

The Impact of Short Videos in the Listening Skills of Young Adults with A1 Level from UCACUE

El impacto de los vídeos cortos en la capacidad de escucha de los jóvenes adultos con nivel A1 de la UCACUE

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ABSTRACT

The use of short educational videos as a tool to enhance listening skills in adult learners has gained significant attention in recent years. This study aims to explore the effects of incorporating short everyday English videos into listening activities in university students from UCACUE, La Troncal extension. The research incorporates a comprehensive literature review to identify the theoretical foundations and justifications for using short videos in adult language education. The participants for this study are fifty undergraduate students from the Language Center at UCACUE, with a beginner English level (A1 course) divided into control and experimental. For gathering data, groups are evaluated through questionnaires and pre and post-tests, to obtain quantitative data. Similarly, to attain qualitative data, a survey is introduced to them for analyzing students' perceptions regarding the implementation of Short Videos in Listening activities. The results of the study revealed a notable enhancement in listening performance, students' motivation, and engagement for participants who were exposed to video materials compared to those who used traditional audio resources. Participants viewing videos scored higher in post-tests, signifying better comprehension. Consequently, the study concluded that integrating videos effectively enhances listening skills, marking multimedia as a potent tool for educational advancement.

Keywords: Educational video; Listening; activity.

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RESUMEN

El uso de videos cortos como una herramienta para mejorar las habilidades de escucha en estudiantes adultos ha ganado una atención significativa en los últimos años. Este estudio pretende explorar los efectos de la incorporación de videos cortos de inglés idario en las actividades de comprensión auditiva en estudiantes universitarios de la UCACUE, extensión La Troncal. La investigación incorpora una revisión exhaustiva de la literatura para identificar los fundamentos teóricos y las justificaciones del uso de videos cortos en la enseñanza de idiomas para adultos. Los participantes para este estudio son cincuenta estudiantes universitarios del Centro de Idiomas, UCACUE, con un nivel de inglés principiante (curso A1) divididos en control y experimental. Para la recogida de datos, se evalúan los grupos a través de cuestionarios y pre y post tests, para obtener datos cuantitativos. Del mismo modo, para obtener datos cualitativos, se les introduce una encuesta para analizar las percepciones de los estudiantes respecto a la implementación de Videos Cortos en las actividades de Listening. Los resultados del estudio revelaron una notable mejora en el rendimiento de la comprensión oral, la motivación de los estudiantes y el compromiso de los participantes que fueron expuestos a materiales de vídeo en comparación con los que utilizaron recursos de audio tradicionales. Los participantes que vieron vídeos obtuvieron puntuaciones más altas en las pruebas posteriores, lo que significa una mejor comprensión. En consecuencia, el estudio concluye que la integración de vídeos mejora eficazmente la capacidad de escucha, lo que convierte a los multimedia en una potente herramienta para el progreso educativo.

Palabras clave: video educativo; escuchar; actividad.

Introduction

Teaching listening has always played a fundamental role in both EFL classrooms and research related to EFL instruction. While listening is primarily a passive skill, learners must actively interpret information from both auditory and visual cues (Kim, 2015). Enhancing second language listening skills is a challenging task since students must simultaneously process content knowledge and linguistic knowledge while listening (Mendelsohn & Ray, 2017). Underwood (1989), states students frequently experience substantial difficulties with listening comprehension due to their inability to control the speed of speech delivery. Additionally, students struggle with maintaining focus during listening activities, as it requires substantial effort to grasp the intended meaning. Furthermore, L2 learners face cognitive limitations in processing information in the target language due to their limited familiarity with the new language. The interest in the implementation of short videos has garnered increasing attention in education due to research findings highlighting a broad range of benefits in enhancing students' academic performance (Carmichael et al., 2018; Ivone & Renandya, 2019), and the increase in engagement by illustrating complex concepts, providing clearer visual representation (Taylor et al., 2018).

Short Videos in EFL Contexts

According to Mirvan (2013), the use of video materials in the classroom can increase students' motivation to learn by providing exposure to diverse situations that aid in their understanding of real-life scenarios.

To effectively integrate video materials into the classroom, several key factors must be considered. First and foremost, aligning the chosen topics with students' interests, their proficiency in English, and the cultural relevance of the content is crucial for engagement and comprehension. Building on this foundation, Nunan (2003), underscores the significance of crafting structured listening cycles. These cycles involve meticulous selection of suitable segments from video or audio resources, breaking them down into digestible sections for presentation. By doing so, instructors can design purposeful activities that not only captivate learners but also ensure that their focus remains on the video content. The careful curation of video materials significantly aids language learning, fostering increased motivation among learners when presented with valuable opportunities to study through multimedia resources.

Influence of Videos on Listening Skills

Mei Hardiah (2019), discusses the use of audiovisual media to enhance students' listening skills. In this project, students are divided into small groups, and the study predicts the content of the lecture through sound (Hardiah, 2019). The researchers and teachers will then assign the following students to distribute. The use of audiovisual media, specifically videos, increases students' concentration and focus, as videos can capture their attention at a higher level (Hardiah, 2019; Yaacob et al., 2021). The author's experience and observations indicate that the listening ability of students, particularly those in the third grade, is still weak. Both third-grade students and adult language learners share challenges in listening skills, indicating a need for specialized approaches like multimedia to improve comprehension. However, the use of audiovisual media helps increase students' attention and focus, especially in listening (Hardiah, 2019). Students are assigned to each learner after considering psycholinguistics. Generally, the findings in the classroom study propose that using sound media in English language instruction enhances students' listening skills (Hardiah, 2019).

Rosdiana (2018), discusses the use of audiovisuals as a means to enhance learners' listening skills. Learning media refers to the tools and methods that facilitate communication and knowledge acquisition (Rosdiana, 2018). It is expected that the use of media in teaching and learning will enhance learning outcomes (Rosdiana, 2018; Carmichael et al., 2018). Effective learning media creates interest, motivation, and positive learning behaviors while influencing students psychologically (Rosdiana, 2018). Based on the findings among English students, this study indicates a decrease in the learning process compared to other studies (Rosdiana, 2018). To achieve the goals of teaching and learning, it is important to use appropriate media and teaching materials that align with them.

In a study conducted by Namaziandost (2019), efforts to enhance Iranian EFL students' listening skills have fallen short of desired proficiency levels, prompting a study on the impact of audio and video aids. Among 40 intermediate learners divided into experimental and control groups, the experimental group exposed to video materials outperformed the control using audio CDs.

The results demonstrated that integrating audio and video aids to elevate listening comprehension among Iranian EFL learners, plays a significant role in achieving superior outcomes.

Related studies using videos

Pratama (2020), argues the effectiveness of YouTube in enhancing language skills and the use of video clips to develop teachers' technological abilities. For that study, a questionnaire was administered to third-semester college students, confirming the advantages of technology in education. The research highlights the importance of YouTube in classrooms, engaging students' attention, promoting creativity, and facilitating comprehensive learning. Hence, YouTube videos serve as a complementary tool for students' learning. Similarly, Qomariyah et al. (2021), address the challenge students face in comprehending audio recordings, investigating the impact of integrating YouTube videos on listening comprehension. Using a quasi-experimental design with non-equivalent control groups, all first-semester English language education students were sampled. The findings revealed heightened student interest and motivation in learning listening comprehension through YouTube videos within the classroom, indicating a substantial positive impact on their performance in this skill.

Theoretical Framework

Dual Coding Theory

Paivio (1986), developed the Dual Coding Theory, which contends that information presented in both verbal and visual modes improves memory and learning. The theory posits that the brain utilizes both visual and verbal channels for information processing. This implies that combining auditory (spoken language) and visual (visual cues, gestures, context-rich visuals) information can improve learners' comprehension and retention of the content.

By integrating verbal and visual elements, short videos provide a dual representation of the information, facilitating deeper understanding and mental connections (Paivio, 1986). According to this theory, presenting information through both visual and auditory modalities, as seen in short videos, can enhance learning and comprehension by activating multiple cognitive processes.

The use of short videos aligns with Dual Coding Theory by providing learners with a rich and multisensory learning experience. The combination of auditory and visual stimuli in short videos engages learners' cognitive processes, enabling them to encode information through both verbal and visual representations (Mayer, 2009).

Multimedia Learning Theory

Mayer (2001), established Multimedia Learning Theory, which highlights the value of using many sensory modalities (such as visual and aural) to improve learning and understanding. This idea states that when information is provided in a multimedia format that incorporates text, graphics, and narration, learners are more likely to comprehend and retain it. Short videos, as a form of multimedia, align with this theory by providing both auditory (spoken language) and visual (visual cues, gestures, context-rich visuals) information (Mayer, 2009).

The combination of these elements in short videos can engage learners' attention, support cognitive processing, and improve listening comprehension. Visual cues, such as facial expressions and gestures, can provide additional context and aid in understanding the spoken language (Liu & Chen, 2017). The visual component in short videos complements the auditory input, reinforcing language comprehension and facilitating the interpretation of the content (Mayer, 2009).

By incorporating short videos into language learning contexts, educators can tap into the principles of Multimedia Learning Theory, leveraging the power of multimedia to enhance listening skills in adult learners. Short videos provide learners with a rich and dynamic learning experience, presenting information in a way that is engaging, memorable, and conducive to comprehension (Mayer, 2009).

Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive Load Theory, by Sweller (1988), posits that learners have limited cognitive capacity for processing information (Sweller, 1988). The theory emphasizes that when instructional materials impose excessive cognitive load, such as presenting difficult language or complex tasks, it can impede learning. However, the use of short videos can help manage cognitive load and facilitate the acquisition and retention of information.

Short videos, with their visual and contextual support, can provide a means to present information in a more manageable and engaging way, reducing the extraneous cognitive load (Mayer, 2005). The visual cues, gestures, and context-rich visuals in short videos can scaffold learners' understanding and facilitate the processing of information.

By utilizing short videos in the classroom, educators can align with the principles of Cognitive Load Theory and optimize the learning experience for students. Short movies provide learners with visual and contextual support that helps manage cognitive load so they may concentrate their cognitive resources on comprehending and integrating the material.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist Learning Theory, as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), posits that learners actively construct knowledge through their interactions with the environment. Short videos align with this theory by providing learners with authentic and contextualized learning resources. They offer a window into real-world language use, presenting learners with meaningful language input that reflects authentic communication situations. Through the use of short videos, learners are actively engaged in the process of interpreting and making sense of the language they encounter (Mayer, 2009). This active involvement promotes deep engagement with the material and facilitates the development of listening skills as learners actively construct their understanding of the spoken language.

Furthermore, short videos offer opportunities for learners to observe and analyze real-life language use in various contexts, such as conversations, interviews, or presentations (Gunter, 2014). By observing these authentic language situations, learners can connect their prior knowledge and experiences to new language input, facilitating the construction of new understanding and the development of listening skills. This alignment with Constructivist Learning Theory suggests that incorporating short videos into language learning environments can support learners in actively constructing knowledge and improving their listening abilities.

This study posed the following aims: To explore the effects that short videos have on A1-level students' listening skills; to identify the effects of using short videos for the listening skills of A1-level students from UCACUE; and to analyze the students' perceptions regarding short videos as a method of fostering listening skills in the EFL classroom.

Methodology

Design of the study

The current study used a mixed-method approach to investigate how students' listening abilities were affected by brief instructional videos. To gauge the degree of improvement made, a pre-test was given prior to the intervention and a post-test following it, as part of the quantitative phase. A control and an experimental group for assessment. Furthermore, qualitative data was gathered through surveys and interviews. Surveys were conducted with a group of students after the administration of the tests. These interviews aimed to explore the participants' perspectives on the frameworks.

Participants

The study engaged first-level English (A1) students, totaling 15 in the control group (parallel A) with 7 females and 8 males. The experimental group (parallel B) included 20 participants, comprising 14 females and 6 males, within the June-August 2023 cohort, aged approximately between 18 to 25 years old.

Instruments

Two instruments were employed in this research study: pre-tests and post-tests and a questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions. Additionally, it is important to mention that conducting a pilot test is an essential step that needs to be undertaken to identify and rectify any potential issues that may arise before the commencement of the main study (Mackey & Gass, 2012). Therefore, a pilot test was conducted first with a different group, A2 levels students or higher, to find any possible abnormalities or inconsistencies in it.

In the quantitative phase, both pre-tests and post-tests were conducted using listening tests sourced from the Cambridge Language Management System (Doff et al., 2015). In this part, students listened to an audio and subsequently responded to the questions.

Using a questionnaire that included both closed-and open-ended questions, data was gathered for the qualitative phase. With the purpose of gathering student opinions on the use of listening test frameworks in the classroom, a questionnaire was created.

Procedure

Participants received a detailed study explanation via a script. Ethical compliance was ensured through Universidad Católica de Cuenca's authorized consent forms signed by EFL A1 students before test administration and data collection.

The primary objective is to assess the influence of short videos on A1-level students' listening skills, employing both a pre-test and a post-test. Initially, in the pre-test, participants in both the control and experimental groups listened to an audio clip twice, answering related questions. In the subsequent post-test, while the control group retaken the same audio test, the experimental group watched short videos before revisiting the audio clip for question response. Integrating videos aims to engage students' visual cognition, aiding their comprehension and subsequent question-solving ability (Mirriahi et al., 2021).

The second aim of the study will be to gather students' opinions on the usage of Short Videos as a method of fostering listening skills. A questionnaire with both closed-and open-ended questions was made for this reason. The questionnaire explored their level of motivation concerning classroom activities, their interactions with peers, and their thoughts on the teacher's teaching approach.

Results

The experimental group consisted of twenty students, while the control group consisted of fifteen students and followed the standard ESL desk-based teaching method. The experimental group worked actively on the A1 course syllabus, engaging in watching short videos for a listening task. Both groups took a pre-test at the term's start to determine listening skills. This ensured both groups had similar listening abilities initially and served as a comparison for later tests.

Pre- and post-testing

Table 1 presents data from the pre-test administered to all thirty-five participants. The results indicate that the vast majority of participants, precisely 85.7%, found it extremely complex (EC) to grasp the main conversation topic post-listening. Additionally, 8.6% perceived it as complex (C), and 5.7% considered it barely complex (BC), while none found it not complex (NC) to identify the primary focus of the audio. Similarly, comprehension of the conversation's context was notably challenging, with 65.7% indicating extreme complexity (EC), while merely 5.7% found it not complex (NC). Furthermore, the identification of speakers posed significant challenges, as indicated by 57.1% finding it extremely complex (EC), while 25.7% found it easy (NC). The data underscores that most participants faced substantial obstacles in comprehending the conversation's main themes, context, and speakers. According Sweller (1998), Cognitive Load Theory posits that incorporating audio-visual materials could aid students in accessing pertinent background information and in simplifying language.

Table 1. Pre-test questions.

No.	Questions	EC	C	BC	NC
1	In general, how complex was it to find the main topic of the conversation that you listened to?	85,7%	8,6%	5,7%	0%
2	After listening to the audio, how complicated was it to understand the setting of the conversation?	65,7%	20%	8,6%	5,7%
3	How complex was it to distinguish who was talking in the conversation?	57,1%	14,3%	2,9%	25,7%

Own Sources.

After multiple sessions, students became familiar with the language and their understanding of audio comprehension. They have now acquired a large amount of vocabulary, common phrases, and basic grammatical structures. Upon analyzing Tables 2 and 3, which compare post-test questions between the Experimental Group and Control Group reveals notable differences in learners' performance following the short video intervention. In the Experimental Group, 50%

strongly agreed (SA) and 35% agreed (A) that they could identify the main conversation topic effortlessly. Conversely, in the Control Group, only 20% strongly agreed, with 13.3% agreeing and a substantial 46.7% disagreeing (D). Regarding differentiating speakers' voices, the Experimental Group displayed higher competence, with 80% strongly agreeing and 10% agreeing, while the Control Group showed a split opinion, with 46.7% strongly agreeing and 46.7% agreeing.

Similar trends were observed in understanding the conversation's setting, inferring new expressions' meanings, and comprehending participants' emotions through listening. The Experimental Group consistently exhibited stronger agreement percentages in these aspects compared to the Control Group, indicating a more favorable impact of the short videos' intervention on their listening comprehension skills. Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer, 2001) suggests that adding visuals or textual support to audio can aid students with A1-level proficiency. Similarly, Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986) proposes that combining visual aids or context-rich materials with audio can boost comprehension and retention during listening activities.

Table 2. Post-test questions. Experimental Group.

No.	Learners' performance with short video intervention	SA	A	D	SD
1	I can identify the main topic of a conversation with no difficult	50%	35%	15%	0%
2	I differentiate the speakers' voices when listening to an audio	80%	10%	10%	0%
3	I have an idea of where the conversation is taking place.	55%	20%	10%	15%
4	I can infer the meaning of new expressions with the aid of listening to the context.	40%	40%	5%	15%
5	By listening, I can understand the feelings or emotions of the participants	50%	20%	30%	0%

Own Sources.

Table 3. Post-test questions. Control Group.

No.	Learners' performance with the traditional method	SA	A	D	SD
1	I can identify the main topic of a conversation with no difficult	20%	13.3%	46.7%	20%
2	I differentiate the speakers' voices when listening to an audio	46.7%	46.7%	0%	6.6%
3	I have an idea of where the conversation is taking place.	6.6%	26.7%	33.3%	33.3%
4	I can infer the meaning of new expressions with the aid of listening to the context.	0%	6.6%	33.3%	60%
5	By listening, I can understand the feelings or emotions of the participants	33.3%	40%	26.7%	0%

Own Sources.

Students' perceptions

The analysis of student perceptions following instruction with video-based listening tasks reveals notable findings across various aspects. Regarding motivation, 80% of students reported feeling highly motivated, attributing it to the engaging nature of video tasks. Additionally, 75% expressed increased engagement, finding videos more interactive than traditional methods. In terms of comprehension, 85% noted improved understanding, crediting videos for clearer context and visual aids aiding comprehension. Furthermore, a surprising 90% reported feeling more comfortable with video-based tasks, referring to reduced anxiety and a more relaxed learning atmosphere. Overall, these percentages underscore the positive impact of short video tasks on students' motivation, engagement, comprehension, interactive learning, and overall comfort in the learning environment.

Discussion

The study delves into the efficacy of short educational videos in bolstering listening skills among A1-level students at UCACUE. The results revealed notable enhancements in listening performance, student motivation, and engagement among those exposed to video materials compared to traditional audio resources.

The data from pre and post-tests distinctly showed significant improvements in the experimental group's listening comprehension after exposure to short videos. Contrarily, the control group, following conventional desk-based instruction, displayed lower performance. These findings substantiate previous research by Namaziandost et al. (2019), and Hardiah (2019), highlighting the superior efficacy of video materials in enhancing listening skills compared to solely audio-based methods.

Nonetheless, there were some restrictions on the study. First off, the results might not be as broadly applicable given the small sample size. A broader and more varied group of participants could offer a greater understanding of how effective short videos are among various types of learners. Additionally, while the quantitative data indicated enhanced performance, qualitative insights on specific learning strategies or challenges could offer a more comprehensive understanding of student experiences (Harris, 2019).

The study's outcomes hold relevance for educators, highlighting the potential of integrating short educational videos to improve students' listening skills. The positive impact observed on motivation, comprehension, and engagement suggests a need to incorporate multimedia resources effectively into language learning curricula (Hsu, 2019; Taylor, 2021). Educators can benefit from tailoring lesson plans to include video content aligned with students' proficiency levels and interests, leveraging multimedia to create dynamic and interactive learning environments (Smith & Brown, 2019).

Beyond language education, the implications extend to various educational domains. Short videos can serve as a versatile tool to enhance comprehension and engagement across diverse subjects (Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2023; Davis, 2018). Their capacity to blend auditory and visual stimuli aligns with Dual Coding Theory, suggesting their potential in subjects demanding multi-sensory learning, such as science or history.

Future studies could explore more varied and extensive samples to validate the efficacy of short videos in different educational settings. Additionally, delving deeper into specific strategies or elements within video materials that enhance comprehension could offer valuable insights for educators aiming to optimize multimedia-based instruction.

Conclusion

The findings of this study corroborate the efficacy of integrating short videos into language learning environments, particularly among A1-level students. Through a comparative analysis between traditional audio resources and short videos, significant improvements in listening skills were observed among participants exposed to short videos. This enhancement encompassed not only listening performance but also evident increments in motivation, engagement, and comfort levels, attributed to the interactive and engaging nature of video materials. Moreover, the usage of short videos facilitated clearer comprehension as reported by participants, mainly due to the provision of clearer context and visual aids surrounding these multimedia resources.

Concerning the research objectives, the study effectively explored the impact of short videos on listening skills, showing their potential to reinforce comprehension and engagement. The comprehensive analysis of students' perceptions concerning video-based tasks revealed affirmative impacts on motivation, engagement, and comprehension, aligning directly with the research objective to comprehend students' perceptions regarding short video use. The educational implications are noteworthy, emphasizing the role of short videos as effective tools for language learning, allowing educators to adapt lessons aligned with student proficiency levels and interests. Moreover, the potential of short videos extends beyond language education, hinting at cross-disciplinary applications in subjects like science or history, aligning with Dual Coding Theory, and suggesting prospects for enhancing comprehension across diverse domains.

However, the study's limitations, particularly the relatively small sample size, raise concerns about result generalizability, requiring further investigation with larger and more diverse participant groups. Additionally, while the quantitative data provided insights into improved performance, deeper qualitative insights could enrich our understanding of students' learning experiences. The trajectory for future research suggests broader participant analyses and focused investigations into specific elements within video materials to optimize multimedia-based instruction further. In conclusion, this research underscores the potential of short videos to significantly enhance language learning, emphasizing the need for deeper exploration into their attributes and applications in diverse educational contexts.

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