USING AUTHENTIC AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LISTENING TEST

MOHD KHAIRULL B AB GHANI

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USING AUTHENTIC AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LISTENING TEST

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A project report submitted in a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of TESL

Faculty of Education
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

September 2013
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In preparing this project report, I was in contact with many people. They have contributed towards my understanding and thoughts. I wish to express my sincere appreciation toward my main project report supervisor, Professor. Madya Dr. Abdul Halim Abdul Raof, for encouragement, guidance and support. I am also thankful to my project report examiner, Dr. Fauziah Ismail for her guidance and critics and motivation. Without their continued interest and encouragement, this project report would not have been the same as presented here.

I am also indebted to Ministry of Higher Education for funding my Master study. People in UCSA, the students, colleagues who had contributed a lot in helping me to complete this project report.

My sincere appreciation goes to all of my fellow postgraduate students who have provided assistance at various occasions. Last but not least to my family members who have given me endless support in completing this project report.
ABSTRAK

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to extend the findings of previous studies on visually supported listening. To fulfill this purpose, 30 Diploma in Medical Laboratory students were selected from University College Shahputra located in Kuantan Pahang. These students were chosen through convenience sampling and divided into two groups (Group A and Group B). Both groups have the same proficiency level. Both groups took audio-only listening test and audio-visual listening test respectively. Both tests had been conducted early in the semester. Group A had taken audio-only listening test first and group B had taken audio-visual listening test first. This study looked into the effects of using Authentic Audio-visual Materials in English Language Listening Test. The study also investigated student’s perceptions regarding the use of visuals in English listening test. Through the use of tests and questionnaire, the study determined whether the use of visuals benefited students in their listening performance. Findings indicated that there were slight significant differences for listening performance for group A participants in audio-visual listening test. However, group B participants did not perform well in audio-visual listening test. It shows that the audio-only listening test needs to be taken first in order for the students to be able to perform well in audio-visual listening test. Analyses of student’s perceptions revealed that group A participants felt that audio-visual listening is beneficial to them. However, group B participants felt that audio-visual listening test did not help them to perform well.
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1.0 Introduction

There are many appropriate teaching methods that can be implemented in the teaching or learning process including teaching listening as a skill. Listening skill is one of the difficult skills to be taught. Students are facing difficulty either in understanding native speakers or in talking like native English and it makes students demotivated and act as inactive listeners (Mohamed Kheider, 2012). This leads to a bad performance in listening test. Students need something that can help them to relate to and enjoy themselves while doing it. The usage of visuals materials can be helpful and motivating. According to Norris (2011), video contain plenty of potentials to help language learners to learn because it is motivating, culturally abundant and authentic.

Most people believe that spoken language is primarily dominated by audition and the perception of facial expression, particularly that of the mouth that will help comprehend speech (Omata & Mogi, 2007). Field (2008) stated that our understanding of conversation is possibly assisted by facial expressions and visual
cues. According to Wagner (2010), the benefits of using video technology in teaching English is very obvious whereas most interpersonal communication involves face to face contact in which the listener can see the speaker, and thus video technology offers a more authentic input for L2 listeners than audio-only texts. The movements of the mouth helps to recognize what the speaker is trying to say especially in a noisy environment (Pollack, 1954). There are many ways and practices that have been adopted these past few decades in developing materials in conducting a listening test for second language acquisition. In order for the materials to be more relatable to students, teachers should choose authentic materials to develop the test.

The use of movies for second language instruction started in the 1930s with Disney Studios' production of a film intended for use with non-native speakers of English (Kelly, 1969). Language teachers all over the world have been utilizing the sources such as audio and visual media to assist them in the teaching of L2 listening skill. This is because students can relate and understand better seeing and listening to things that are relatable to themselves. Berne (1998) stated because of the nature of listening comprehension is complicated, L2 listening practice should include a wide range of situations as well as different types of listening passages, different modes of presentation such as videotape and audiotape, also different types of tasks. All of these are considered as authentic materials. Berardo (2006) stated the idea of using authentic materials in the classroom is to expose learner to as much real language as possible.
1.1 **Background of the Study**

Nuttall (1996) stated that authentic texts can motivate students because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people. If the text interests the learner it can also be related to his or her own experiences. One of the reasons to use authentic materials is to create the same reaction that the student has towards their first language (Berardo, 2006). According to Underwood (1989), using mutual knowledge and common context makes the information easier to be comprehended by the listeners. Herron and Seay (1991) found students who had no experience with the authentic materials scored less on listening comprehension assessments than students who were exposed to them. This is because authentic materials can help the student to perform better.

One of the authentic materials that have been used by listening test constructors is visual components. The examples of these visual components are video tapes, television broadcasts, video disks, teleconferencing and variations of CD-ROM technology (Gruba, 1997). A visual listening test is an active process in which listeners select and interpret information which comes from auditory and visual cues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to express (Rubin, 1995). Teachers started to utilize video media to assess second language listening comprehension due to the growing and widespread usage of video, satellite broadcasts and multimedia applications in the language classroom (Gruba, 1997). A study by Bret (1997) revealed that participants in the video group scored higher on four of the six tasks than the participants of audio-only group, whereas the audio-only group scored higher than the video group on two other tasks. According to Mueller (1980), utilizing
visual context may increase scores of low level candidates. This showed that students can perform better with the inclusion of visual component in their listening test.

Another reason to use video media in language assessment is because there are features of the process or setting of how the language is being used which cannot be separated from its meaning (Gruba, 1997). It can help to raise students’ enthusiasm, cultivate their listening interests, and achieve the goals of learning English. Ockey (2007) stated that because the use of video might result in assessing learners’ ability to use visual cues to understand the aural text, this would help the learners to understand and make better sense on what they have listened to. Eventually, the use of video to teach listening comprehension has become more common in the L2 classroom (Nunan, 2005).

In addition, uncontrolled variables like the nature of the visual text, the ability level of the students, the genre of the texts, and the types and format of questions asked may be at least partially responsible for the varying nature of the results. The result had proven that the usage of visual components can help the students to perform better in English listening test.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

These are a few challenges that students faced in using visual component in listening test that need to be put into consideration by the test constructors. Firstly, even though the test takers can understand the surface meaning of the text, they may have difficulties in comprehending the meaning of the whole text due to unfamiliarity to certain word. The nonverbal cues such as facial expression, gestures or tone of voice can also be misinterpreted by listeners from different cultures. The test takers also might face difficulties in concentrating in a foreign language. However, some studies showed it does not give any significant effect on the test takers performance. Some researchers argued that the inclusion of the visual channel does not necessarily lead to increased comprehension, because the visual components of the text might not be attended to by the test-takers, or even because the video can be distracting for test-takers.

Although nonverbal communication gives clues to what speakers are thinking about or enhances what they are saying, cultural differences may interfere with understanding a message (Pennycook, 1985). For example, facial expressions in Korean culture are different from those in Western cultures in terms of subtlety. Yum (1987) stated perceptiveness in interpreting others’ facial expressions and emotions is an important element of nonverbal communication. Kagawa, (2001) stated, in Japan gestures and facial expressions sometimes serve social functions such as showing politeness, respect, and formality. Bowing or looking slightly downward shows respect for the interlocutor. Engaging eye contact is often considered rude in Asian culture. Sueyosi & Hardison (2005) stated that learners in both proficiency levels would have positive attitudes toward the presence of additional visual cues to aid
communication and skill development, but the higher proficiency learners might consider facial cues more informative and report paying more attention to them as a result of their linguistic experience. Linguistic, cultural experience and proficiency level are the factors that influence the information value of the visible components of a speech event (Sueyosi & Hardison, 2005). This study was conducted in order to see whether all of the findings from the previous research studies that were mentioned here about the usage of audio-visual materials have a similar result on the student’s performance.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This research was carried out to identify whether the usage of visual materials in an ESL listening test can help test takers to perform well and achieve a better result. The result of the research studies that had been conducted in the past had shown a negative and positive effect of using authentic audio-visual materials. Some of them showed that the usage of visual component can help the test takers to do well. However, others showed that the usage of visual component only act as a distraction and the test takers cannot concentrate on what is really being tested which is their listening skill. However it depends on the materials used in constructing the test paper. The choices of the visual have to be suited with the student’s level and background in order for them to be considered as authentic.
This study had find the answer to whether the usage of visual component in constructing an ESL listening test can help students to perform well and achieve a better result or it will only disrupt their performance. Also the perception of students towards the usage of visual component in ESL listening test had been discovered.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effect of using authentic audio-visual materials in English language listening test.

2. To identify the perception of the students towards audio-visual listening test

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does the use of authentic audio-visual materials in English language listening test affect student’s performance?
a. What visual elements can affect the performance positively?

b. What visual elements can affect the performance negatively?

2. What is the perception of students on the use of authentic audio-visual English language listening test?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study concentrated on student’s performance in ESL listening test using audio-visual method. Health Sciences students in semester three were the participants. The reason to choose Health Sciences students is because listening skill is very important to them because they have to go to the hospital for so many times for their practicum. They have to interact with so many people in the hospital and one of the skills that they need to be good at is listening skill. This is important for them in order to help them to prevent from doing mistakes while carrying their task and listen to every single information correctly. This study was conducted in one of the private college in Kuantan. A total of 40 students from two different classes will be chosen. The students are from intermediate proficiency level. This is based on the marks that they have obtained in listening test during their second semester English listening test.
record. The audio-visual that will be used in this study will be adapted from internet sources.

1.7 **Significance of the Study**

Audio-visual listening test has been studied for many years. According to Wagner (2010), many studies have investigated the effect of using visuals on test takers in comparison to audio-only texts, and they failed to show what L2 listening test-takers actually do while taking a video listening test. They cannot really see how does the visual elements help or disrupt the test takers performance. Many studies showed that the usage of visuals can help to improve student’s performance. However, there were some studies that showed, the usage of visuals do not help the student to perform better. They also disrupt the student because they test not only the student’s listening skill but also some other enabling skills. Nevertheless, according to Morrels, Samuels & Krauss (1992), the existence of gesture helps to convey what the speakers are trying to say more clearly. According to Hattori (1987), non native speaker use the visual information that they can see from the face of the native speaker to facilitate their understanding better. The process of listening becomes more active when accompanied by visual motions, and the nonverbal aspect of speech is an important part of the whole communication process (Perry, 2001).
Hopefully, this study should be able to discover types of authentic visual elements that can help students to perform better in their listening test and achieve a better result. Also hopefully it will help the teacher to understand better on the importance of using visual aids in constructing English listening tests. Also, hopefully this study will help the teacher to understand better on how to choose the right materials in order for it to be authentic and comprehensible by the students regardless of their proficiency level. Moreover, hopefully, the study had provided more understanding to the future researcher in the usage of visual materials in English language listening.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

For this study, the following terms are defined:

The first key term is authentic Material. Authentic material has been defined as materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community (Peacock, 1997). An authentic material also has been defined as oral and written language materials used in daily situations by native speakers of the language (Rogers & Medley, 1988).

Second key term is visual materials. Visual material has been defined as any projected or non-projected image that can be classified into illustrations, visuals,
pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likeness, replicas, reproductions or anything that would help a learner see an immediate meaning (Canning, 2000).

The third key term is listening. Rubin (1990) define listening as the process of processing information which the listener gets from visual and auditory clues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to say. Next, video listening test is a test that utilizes video texts (Wagner, 2010).

The fourth key term is ESL listening test. ESL listening has been defined as an active process in which listeners select and interpret information which comes from auditory and visual cues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to say (Rubin, 1995).

The fifth key term is audio-visual. The term audio-visual refers to works with a sound and a visual component, the production or use of such works, or the equipment involved in presenting such works. The examples of these visual components are video tapes, video disks, teleconferencing and variations of CD-ROM technology (Gruba, 1997).