

Using online platforms to teach listening

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received June 2024

Received in revised form

10 July 2024

Accepted 25 July 2024

Available online

25 August 2024

Keywords:

skill,
tool,
Internet,
technology,
social media,
chat,
blogs,
emails,
Youtube videos,
ELLLO,
ELSA.

ABSTRACT

This article aims at exploring the impact of using online educational platforms on the listening skills of private learning center students in Tashkent. It has recruited 4 ESL teachers and 10 intermediate teenage students. This group utilized various online platforms such as ELSA and ELLLO to acquire listening skills and showed a significant improvement on the pre- and post-listening tests. The teacher interviewees and the student group members confirmed the positive impacts of utilizing online educational platforms on developing students' listening comprehension.

2181-3701/© 2024 in Science LLC.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-3701-vol2-iss2/S-pp132-144>

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Tinglash ko'nikmalarini o'rgatish uchun onlayn platformalardan foydalanish

ANNOTATSIYA

Kalit so'zlar:

mahorat,
vosita,
internet,
texnologiya,
ijtimoiy media,
chat,
bloglar,
elektron pochta xabarleri,
YouTube videolari,
ELLLO,
ELSA.

Ushbu maqolaning maqsadi Toshkent shahridagi xususiy o'quv markazlari talabalarida tinglash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga onlayn ta'lim platformalaridan foydalanishning ta'sirini o'rganishdan iborat. Tadqiqotda 4 nafar ESL o'qituvchisi va ingliz tilini "o'rta" darajasiga ega bo'lgan 10 nafar o'smir ishtirok etdi. Guruh tinglash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish uchun ELSA va ELLLO kabi turli xil onlayn platformalardan foydalangan va darsdan oldin va keyingi tinglash testi ballarida sezilarli yaxshilanishni ko'rsatdi. O'qituvchilar ham, talabalar ham onlayn ta'lim platformalarining og'zaki tilni tushunish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga ijobiy ta'sirini tasdiqladilar.

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Использование онлайн-платформ для обучения аудированию

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

навык,
инструмент,
интернет,
технология,
социальные медиа,
чат,
блоги,
электронные письма,
видео на YouTube,
ELLLO,
ELSA.

Цель данной статьи — изучить влияние использования онлайн-образовательных платформ на развитие навыков аудирования у студентов частных учебных центров в Ташкенте. В исследовании приняли участие 4 преподавателя ESL и 10 подростков с уровнем английского языка «средний». Группа использовала различные онлайн-платформы, такие как ELSA и ELLLO, для развития навыков аудирования, и показала значительное улучшение результатов на тестах по аудированию до и после занятий. Как преподаватели, так и студенты подтвердили положительное влияние онлайн-образовательных платформ на развитие навыков понимания устной речи.

INTRODUCTION

The four language abilities of hearing, speaking, reading, and writing provide the foundation for learning a foreign language. There is substantial interaction between listening, speaking, reading, and writing, hence it is inaccurate to think of these skills as completely independent, according to Zhang (2009). The ability to listen is one of the English language's multifaceted language skills. It starts with knowledge of sounds and images and focuses on them. It then moves on to recognition and recollection of audio-visual stimuli. Finally, it ends with the interpretation of meaning. It is also emphasized that developing listening skills impacts all other linguistic abilities. The programs for teaching English as a foreign language, however, the emphasis placed on reading, writing, and speaking skills in programs for teaching English as a foreign language ignores listening competence.

Numerous studies show that anxiety experienced by pupils during face-to-face interactions negatively affects language learning in general and plays a key role in the growth of listening abilities. It is noted that there is a close correlation between the nature of the material to be delivered and the listening performance in the context of improving listening skills. In order to achieve the objectives of strengthening communication skills (listening and speaking), the materials utilized during the process are of significant importance. For pupils to be competent in situations that they could encounter in real life in terms of language understanding, material is thought to be a crucial necessity. In order to give students accurate information about the target language and examples of genuine use of the target language, materials that are crucial to presenting content to students should be carefully chosen. The complexity of the text, the quantity of ambiguous and unfamiliar words in the content, and the syntactic challenges that people are unfamiliar with in listening materials, according to Wilson (2016), all contribute to the problems learners confront when developing their listening skills.

The use of immersive video conferencing, a variety of visual media, and digital devices in TESOL systems has led to an increase in the use of listening instruction. With such inclusion, students have access to a wide range of listening materials, which gives

them more flexibility and boosts motivation and engagement. Theoretical and pedagogical frameworks that enable innovations' moral application in the instruction of listening are being developed as they are being adopted into second-language classrooms. There are several well-liked and efficient online tools available today that help language teachers and students develop their listening skills. These websites serve as good learning resources for EFL instruction. Some websites are made specially to let students exercise and develop their listening abilities. There has been a lot of research on how technology-based instruction affects the production of language skills in foreign literature, but very little research has been done – especially in the Uzbekistan context – on the relationship between the development of foreign language listening skills and the use of language web platforms. Contrarily, the volume and breadth of research on using technology to teach English as a foreign language focus more on the other skills than on the listening skill.

The purpose of this course paper is to investigate the efficiency of using online platforms to teach English listening skill to English learners through studying previous existing theories and implementing them into the experiment. To do this, we chose to have a case study with an experimental group by comparing their pre and post-listening results.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

MATERIALS

Online Teaching

1.1. History

Using online platforms has already become an effective way of teaching a language to foster the process. We have observed a lot of sources and previous research papers regarding the usage of technology in education, modern platforms, and so on. We are going to outline some key features of them below.

When we talk about online platforms, in our opinion, we should consider digital technology as well. According to Healey et al (2009), technology is defined as the use of systems that is dependent on both computer and digital applications as well as networks in all of their forms.

Although there were different arguments against using computers in the 1940s, it was alleviated by the 1980s. However, financial difficulty was still an obstacle to people's notions towards educational technology. In the 1980s email and some other software were used widely among teachers and students. They moved to the web through blogs, websites, and groups on social networks.

1.2. Teaching language skills by using online tools

In the past, different software was created to teach language skills. Sharing information between teachers and students was much simpler with the help of email and course management systems, via which teachers can send course materials, check assignments, and track attendance.

Regarding the drawbacks of digital platforms, when a pedagogue has their students read on a screen, some problems may occur together. Online reading requires 25% more time from a person than reading on paper. Online readers tend to skip larger texts and read shorter paragraphs and bullet points. In terms of the merits of online reading, several websites help students improve their speed reading and the Internet is considered as a great supply of reading materials. That is to say, a teacher can use search engines to find topics that match students' interests.

When it comes to teaching writing, in the early years, email was widely used, yet it failed to provide communication due to certain factors. One of them was too much work for teachers. It seemed they receive too many emails from students which means they only respond to some of them, replying can be too long, or students' messages might probably end up in the spam folder. Another reason why email failed was that it was overshadowed by the economical facilitation of other platforms, such as **social media** and CMS:

Chat is more real-time than email as it has the feature of immediate response which email lagged. Chat can be used for two main reasons: to improve coherence in writing and to discover how students' grammar is accurate by addressing errors.

Blogs are another effective way to promote students' writing, thus they gained popularity in teaching. Since blogs are created on Web 2.0, students can leave comments for posts. What makes blogs distinctive from the above-mentioned ways is that a student can create not only written posts but also various materials like graphics and videos. Students can choose either a public or private blog to post their writings. At first glance, it may seem that having a private blog is much better. However, if they have a public one, they unconsciously start to pay more attention to how accurate their writing is. Students' target will not be their teacher who checks their work but a global audience when it is made public.

Social networking, as students are already familiar with, is used widely by instructors to communicate with their students. There are two types of social networks: the first is established networks, and the other is do-it-yourself networks. Both types are used in education.

1.3. E-learning

Online teaching can be considered as a tool that can make the learning process more innovative, and more flexible. Online learning is learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g. phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be autonomous to learn and interact with teachers and other students. The study department should make a lot of effort and time in making effective strategies to give online instructions. Effective online instructions will serve to get feedback from students, make them ask questions, and broaden their horizons for the course. Pedagogical issues should be focused and case learning, collaborative learning, and project-based learning through effective online instruction should be emphasized by educational institutions. Educational departments need to be resilient when any unexpected pandemic or crisis occurs, and should be pre-prepared for carrying on online teacher-learning activities. Five important things that an instructor must keep in mind while delivering online lessons are instruction, content, motivation, relationships, and mental health.

One of the benefits of online learning is that learners who are not self-sufficient enough can boost their potential. Having little preparation to have online lessons can lead to a poor user experience. In a traditional classroom, a teacher can move around, check whether the students understand or not by asking CCQs (Concept-Checking Questions), and correct their misunderstandings. The students initially were not able to focus on online platforms. Those who accepted the new learning environment were able to adjust very soon.

Learners who are shy in raising or speaking up their opinion in a traditional classroom often get enough confidence to do so when they are assured that they can't be seen by others during the class. Similarly, disabled learners are at no disadvantage in a virtual classroom where all the students are treated equally. There are a lot of interlinked factors which affect learner's experience and retention like family and study; ability to balance work, motivation, time management skills, sense of belonging, self-desired, and support systems. Therefore, a proper quality check should be done to improve online learning. Many people believe that a new hybrid model of education will appear with considerable benefits as a result of e-learning. The participation by learners is not enough, teachers must also put considerable effort to make the students engaged in the lesson, assess the knowledge of the students, and get feedback very often. The mentioned tips will result in an effective and meaningful learning environment.

1.4. Teacher's knowledge and beliefs regarding online platforms for teaching English listening

We researched a lot to gain enough background information on my course paper topic so that we could elaborate on it in detail.

The first case study was carried out by university students in Indonesia focuses on teachers' knowledge and beliefs about online platforms (Hustarna, Mursid Saleh, Sri Wuli Fitriati, Zulfa Sakhiyyah, 2021). They covered three main questions which are (1) teachers' knowledge and beliefs on what online platforms they used, (2) their experience of using such platforms for teaching listening, and (3) problems they faced during online teaching.

1. Two university teachers participated in this research whose names were Ms. Ana and Mr. Jhon. When they were interviewed, it was concluded that both of them had no prior experience in online teaching. Ms. Ana claimed that she knew how to use Zoom, WhatsApp, YouTube links, and LMS, while Mr. Jhon said he knew only two applications, i.e. Zoom and WhatsApp and he was sure there were also other applications that he did not know how to conduct an online lesson. however, he only used the latter one to teach listening to his students. The reason for not using Zoom was that he thought it would take large internet data and be challenging for the students.

2. When they were interviewed, the result showed that not all beliefs were the same as reality. In other words, neither Ms. Ana nor Mr. Jhon used all the features of the above-mentioned platforms optimally. Although she used Zoom, WhatsApp, and LMS Schoology, she used their limited features like transferring the materials and discussing with students. She used WhatsApp just to communicate with her students before the Zoom session, and LMS was only used twice and its many features were not implemented at all. Mr. Jhon also used too limited options of WhatsApp, that is to say, he used it for communicating and sending teaching materials.

3. One of the problems Ms. Ana faced was lacking enough knowledge to operate Zoom to deliver video materials. She struggled to send materials, not because of Internet instability, but just because she was not aware of how to utilize the app properly. Another problem was linked to the duration of the Zoom meeting. She had used a licensed version of Zoom before she started to have a free limited version. She had to make another link to continue the meeting after forty minutes. Rather, she should have selected the recurring meeting option from the setting.

All in all, although there are numerous online platforms available to teach, people may not take all the advantages unless they are used effectively. ICT competence plays a crucial role in achieving success in online teaching. Moreover, teaching online is not an easy job as many teachers assume, according to Tschida et al (2016) stated that "teaching online is not as simple as transferring face-to-face courses to the Internet".

LISTENING

2.1. Listening is a skill.

Listening is one of the four language skills that need mastering. however, listening is not only about L2 or learning some new languages, it is one of the senses people have. The ability to hear is a natural process that develops in all normal infants. Additionally, people talk to each other, listen to each other, and process what they heard in their brains in everyday life. Thus, Jalolov et al (2015) described listening as a speech activity and stated that to decode the message sent by the speaker the listener has to use his linguistic knowledge, divide the stream of sounds into meaningful parts, and compare these items with the shared knowledge between them to get the meaning of the sentence.

Listening is, without a doubt, one of the most complex skills to master. Since a listener has to do multi-tasking; it is a double problem for them. They need to listen to the speech, process it, and comprehend the meaning at the same time. Furthermore, a listener will encounter different varieties of English, such as British English, American English, and Australian English. Learners should expose themselves to World such varieties well enough so that they can understand people across without problems.

Thanks to a faster internet connection, it upgraded teaching listening, enabling it to go smoother and more interactive. There are special sites for language learners within an ELT context where students can have access to various types of listening materials like podcasts, lectures, interviews, audiobooks, and more.

2.2. Teaching listening

According to Harmer (2007), there are 6 main principles in teaching listening. They are:

- The tape recorder is just as important as the tape;
- Preparation is vital;
- Once will not be enough;
- Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of listening, not just to the language;
- Different listening stages demand different listening tasks;
- Good teachers exploit listening text to the full.



When a teacher conducts a listening class, they can combine different ways like tapes and videos to make it more effective. Both tools have advantages and some drawbacks, that is why the teacher must prepare for the lesson pretty well to avoid foreseeable problems. In addition, there are two approaches to the listening process: bottom-up and top-down approaches. In the bottom-up approach, listeners build understanding by starting with the smallest units of the message: individual sounds and phonemes. Then, they go further to combine them into words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Finally, individual sentences are combined to create ideas, concepts, and relationships between them. The top-down method emphasizes the use of previous knowledge in processing text rather than relying upon individual sounds and words (Jalolov, Makhkamova, & Ashurov, 2015, pp. 146–159). To conclude, it is an individual's

preference to choose which approach, it does depend on the level of learners. To be more precise, if learners are beginners, they had better learn listening through the bottom-up approach, if they are advanced learners, the other one will be a better option. Along with it, a faster internet connection upgraded teaching listening, enabling it to go smoother and more interactive. There are special sites for language learners within an ELT context where students can have access to various types of listening materials like podcasts, lectures, interviews, audiobooks, and more.

All in all, there are a lot of online sources available for both learning and teaching listening as long as their all features are wisely operated. Having studied the available sources, I have decided to carry out a case study with English learners in a study center to determine the efficiency of online platforms in teaching listening.

METHODS

Having gained all the necessary theoretical background knowledge, we decided to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods for my course paper. As our topic is based on more concepts and thoughts rather than numbers, we just needed to express our experience and results in words. Besides, we preferred to conduct experimental research since we teach English ourselves. We taught listening to my general English group. In addition, we used inductive reasoning to develop the theory 'Usage of online platforms in teaching listening'

Specific observation  Pattern recognition  General conclusion

How we collected and analyzed the data

As we said, we conducted qualitative experimental research. We requested four colleagues (ESL teachers in the private education sector) to have interviews on the topic. Their names are Gulasal Kuzieva, Zulkhumor Sattarova, Nurullokh Kamalkhujaev, and Ilkhom Abdukarimov.

10 of my teenage students participated in an experimental group. They are Komil, Abdulaziz, Mirjamol, Guzal, Aziza, Mokhinur, Zulkhumor, Latofat, Odina, and Rano. They had been learning English since June and their level was intermediate (B1). They were not informed that research was being carried out in their group. They thought it was just for improving their listening skill.

Before 5 conducted online platform-aided lessons, students had lots of problems related to comprehension, main and supporting details in listening audios, and the main plot of tracks. However, when we used online platforms to illustrate and visualize certain situations, it greatly helped them to improve their listening. Some miscomprehended most parts of the pre-listening test. Some could not catch what was happening in the audio, while others lacked of vocabulary to grasp the meaning.

Online platforms we used

YouTube, British Council website - Listening B1, Elsa, English Listening Lesson Library Online (ELLLO). All websites and platforms are designed to teach English and particularly listening sub-skill. YouTube was used to display listening topic-related videos. Kurzgesagt, TED-Ed, Nas Daily, and other educational channels were used. Situational lesson listening audios have been taken from the B1 listening British Council website. Elsa was used as a supplementary to help students be able to differentiate homophones while listening and it boosted their speaking at the same time. ELLLO was used to access authentic listening materials (See Appendix A).

Why we chose these research methods

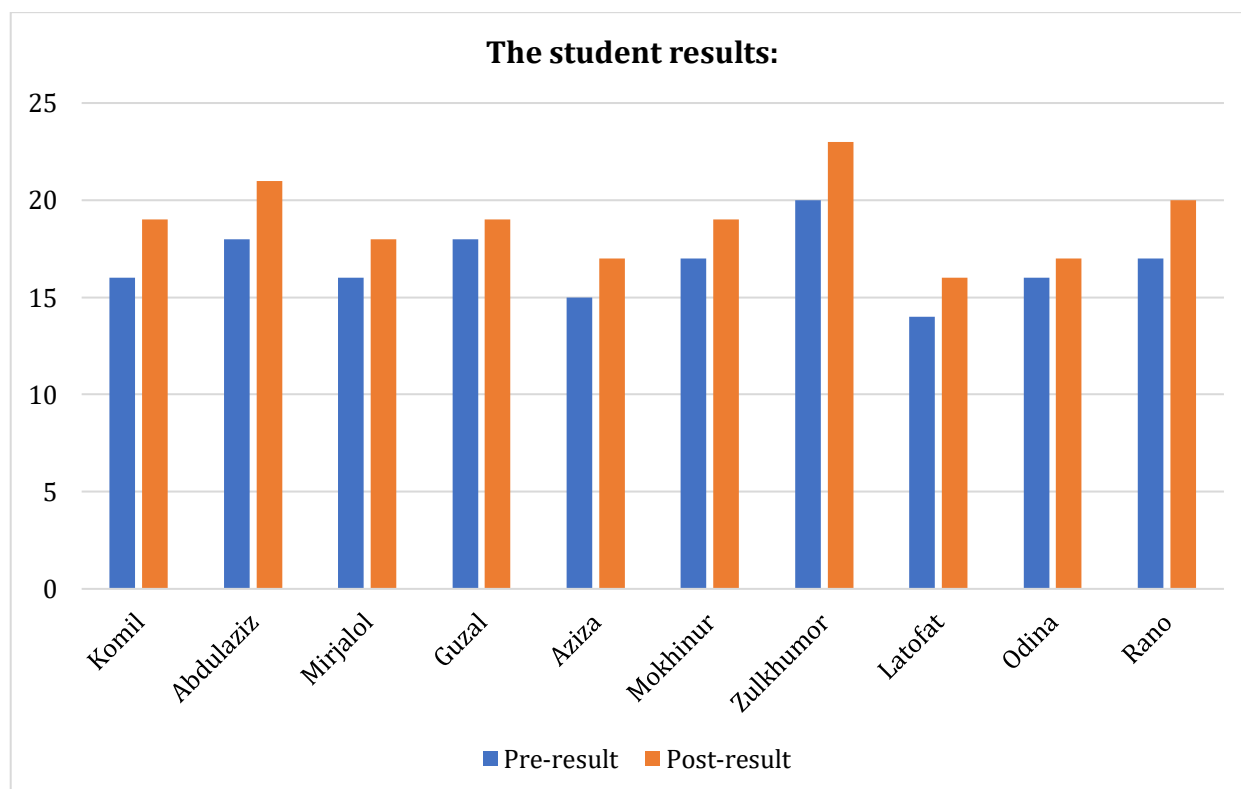
As our course paper topic is related to the concept of using online platforms to teach listening, qualitative method was the most appropriate one. Yet we combined it with a quantitative method to illustrate the students' results. Furthermore, we have always planned to conduct experimental research as it is a great way to visualize the core concept of the topic.

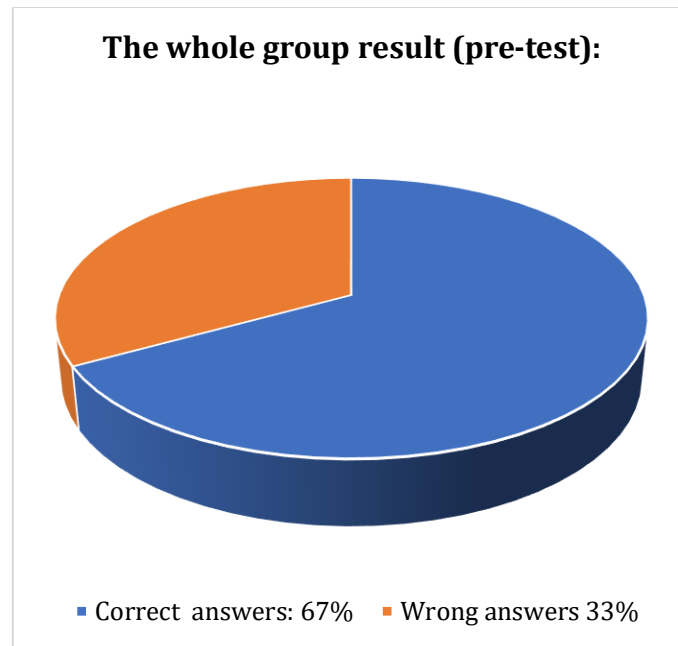
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

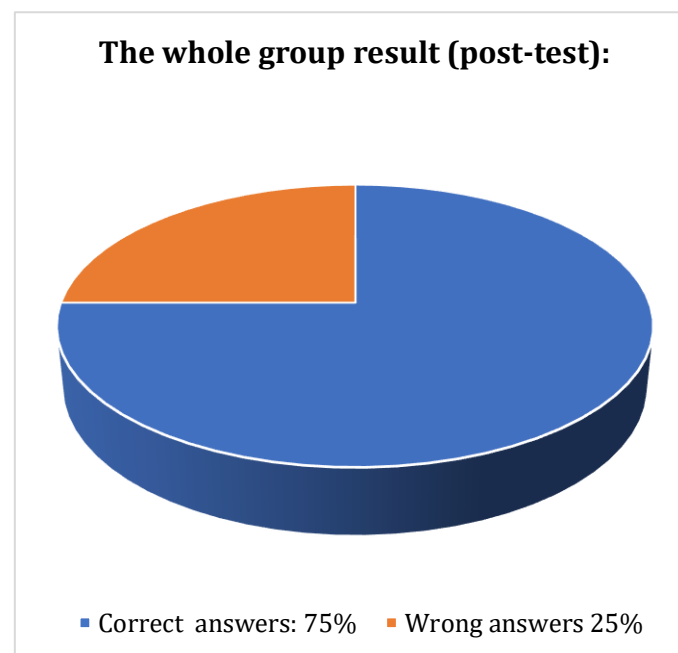
According to the results of interview with teachers, they supported implementing online platforms into the teaching process. As it can serve as a great tool to boost not only their students' listening comprehension, but also it helps to improve other skills at the same time. It shows that they prefer to use online platforms rather than traditional ways of teaching listening as it makes their lessons more interactive and interesting. Listen to Notes, Accent Rosie, Read Aloud, Teachvid, Udemy, Skillshare, and YouTube were mentioned as the most frequently used platforms by them. According to the debate with the students, it shows that they are welcome to learn listening using online platforms. Many benefits were counted as supporting details (they are given in the Discussion section).

When it comes to the performance of the students, the overall correct score is 67% (Graph 1) on the pre-listening test, and, then, the post-listening result shows 8% growth (Graph 2). It shows that using online platforms wisely in the lessons helped them develop their listening aspect.





Graph 1.



Graph 2.

DISCUSSION

As we said above, we carried interviews with some English teachers to find out their attitude towards teaching listening. The summary of the interviews with the teachers is given below. It included some key questions (The full transcripts of them are given in Appendix B):

1) How do you find teaching listening?

It shows that most of the teachers find teaching listening easier than other aspects, yet two teachers think it is more challenging as it requires special attention.

2) Would you prefer to use online platforms to teach listening?

Almost all teachers prefer to utilize online applications to conduct a listening lesson. Online platforms are considered interactive and engaging in education, thus they make English lessons even more effective. One of the teachers said that he prefers to use his own online materials.

3) Types of online platforms to use while teaching.

According to the interview result, it shows that Youtube, Listen Notes, Accent Rosie, Read Aloud, TeachVid, Udemy, and Skillshare are mentioned as mostly used online platforms in ESL classes.

4) Their attitude and competence in teaching online.

The interviewees are all positive about using online platforms and they mentioned the same platforms they use to teach listening. Although, some of them admitted that they have never implemented available sources into their teaching, they are ready to learn how to use such platforms.

To sum up the points given by the teachers, online platforms are so effective because they make lessons more interactive. Using online platforms such as Teachvid and Skillshare are highly advisable to implement into ESL classroom so as to foster learning process.

Along with the interview, the debate on the topic of the benefits and drawbacks of using online platforms to learn listening was carried out.

The arguments for the advantageous side made by them:

- it helps to fasten the learning process;
- it gives fun;
- it makes learning more interesting;
- it is more interactive;
- it helps to remember things faster and better.

The arguments for the disadvantageous side:

- the Internet may be problematic;
- disconnection;
- lack of mobile data;
- it might take more time.

At the end of the debate, we concluded that the merits of using online platforms to learn a language outweigh its drawbacks. Since almost all the students supported the idea of utilizing online platforms to improve listening. If they are used appropriately, both teachers and students can get many benefits.

Although the study has shown a positive impact of online platforms on teaching listening, it included a limited scope. This is to say, it may not provide exact statistics or the beliefs that include the whole listening teaching. To further the findings in the future, another research can be carried out among the broader scope. We are planning to use this course paper as a groundwork in my further education.

CONCLUSIONS

Listening is one of the language skills which requires special attention and dedication from learners. To foster the process, they should expose themselves to the English atmosphere. Both educational and authentic materials should be used in an integrated way. Along with it, learners are encouraged to have different modes of learning: intensive and extensive. As technology has become an indispensable part of our

lives, it has some improvements in education. More and more online platforms are being used to teach languages, particularly, English.

So, we have also experimented to determine the efficiency of online platforms in teaching English. Its findings showed that using online platforms, like ELSA and ELLLO, had a significant positive impact on the listening comprehension skill. Such platforms improved students' results since they created an interactive and effective learning atmosphere. Besides, as we claimed many times in this article, listening should have to be taught integrated with other skills, not separately. The selected students for the experiment were taught listening and speaking simultaneously.

EFL teachers are advised to utilize learning platforms as language-learning means in and outside the classroom. In other words, students should be exposed to the English atmosphere not only in the English lesson but also outside it, enabling them to boost their listening sooner. That is to say, the more students are exposed to the English atmosphere, the better their listening comprehension becomes.

Using online platforms only fosters this process as long as they are used appropriately and all their functions are used. To achieve this, teachers must show adequate competence in using technology and they should be open to new changes in education. Further research is planned to perform similar experiments to explore the efficiency of English learning platforms in teaching the rest of language skills.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Used materials

British Council B1 listening:

- 1) A phone call from a customer-
<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/sites/podcasts/files/LearnEnglish-Listening-B1-A-phone-call-from-a-customer.pdf>;
- 2) A student discussion-
<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/sites/podcasts/files/LearnEnglish-Listening-B1-A-studentdiscussion.pdf>;
- 3) A team meeting about diversity-

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/sites/podcasts/files/LearnEnglish-Listening-B1-A-team-meeting-about-diversity.pdf>;

4) An interview about listening skills-

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/sites/podcasts/files/LearnEnglish-Listening-B1-An-interview-about-listening-skills.pdf>;

YouTube videos:

1) Too few friends- https://youtu.be/I9hJ_Rux9y0;

2) Change your life- https://youtu.be/75d_29QWELk;

3) Immune system- <https://youtu.be/IXfEK8G8CUI>;

4) How puberty changes your brain- <https://youtu.be/deNGkzUlhZU>;

5) How love changes your brain- <https://youtu.be/fOPjYQovAE>.

Appendix B. The transcripts of the interviews with ESL teachers:

Gulasal Kuzieva (an EFL teacher, with 5 years of teaching experience):

1. Teaching listening is somehow challenging. The only way is to explain the importance of practice and consistency I guess.

2. Why not? If students are capable of understanding what they are doing, the only thing that is left to you is explaining what to focus on and finding appropriate platforms.

3. There are a lot of them: Listen Notes, Accent Rosie, Read aloud, TeachVid and etc.

4. I am neutral with it. Sometimes in my offline classes, I use materials of online platform. And they are really interesting.

Zulkhumor Sattarova (an EFL teacher, with 4 years of teaching experience):

1. Teaching listening requires attention and concentration. Teachers should be aware of how students understand the context and make decisions based on what they have listened to. Listening tracks shouldn't have to be long and boring. It's important to choose interesting and theme related topics so that students can enjoy listening. Moreover, teachers have to explain every answer as well as prove them.

2. Yes, definitely. Online platforms such as Teachvid, read aloud and synth are just wonderful tools to help students develop their listening skills. In addition, they can make lessons even more interactive and engage students to speak listen and share ideas with their peers.

3. Teachvid, Udemy, Skillshare and more.

4. The timetable is the primary benefit of online instruction. It won't conflict with your work or social schedule, and you may decide when you're available to teach. The lack of time is frequently one of the obstacles to earning more money on the side.

This barrier is virtually eliminated when teaching online. There are students all over the world who are looking for online English as a Second Language (ESL) and subject teachers, and you're likely to find students with schedules that match up to yours at varying grade levels including high school.

Nurullokh Kamalkhujaev (an IELTS instructor, with 4 years of teaching experience):

1. I find teaching listening easier and more enjoyable.

2. I'd like to teach listening using my own materials, and I have never tried online platforms for listening.

3. I do not know, or I can't remember at the moment.

4. I am positive about making video lessons and sharing them with students. But I don't like live online lessons.

Ilkhom Abdukarimov (an EFL teacher, with 3 years of teaching experience):

1. It is easier than any other skill and very fun.

2. I use YouTube especially when I am dealing with vocabulary, it is a great way to play some native usage of the useful chunks, I believe.

3. YouTube for sure.

4. I don't care, I record whenever I have an online lesson, and I share it with students.