioning.

The video uses both audio and picture at the same time, which makes it very easy to the learner to comprehend the conversations or guess the content, learners may acquire new words from the context of the conversations, it also helps to receive the correct pronunciation.

Garza (1991) compared learners' comprehension of video segments with second language captions with that of video segments without captions. By means of a 10-item comprehension test, he measured students' comprehension of the video segments. The results of data analysis revealed that students who viewed the video segments with captions gained the highest scores.

(Field, 2004) pointed that the use of subtitles and captions has been suggested since they could assist learners by allowing dual processing of input.

(Kasper, 1999) stated ESL/EFL educators have the responsibility to provide students with certain skills, that will allow them to succeed in their studies, to acquire skills and knowledge in English.

(Danan, 2004) argued that in the literature on movie subtitling and captioning, there is controversy over the effects of these help options on the listening comprehension ability of language learners.

Nonetheless, the studies that support subtitling have usually demonstrated improvement in two major areas: a higher level of comprehension and better vocabulary recognition ability. In terms of comprehension, several studies have reported a significant improvement in the listening comprehension of language learners after being exposed to the captioned/subtitled movies.

2.2 Previous studies

Hayati and Mohamadi (2011) considers the use of subtitled videos for listening comprehension for Iranian university learners. In this study, three video treatments were used, these included: a video segment with English subtitles; a video segment with Persian subtitles; and finally. A video clip with no subtitles. The participants were ninety university students, who were each allotted one of the three video treatments. After six weeks of exposure to documentary video clips, the participants undertook multiple choice comprehension test. The statistical findings reveal that the English subtitle group outperformed the other two groups. Despite the limitation of the comprehension test, the researchers claim that viewers with intermediate proficiency level were able to connect the spoken language to its written form, and hence benefit more from English subtitles.

Zeinab Abdollapour (2014) examined the influence of schemata and subtitles on second language listening comprehension. Two models used in this study include dual subtitling (English dialogue with Persian as well as English subtitles at the same time) with schema-activation and dual subtitling without schema-activation. The preliminary use of dual subtitling with schema-activation was to explore their possible effects on the development of Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners listening comprehension. 50 advance

EFL participants took part in this study. The learners were divided into two groups randomly. The first group of participants was labeled as dual subtitling with schema-activation and the second group as dual subtitling without schema-activation. The results confirmed the effectiveness of dual subtitling accompanied by schema activation in ameliorating EFL learners listening comprehension. Dual subtitles accompanied by schema activation can be recommended as a way for simultaneous attention on listening comprehension and teachers who are interested in promoting listening skills of their student can benefit from the findings of this study and use dual subtitles accompanied by schema activation in their daily programme.

Noha Sobhy Ghonem (2015) examined the effect of feature movies with and without subtitles on listening comprehension of Egyptian EFL learners. The participants of this study were randomly selected from a larger pool of 180 fourth year students from the Department of English Language, Manoufia University, Egypt. 104 participants were randomly chosen and then randomly assigned to the two experimental groups and control group. The first experimental group viewed the movie with English subtitles (ESG), the second group viewed the movie with Arabic subtitles (ASG), and the control group viewed the movie without subtitles (WSG). After screening the 14 excerpts from 8 movies, 14 multiple-choice listening comprehension tests were administered in order to evaluate their listening comprehensions. Then, each group was asked to complete a questionnaire in order to know their opinions about the way the movie was presented. In the last session, all participants sat on the listening section from the TOEFL test. The results of the data analysis revealed that for Multiple Choice tests, the subtitles groups outperformed the WSG, and ASG performed better than the ESG; however, on the TOEFL test, the analysis of groups' performance revealed a better mean score for the ESG compared to other groups.

Supakorn Napikul (2018) attempted to find out which type of subtitles is likely to be more effective in developing EFL tenth-grade students listening comprehension and vocabulary of a feature film: bimodal subtitling (English subtitles with English dialogue), standard subtitling (Thai subtitles with English dialogues), and English dialogues without subtitles. The data of this study was elicited from three groups of students in tenth-grade, 21 students per group, with similar English learning achievement level. Students in each group

were assigned to watch an English dialogue movie with assigned subtitles, one type of subtitles per one group. They were tested on listening comprehension, content and vocabulary after they finished watching the movie. After all the students had finished taking the test, four persons from each group were randomly selected to be interviewed. The findings showed that Thai subtitles affect tenth-grade students listening comprehension more than English subtitles and not having any subtitles at all. The average score for content and vocabulary showed that Thai subtitles affect students listening comprehension of content and vocabulary more than English subtitles and having no subtitles whatsoever.

Markham (1989) investigated the effects of subtitled TV programmes on the listening comprehension of beginner, intermediate and advanced learners of English. He used two subtitled videos on topics not known to the learners. Each group viewed both movies with and without subtitle. Measuring the participants' comprehension by some multiple choice questions, he found that all three groups using the subtitles performed significantly better.

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants

80 freshmen college students (pre-intermediate) learning English as a foreign language participated in this experiment. They are from Al Mashreq University. Their age range between 18- 21 years old. Their native language is Arabic. They have been taking English classes for almost 7 years in the general education. They were randomly distributed among the two conditions according to their proficiency levels. 40 pre-intermediate level students were assigned to videos without English subtitles condition. 40 pre-intermediate level students were assigned to treatment videos with English subtitles condition.

3.2 Materials

The English course used in this study was the BBC breaking news English course Listening & reading which was compiled by the researcher and developed (customized) by other experts in the field of English language teaching and syllabus design. For the experimental group, the BBC breaking news English videos with subtitles

accompanying the course book were the springboard of the teaching method and presentation of materials.

BBC English video clips with subtitles provide authentic input and further improvement for both listening and reading skills. For the controlled group, the same material was used, but English subtitles (captions) were excluded.

3.3 Procedures

The students were split up into two groups the experimental group and the controlled group and tested before the experiment. The controlled group was taught differently without subtitles and the experimental group was taught with videos with subtitles and tested after the programme to test listening comprehension skills.

The data was collected, analyzed and a comparison between the results was made.

4. ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Results of Research Question one: Stated that

“Do videos with English subtitles positively improve the students listening comprehension skills?”

To examine this research question one, mean scores and standard deviation and standard error of the mean estimate are calculated for the students in the experimental group in the pretest & post-test, and the results are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 demonstrated the mean scores and standard deviation of the experimental group in the pre-and post-tests.

Test	Mean	Standard deviation	Std.error mean
Pre-test	12.45	2.36	0.37
Post-test	17.78	2.02	0.32

The results in table 4.1, shows the mean value of the students' scores in the pre-test was equal to (12.45) with standard deviation (2.36), compared with a mean score value equal to (17.78) with standard deviation equal to (2.02) in the post-test. This indicated that the students' listening comprehension skills have been improved in the post-test after the students have been taught by using the video with English subtitles.

Thus, it could be concluded that using videos with English subtitles positively influence the students learning the process and make it easy and interesting to improve the listening comprehension skills.

The previous statistics are also shown in the graph below:

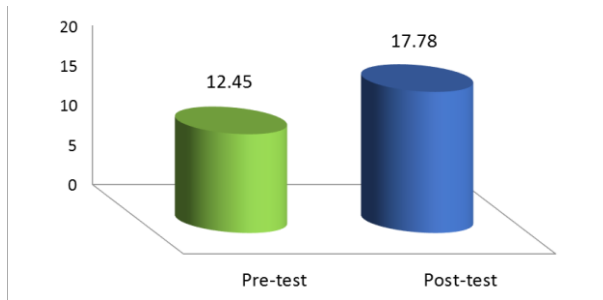


Fig.2 shows the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-and post-test.

To assess, by how much the students learning process have been improved in listening comprehension skills, the percentage of improvement was estimated by applying the following equation:

$$\text{Percentage of improvement} = \frac{M_2 - M_1}{M_1} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{Percentage of improvement} = \frac{17.78 - 12.45}{12.45} \times 100\% = 0.428 = 43.0\%$$

This means the improvement in students' scores in the experimental groups who have been taught by using videos with English subtitles has been increased by 43.0% approximately. Therefore, this result confirmed that using videos with English subtitles improve the students' listening skills in the post-test after teaching them using the combined methods videos with English subtitles.

4.2 Results of Research question Two: stated that

Are videos with English subtitles more effective than Videos without English subtitles?

To examine if using videos with English subtitles are more effective than Videos without English subtitles, the analysis of

covariance, was conducted in which we control for the effect of pre-test scores, in order to find the effect of grouping the students into two groups (experimental and control). The results of the test displayed as in the table No.4.2.

Table No.4.2, shows the results of analysis of covariance to test for the effective of using videos with English subtitles compared with Videos without English subtitles

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	P-value (sig.)	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected model	467.287	2	233.644	76.002**	0.00	0.664
Intercept	299.117	1	299.117	97.299**	0.00	0.558
Pretest	53.237	1	53.237	17.317**	0.00	0.184
Group	337.05	1	337.05	109.638**	0.00	0.587
Error	236.713	77	3.074			
Total	19924.00	80				
Corrected total	704.00	79				

**indicated that the F statistics are statistically significant at the (0.01) significant level.

The results in the table No.4.2 revealed that overall, there are about 66.4% of the variations are explained by the model. The results of testing to examine the effect of the independent variable (groups), the F values calculated is equal to (109.638) which is statistically significant at the (0.01) significant level as the (P-value =0.00). This results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group compared with the mean scores of the control group in the post-test.

Furthermore, the partial Eta Squared value is equal to (0.589) this means that the effect size of using video with English subtitles is equal to (59.0%) approximately. So this indicated that using videos with English Subtitles improve the students' listening skills moderately by 59.0% when compared with other methods of teaching listening skills. So there is about 59.0% improve in listening skills is accounted for the use of videos with English subtitles in teaching students. The adjustment of this effect of using videos with English subtitles was based on Cohen's guidelines (0.2-small effect, 0.5 moderate effects, and 0.8 large effect.

4.3 Results and Recommendations

Based on data analysis through answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses, the study concluded with the following findings:

The study found that teaching students using videos with English subtitles has contributed to a profound improvement in experimental group listening comprehension skills in the post-test compared with the pre-test by 43.0% approximately.

The results detected that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group compared with the mean scores of the control group in the post-test. therefore using videos with English subtitles has an effect equal to (59.0%) approximately, which means that there is 59.0% of the improvement in students listening comprehension skills is accounted for the use of videos with English subtitles.

Using videos with English subtitles is better than other traditional methods of teaching the students and improving their listening skills.

The study detected that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test. Therefore, this result confirmed that using videos with English subtitles in the classroom enhance listening comprehension skills for the students in the experimental group, who have been teaching with using videos combined with English subtitles in the classroom.

The study proved that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and experimental group in the post-test. It was noticed that the difference is positive and significant to the side of the experimental group. This means that using videos with English subtitles facilitates language learning by helping learners visualize what they hear. Therefore, this result will encourage English language teachers to use more sophisticated recent and Electronic methods of teaching to improve the students' proficiency in all English language skills.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, it is recommended that:

1. There should be a clear strategy for implementing e-learning in Sudanese secondary school.
2. Policy direction is made by policymakers to strategically incorporate videos with English subtitles in education

curriculum while encouraging secondary school teachers to use these video in their classroom.

3. Curriculum Developer should be trained on using videos with English subtitles in English language courses in Sudan (SMILE series)
4. Teachers should be trained on using techniques of inserting subtitles to YouTube videos and other available videos.
5. Teachers should be trained on how to use videos effectively to improve students listening skills.

5.1 Suggestions for Further Study

As a result of the positive effects of using videos in general and using videos with English subtitles in particular, the researcher suggests further research in this area such as

1. Investigating the effectiveness of using videos with English subtitle to improve English writing skills
2. Examine the impacts of using videos with English subtitles to enhance grammar/ vocabulary/pronunciation/Lexis.
3. Study the Impacts of social media in developing English communication skills

6. CONCLUSION

The results disclosed a significant difference between teaching students using videos with English subtitles and teaching students using videos without English subtitles. Therefore the findings of using videos with English subtitles supports the hypotheses that it enhances the learners listening comprehension skills.

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