

WEBSITES PRACTICING TO DEVELOP LISTENING SKILLS

Citra Kusumaningsih¹, Senny Wiyanti², Yulia Ramadhiyanti³

^{1,2,3}English Study Program, IKIP PGRI Pontianak
correspondence email: citrakusumaningsih@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper shows the qualitative study of the employment of websites to practice English listening skills of students. The samples in this survey were the students majoring in English, one of school education, Pontianak, Indonesia. The open-ended questionnaire and interview were used to compile the data. The study reported that the students held a positive attitude toward the use of the websites for practicing listening skills because of many advantages such as the websites offer unlimited opportunities to learn and practice their listening skill as if they are in the real situation with native speakers and these opportunities provided them more new English vocabularies. Moreover, it can facilitate them to create autonomous learning strategies. It was also found that it was so convenient when using the internet sites for practicing listening skills outside classroom and from book, anywhere and anytime. However, the students experienced a problem with the native speaker accent so they could not understand the conversation.

Keywords: English Listening Skills, Practice English Listening Skills Through the Websites.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menunjukkan studi kualitatif tentang penggunaan situs internet untuk mempraktikkan keterampilan menyimak bahasa Inggris siswa. Sampel dalam survei ini adalah siswa jurusan bahasa Inggris, salah satu institusi yang berada di Pontianak, Indonesia. Kuisisioner dan wawancara terbuka digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Studi ini melaporkan bahwa para mahasiswa memegang sikap positif terhadap penggunaan situs untuk melatih keterampilan mendengarkan karena banyak keuntungan seperti menawarkan kesempatan tanpa batas untuk belajar dan melatih keterampilan mendengarkan seolah-olah mahasiswa berada dalam situasi nyata dengan penutur asli dan peluang ini memberi mahasiswa lebih banyak kosakata bahasa Inggris yang baru. Selain itu, dapat memfasilitasi mahasiswa membuat strategi pembelajaran mandiri. Juga ditemukan bahwa mahasiswa merasa sangat nyaman ketika menggunakan situs internet untuk melatih keterampilan mendengarkan di luar kelas selain dari buku, di mana saja dan kapan saja. Namun, para mahasiswa mengalami masalah dengan aksen penutur asli sehingga mereka tidak dapat memahami percakapan.

Kata kunci: Keterampilan Mendengarkan Bahasa Inggris, Praktek Keterampilan Mendengarkan Bahasa Inggris Melalui Situs Web.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is often used together with the other skills of speaking, reading and writing. It is not only a skill area in language performance but also a critical means of acquiring a second language. It helps students to acquire good speaking habits as a result of the spoken English they have absorbed and helps them to improve their

pronunciation. Listening texts often provide excellent examples of functions such as apologizing, inviting and refusing. In the process of listening, especially the bottom-up and top-down model, the schema-building activities are also applicable to reading. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, applied linguistics recognized that listening was the primary channel by which the students gained access to second language data and that it, therefore, served as the trigger for acquisition (Rost, 2001).

Students who have a strong motivation in learning will surely maximize the benefits of both sources. Moreover, the teacher's task is to foster and increase motivation to learn through innovative teaching activities using up to date material resources. So as a teacher must also be diligent in exploring new teaching materials or media. For that purpose, the importance of utilizing computer technology. According to Laborda in Mudofir (2015), English teaching should also pay attention to the use of technology in the learning and teaching process, such as the use of computers. Computers and language teaching can coexist in line with the learning process. Apart from being an unlimited source of information, internet technology can also be used by teachers all over the world to develop more innovative teaching methods to create a different atmosphere in the classroom. With the internet, each individual can create blogs, websites, wikis, language teaching methodologies, journals. From this, it can be proved that there is a positive effect on the integration of computers in language teaching.

Many teachers are challenged to learn computers have used in the learning and teaching process. The use of computers is not only for typing a text, sending messages, browsing the internet, but a computer can be used as a teaching tool so that it can motivate and instruct teachers to integrate computers and ICT in the classroom. Ru-Si and Chin-Chung (2007) investigated students' attitudes toward learning via the web of 1,866 Taiwanese university students by using an online survey. The results showed that the students had a positive attitude on the dimension of access to Internet technology for learning. Ahmed and Abdulaziz (2006) examined 47 University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students' performance on the Use of the Internet in learning. This study reported that students had a positive attitude

toward learning via the Internet and the use of the web as a supplement to classroom learning 50 and as a long-distance instructional medium was an ideal way to improve learning and increase access to Education. Aytekin (2004) studied on classroom learning towards the Internet. 73 graduate and postgraduate students at Eastern Mediterranean University were explored and the result showed that high percentages concentrated on positive and consciousness about the internet. This study showed that there was a consciousness about the effects and importance of the internet by having tendency to apply the consciousness or willingness of new technological style.

Hong, Ridzuan, and Kuek (2003) studied the success of technology and Internet enriched teaching and learning environments in molding positive attitudes among students toward using the Internet for learning at a university in Malaysia. The findings indicated that students had a positive attitude toward using the Internet as a learning tool and viewed the learning environment as supportive of using the Internet for learning. Moreover, the students with better basic Internet skills and who viewed the learning environment as promoting the use of the Internet favored using the Internet for learning. Furthermore, Sanders and MorrisonShetlar (2001) explored the relationship between student attitudes toward web-enhanced instruction and variables such as sex, race, age, year in school, computer experience, and learning styles. The study reported a positive effect of the Web-component on student learning. It was also found that age, race, year in school, computer experience, and learning styles did not affect student use of the web.

As the importance of listening skills and the use of learning via website and Internet in the age of technological education are mentioned above, therefore, this study is examined to explore both the students' attitudes about the advantages and their problem on the websites employment for practicing English listening skills in order to succeed in their English learning

RESEARCH METHOD

The samples of this study were 24 fourth-year students majoring in English, Faculty of Education who enrolled in the Introduction to Multimedia in the English Classroom course in the first semester, the

academic year 2019 at one of school education, Pontianak, Indonesia. The open-ended questionnaire and interview were used to collect the students' feelings, opinions, comments, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions about the website employment to practice English listening skills. The websites were www.esllab.com, www.elllo.org, <http://esl.about.com>, www.manythings.org, www.carolinebrownlisteninglessons.com, and www.youtube.com. Data collection was entirely conducted within the study where the entire time-frame was 14 weeks. It took an hour per student a week in the practice hours of the Introduction to Multimedia in the English

Classroom course. Five students selected for an in-depth interview. The process of content analysis analyzed the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire and the interview.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Students' Point of View about the Advantages on the Websites Employment for Practicing English Listening Skills

Most students agreed that using websites for practicing listening skills can help them improve not only their listening skills, but also other skills as well, and it can help them to create autonomous learning strategies. Another one it is convenient for them when using the websites for practicing listening skills outside the classroom and from the book, anywhere, and anytime.

According to the questionnaire and interview results, it was found that all students mentioned advantages into three points. Firstly, the use of the website is convenient for them to practice listening skills. Many websites provide various topics and students can choose the topics they prefer and or those related to the topics they are studying in English class. They also stated that it saved time and was convenient. They do not need to find materials for practicing listening skills from the library or book stores. Many informants said they could use the websites part-time or in their free

time at the library, house, or dormitory and Internet café. These are quite convenient and support time and place for them.

Secondly, the students find suitable learning strategies to solve some problems by themselves. Students can easily repeat listening materials again and again until they finally get information about listening materials and with the help of scripts, students can find out where the problems are when they listen to those materials. Outside classroom students can use the websites for practicing listening skills to prepare themselves for a listening test of their English class. It is quite helpful in creating an autonomous learning environment.

Finally, the use of websites enhances English skills for students. Most students reported that using websites can help them improve their English listening skills. Moreover, they thought that this practicing listening skills enhanced them not only listening skills but also they could improve other skills while they listened through websites, such as pronunciation, speaking, reading, vocabulary learning. During the time they listened to the native speakers' sound, they also tried to follow and repeat the sound in order to familiar with pronunciation, native accent and intonation, and they spoke better after then. When they looked at the sound script, they knew new words and vocabularies as well.

The Students' Problem on the Websites Employment for Practicing English Listening Skills

The problems when using the websites to practice listening skills were technical problems; the Internet connection was quite slow, the processes and instruction of the websites are complicated. Some students did not have their own personal computers. Somebody had a lot of schedules to do, so it was a limitation for them to get a good chance to practice listening skills outside the classroom. Another problem was the students' background knowledge. Students didn't know some new words, they were unable to get used to the native speakers' intonation and pronunciation. These are quite difficult for them to improve their listening skills through the use of websites.

According to the students' answers from the questionnaire and interview part, it is found that there are three main points that they revealed about their problems when using the websites for practicing listening skills. The first problem of their practicing listening skills on websites is their limitation. Some of the students did not have their personal computers, they either could not practice outside the classroom, or go somewhere, such as the library, computer lab room, English Language Learning Center, or Internet cafe, but from the questionnaire, the students stated that they rarely went to these places for that. Although many students had their personal computer, someone reported that they did not use the websites for practicing listening skills outside the classroom because they had a lot of plans to do, such as taking courses, joining university activities like clubs and sports, and doing part-time job. Such students lose many chances because of their limitations.

Secondly, some of the students reported they did not think that using websites could improve their listening skills since they have little background knowledge. The students claimed that while they were practicing and listening to the native voice on the websites, they sometimes felt the speed of listening materials was too fast and they could not get the information. They could not catch the words or sentences because they were unable to get used to the speakers' intonation and pronunciation. The difficulty of vocabulary, phrases and words was also their problem to find the meaning. In this case, they stated that they need the teacher to explain and suggest when they had the problems while they used the websites. Another problem was technical problems. Some websites were quite slow, it took time to wait to open or download listening materials. Some websites were quite complicated to use and they could not be operated by themselves. A few students said they felt using websites was quite complicated and finally, they will give it up. That is to say, those students needed someone like a teacher or their friends help them to choose suitable websites or guided them on how to choose suitable materials for practicing listening, did it step by step.

CONCLUSION

According to the data which was obtained from students' investigation, using websites for practicing listening could be an excellent assistance to improve students' language learning ability. Like Robin (2007) mentioned, effectively use of Internet website resources, such as easily repeatable video clips, captions, and

even translated scripts will bring a wider variety of input at the proper level for a broader range of learning styles than could be made available in any pre-packaged closed-track program. The findings of this study had significant implications on the appropriateness of relying on websites assisted language learning and teaching process. Teachers and higher education institutions should focus on those websites' usefulness and ease of using them for language learning and teaching.

The study revealed four major critical factors for the perceived usefulness of websites assisted language teaching and learning. Firstly, the coursework interactivity, course materials could be available electronically in different formats via the website and students could quickly go and practice any of them. Those websites already included many other links to related materials and websites that could help to get the information on their topics. Secondly, students enjoyed practicing as well, because those websites can provide them with online components such as animations and multimedia materials. Next factor, it is easier to make study course material by having related study material available anytime anywhere, facilitating student-student and student-teacher communications. The last factor was to increase students' productivity and effectiveness in learning. This factor was a result of enabling students to finish their practicing quickly and achieving their objectives efficiently using the tools available on the websites.

New technologies have forced teachers to think about their roles in teaching with computers. Furthermore, nowadays, websites through Internet overgrow, teachers began to see computers more like "active partners" than "passive assistants" (Debski and Gruba, 1999). However, Levy (1997) and Fernandez (2001) discussed that the teacher is an outstanding person who decides how the class should be conducted, not the computers, not the Internet. Therefore, the teacher is not the only source of knowledge but also the person who enlightens students to succeed in their learning.

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