

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS AUTONOMOUS LISTENING ACTIVITY TO SUPPORT THEIR INTERPRETIVE LISTENING COURSE

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Abstract

This study aims to describe students' perceptions and improvement in Interpretive Listening courses using autonomous listening activities. The research uses a qualitative method with a case study as a research design, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicate that most students are satisfied with autonomous listening in Interpretive Listening classes. Autonomous listening allows students to learn independently based on their preferences, exploring a wide range of material. It also helps students achieve high test scores and enhance their comprehension of interpretive listening material. Therefore, autonomous listening activity has a significant impact on Interpretive Listening classes. Students with high and medium final scores respond positively to improvements in their comprehension of listening material, while those with low scores are less satisfied. This study serves as a reference for teachers to consider the use of autonomous listening in interpretive listening courses.

Keywords: autonomous listening, interpretive listening course

INTRODUCTION

Listening has historically been regarded as a challenging skill for many foreign language students. Compared to other skills, listening appears to be difficult to acquire. This is supported by some opinions from the expert, firstly, Schmidt (2016), who contends that listening is one of the most difficult skills to learn. Buck (2001) identified a variety of difficulties that may be encountered in auditory tasks, including unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, rapid speech rates, and unfamiliar accents. Previous studies on listening revealed that there are a number of factors that contribute to students' difficulties with listening comprehension. They were the environment, poor recording, unfamiliar topics, speaker's accent, speaker's speed of speech, ungrammatical sentences, protracted listening, concentration and focus, unknown words, and an uninteresting topic (Wahidah, 2018).

Furthermore, listening is a skill that has traditionally been taught via a wide variety of media and approaches. Autonomous listening activity is one of the approaches to teaching English used by teachers. This strategy involves the use of a variety of listening sources as the medium. Autonomous listening activity provides students with a way to hone their listening talents and develop the capacity to listen on their own, which is a crucial life skill. When students engage in an autonomous listening activity, they take charge of their own listening session. When designing a learning environment for students to improve their listening abilities, Lee and Cha (2017) argued that effective listening tools and approaches centred on the desires and talents of students are of crucial importance. Teachers now have access to a wider variety of authentic learning resources, utilizing audiovisual materials such as video, television programmes, and online learning, due to the widespread availability of the internet. (Mayora, 2017).

Each student achieves unique levels of academic growth as a result of their use of the several types of learning resources. The purpose of this is for the researcher to have an idea of how students feel about the weekly individual listening activity and how it contributes to an increase in students' listening comprehension in Interpretive Listening Courses. Students need to conduct their own listening to align with the goals of promoting autonomous listening activity as a means to practice listening skills. Learners engage in an autonomous listening activity when they take charge of their own listening session. A high level of listening comprehension is essential in any academic setting. Students in higher education need to develop their listening skills in order to participate effectively in a variety of classroom and extracurricular activities, including lectures, tutorials, small group work, and group projects, as well as social interactions (Picard & Velautham, 2016).

Several studies are relevant to this research. In 2018, Sacko raised a topic related to autonomous listening focused on the use for TOEFL preparation. The objective of this study was to provide autonomous listening learning resources for the purpose of TOEFL preparation, specifically designed for learners at the independent language learning center (ILLC) within the Language Development Center at UNY. These materials were intended to aid in the enhancement of their listening abilities. Handayani and Savitri (2020) explore the listening log as an autonomous listening activity medium for carrying out English learning activities outside of the classroom, as well as students' impressions of it. According to the studies mentioned above, the research focus differs from the topic stated by the researcher. This study examines students' perceptions of autonomous listening activities for students in second-semester listening courses, as well as the influence of these activities on their Interpretive listening courses.

This qualitative study's objective is to determine how students' improvement in listening courses increases as a result of participating in a weekly autonomous listening activity that utilizes a number of various types of listening sources. Additionally, the findings of this study will be used to determine how students' perceptions of this activity support their Interpretive Listening Courses.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method to enhance comprehension of the subject of concern. The central phenomenon of this current research was finding out the students' perception towards autonomous listening activity to support their interpretive listening course. What was studied was the effectiveness of the activity to support their interpretive listening course.

Moleong (2000) explains that in qualitative research, researchers create comprehensive reports based on interview transcripts, field notes, videotapes, personal documents, memos, and other official documents. A case study was the approach chosen by the researcher, using a case study approach, the researcher would conduct in-depth research on this case. This study investigated the students' perception of the use of autonomous listening activity and described students' improvement in the listening course supported by their autonomous listening activity.

The present study was conducted at the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, located in West Java, Indonesia.

The participants in the qualitative research study were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The researcher employed a purposive sampling strategy to select both the places and persons included in the research, with the aim of investigating the phenomenon under study. The participants of this study consist of students who have completed the interpretive listening course during the second semester. A total of 15 students were selected as participants, with their selection being based on their interpretive listening course final grade level. The participants were categorized into three distinct levels: high, middle, and low based on their scores in the interpretive listening class test. Each level was completed by five people.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the obtained data, the study's findings were drawn. The data was collected in order to address the research questions: 1) How are the students' perceptions towards autonomous listening activity in the interpretive listening course? 2) How is the students' improvement in the listening course supported by their autonomous listening activity?

Students' Perception towards Autonomous Listening Activity in the Interpretive Listening Course

There were two different types of data that could be utilized to investigate the students' perception of the implementation of autonomous listening activities. The data was obtained using a questionnaire for the first method, whereas the second method involved conducting interviews.

1. Questionnaire

The online questionnaire was distributed on the 14th of October. A total of 15 people successfully completed the online questionnaire on October 17th. The questionnaire consists of an overall amount of 22 statements, with 12 questions specifically pertaining to this particular part. The first set of data provides an analysis of students' perspectives regarding autonomous listening activities.

It can be concluded that the autonomous listening activities utilized in the interpretive listening course facilitate an effective learning environment. The majority of students became enthusiastic about interpretive listening classes as a result of autonomous listening activities and reported that interpretive listening classes were more enjoyable. In the interpretive listening class, the teacher presents a variety of themes that can make students excited if they like a suitable one. There were also numerous learning resources available to students, making it simpler for them to find relevant material. Students almost consistently reported that they liked video-based media the most out of all the different kinds of media that were used.

2. Interview

After distributing a questionnaire to 15 respondents, the researcher selected six participants to represent each final score category (high, median, and low). Respondents were selected based on classes taught by various teachers. From classes A-C, three students with high, middle, and low grades were selected, and from classes D-E, three students with high, middle, and low grades were selected.

The interviews were conducted via the online meeting platform Zoom. Beginning on October 16, four students conducted successful interviews. The following day, the remaining participants conducted interviews. On the basis of student perceptions, interviews were conducted in order to gain additional information regarding autonomous listening activities. There was a total of nine questions in this section.

Students who conducted interviews regarding their perceptions of autonomous listening activities were able to comprehend and explain in greater detail the autonomous listening activities conducted in the second-semester interpretive listening class. According to them, autonomous listening activities progressed by providing themes and assignments to seek materials and interpret their comprehension in class presentations. Several listening sources, including YouTube, Spotify, Schology, and websites, have been mentioned. YouTube was the media that almost all students agreed was their favourite out of the many used. In addition to allowing students to learn independently using their preferred media, autonomous listening activities can also provide them with a wealth of new information. Then, several themes that were rarely found were claimed as one of the challenges in interpretive listening classes by

students. Students also mentioned the difficulty of accessing learning materials and resources as a disadvantage of autonomous listening activities.

The results of this research relate to the perspectives held by students in interpretive listening courses pertaining to autonomous listening activities through 3 stages of the perception process, namely stimulation, recognition, and interpretation:

a. Stimulation

Students were unfamiliar with the concept of autonomous listening. Autonomous listening activities were conducted by providing themes, assigning students to discover material based on student preferences, and requiring them to present their understanding in front of the class.

b. Recognition

Students were prepared to take part actively in their own learning activities through autonomous learning activities. By searching for learning materials and resources based on student preferences, students were able to connect with a wide variety of new learning materials and resources.

Interpretive listening classes covered a wide range of themes and learning resources. YouTube, Spotify, Schology, and websites for online tests have been utilized as learning resources in interpretive listening classes. YouTube was the most favourite learning resource among students because YouTube's illustrations and subtitles make it simpler for them to comprehend the material.

c. Interpretation

The material obtained was not only beneficial for assignment requirements, but also had a positive impact in the context of information and knowledge expansion. Students with low test scores reported that autonomous listening did not have a significant positive impact beyond the ability to learn independently. One of the shortcomings of autonomous listening activities faced by students was the difficulty in finding material due to the rarity of topics that were discussed. In addition, the lack of direction from lecturers frequently results in misunderstandings between what lecturers intend and what students perceive also a part of the shortcomings.

Students' Improvement in Listening Course Supported by Their Autonomous Listening Activity

There are two different datasets to find the students' improvement in the listening course due to the contribution of autonomous listening activities. First, it was gathered by questionnaire, and the second was collected through an interview.

1. Questionnaire

This session of the questionnaire consists of ten questions concerning the impact of autonomous listening activities on interpretive listening class results.

The ten questions were as follows: In the interpretive listening course, I would repeatedly listen to English material when I encounter English terms that were difficult for me to comprehend.

1. In interpretive listening courses, students' grades can indicate their ability to listen to English material. 2. I believe that excellent listening skills in the interpretive listening course

impact the general significance of the English language field. 3. I consistently complete the interpretive listening course assignments assigned by the lecturer. 5. It was very important for me to complete every interpretive listening course assignment given by the lecturer. 6. I consistently try my best to hand in my interpretive listening assignments on time. 7. Autonomous listening activities were able to overcome my difficulties in the interpretive listening class. 8. Autonomous listening activities have enhanced my interpretive listening comprehension. 9. My Interpretive Listening class examination results were satisfactory. 10. I was able to achieve excellent scores on exams in the interpretive listening course because of autonomous listening activities.

All students of varying grade levels reported that they preferred repeating video or audio material when discovering unfamiliar terms. Fifty percent of respondents agreed that students' grades could serve as an indicator of their ability to comprehend auditory material. The majority also believe that listening comprehension can affect grades in other English classes. The importance of completing assignments assigned by teachers was accepted by all students, but only 80% of students reported submitting assignments on time. Moreover, the majority of students reported having difficulty in interpretive listening classes and agreed that autonomous listening activities could help them to gain excellent results. Students with high final grades felt satisfied with their results, whereas those with low final grades were dissatisfied.

The majority of students expressed the tendency to replay the audio or video material in times when they encountered unfamiliar terms. One of the challenges encountered by students pertains to language acquisition. The primary challenge that students often face in interpretive listening classes is a deficiency in vocabulary (Buck, 2001). Moreover, it is important to note that certain students hold the belief that the skills gained in interpretive listening courses serve as an indicator of their ability to comprehend English language material. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged by the majority of students that possessing excellent listening abilities in interpretive listening classes can have a significant impact on academic performance within the entire field of English studies. According to Yavuz et al (2015), it has been observed by English teachers that while students may have made progress in developing many skills, listening is widely acknowledged as the fundamental talent that facilitates the effective utilization of their other abilities.

All students reported that they always complete all assignments assigned by the teacher. Yet, not everyone submits it by the appointed time. Some students might overcome difficulties in listening classes by using autonomous listening activities. In addition, they mentioned how autonomous listening activities could enhance their comprehension of the material in interpretive listening classes. Only half of the respondents reported being satisfied with their final grades. A few others were dissatisfied with their final exam results. Consequently, autonomous listening activities were unable to completely aid students in achieving high test scores in interpretive listening courses.

2. Interview

In this section, students will elaborate on their perspectives on the use of autonomous listening activities to support their listening improvement in the listening course via an interview. There were ten concerns relating to the contribution of autonomous listening activities to interpretive listening classes.

The questions used in the interview were as follows: 1. What difficulties did you face in interpretive listening courses? 2. Did you have certain preparations to face difficulties in autonomous listening activities in interpretive listening courses? If so, try to explain your preparations. 3. Did the autonomous listening activity help you reduce the difficulties in interpretive listening courses? 4. What did you gain from autonomous listening activities?

Please explain! 5. In your opinion, which autonomous listening activity would help you the most in understanding interpretive listening material? 6. In your opinion, why might autonomous listening activities improve or not improve interpretive listening comprehension? 7. In your opinion, why autonomous listening activities might/might not offer excellent results on your interpretive listening course exam? 8. Why did you feel satisfied/dissatisfied with your interpretive listening score? 9. Why might autonomous listening activities help/or not help you achieve high test results in interpretive listening courses? 10. After the entire semester of the interpretive listening course using autonomous listening activities, do you feel any positive differences regarding your listening comprehension compared to before? Please explain what kind of differences you feel.

Through interviews, the issue of student difficulties in interpretive listening classes was addressed. In interpretive listening classes, all students of all grade levels experience difficulty. The majority of respondents identified the theme as the primary issue. Difficult topics make it difficult to find discussion material. Occasionally, a misunderstanding between what the lecturer intends and what the students perceive also presents a barrier. When one of the students lacks confidence in their ability to articulate their comprehension of the interpretive material, weekly presentations in front of the class become challenging. One student with a low grade reported having difficulty compiling and interpreting his comprehension of the discussed material. Learners also have the opportunity to reflect on their listening by identifying their strong and weak features and gaining insight into which skills to work on and develop outside of the classroom (Schmidt, 2016). Dealing with the obstacles they face, some students prepare for the interpretive listening class beforehand. They will repeat the material, write down key points, and look up unfamiliar vocabulary. One of the students with the highest grade stated that he would ignore the opinions of others during presentations so that he could concentrate on himself. Students in the category with the lowest scores reported that they did not prepare for the interpretive listening class. The majority of students subsequently concurred that autonomous listening activities could assist them in overcoming obstacles in interpretive listening class.

Students learned to consistently search for material that matches their needs and interests as a result of autonomous listening activities. In the course of their research, students discover an abundance of material options, which they could then interpret and present to the class. The greater the quantity of material encountered, the greater the amount of information and new knowledge acquired. This has an impact on students' comprehension of the material, which in turn has an effect on the interpretive listening course's final results. According to Benson (2016), autonomy is essential for achieving effective learning outcomes. The development of learner autonomy not only improves learners' skills but also cultivates their sense of responsibility and critical thinking, thereby encouraging their active participation in the communities they are a part of.

The implementation of autonomous listening activities has been found to provide numerous beneficial outcomes across various aspects associated with listening instruction. One student who had excellent exam scores mentioned a positive change in their ability to fully understand videos and films without relying on subtitles. In the context of autonomous learning, students engage in ongoing practice and actively seek out their own sources of learning materials, which has a beneficial effect on their listening proficiency. A student who achieved an excellent final score also noted that the aspect of pronunciation had significant improvements. Vandergrift (2007) and Walker (2014) contend that students should possess the ability not only to identify words despite their unfamiliar pronunciation but also to ascertain the correspondence between linguistic elements and individual words. Students have the opportunity to discover an abundance of learning materials that were not familiar to them. In contrast to the act of listening in the first semester, interpretive listening has the capacity to

provide students with fresh information and experiential opportunities. In the first academic period, the teacher employed various media resources, including songs, potentially due to limitations in diving into the subject matter more extensively. Nevertheless, one student expressed that their comprehension of the listening material improved as a result of incorporating songs throughout the first semester.

CONCLUSION

There are two research findings that can be inferred. The first is the factor of students' speaking anxiety in drama performance involving internal and external factors. First, from internal factors, there are a) fear of making mistakes, in which students felt negative feelings, and they lost their enthusiasm for performing in front of an audience. b) lack of confidence, these factors occurred when students felt anxious to speak in a drama performance. Second, from external factors, a) embarrassment, it happens when students are about to perform in front of an audience, they feel uncomfortable, and it disturbs the students' concentration, so that the drama performance does not run smoothly. b) friends/classmates, it happens when students perform in front of the audience, they feel nervous when stared at by other students. Last, c) lack of preparation, it happens when students are about to appear in a drama performance, and they feel anxious and afraid of forgetting their own script/dialogue that they would like to perform. In conclusion, autonomous listening activities can boost students' interpretive listening comprehension and interpretive listening achievement. To maximize their potential, students must develop autonomy and actively participate in these activities. Interpretive listening students succeed when they use autonomous listening to overcome challenges and improve comprehension. Students often struggle with vocabulary and doubt their abilities to explain their understanding. Students can learn more by finding material that suits their needs and interests through autonomous listening activities. High-scoring students were likely satisfied but wanted better grades. On-time assignment submission, class attendance, and active, autonomous listening can lead to good scores. Low-scoring students dislike their final test results because they know they lack attentiveness and ability. Autonomous listening activities provide many benefits for listening instruction. One student who scored well on exams reported a better ability to understand videos and films without subtitles. Autonomous learning improves listening skills since students practice and find their own materials.

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