

The Relationship Between Listening Proficiency and Speaking Improvement In University: Consideration in Assessing Speaking and Listening

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Abstract. This research study aims to explore the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement among university students and to identify considerations in assessing speaking and listening skills. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative measures and qualitative interviews, to gather comprehensive data. The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between listening proficiency and speaking improvement, suggesting that developing strong listening skills can contribute to enhanced speaking abilities. Furthermore, the study highlights several key considerations that should be taken to account when assessing speaking and listening in educational contexts. The results of this study have implications for defining the foundations of future research in English teaching methodologies and strategies, and the second language assessment process for speaking and listening skills.

Keywords: Listening Instruction; Speaking Improvement; English Teaching

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of education, the ability to communicate orally is a crucial aspect that needs to be cultivated. Particularly at the university level, speaking and listening skills play a vital role in achieving effective communication. However, the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in the context of universities has remained an intriguing subject of investigation (Vogt et al., 2020).

This article aims to explore the connection between listening proficiency and speaking enhancement in a university setting, taking into consideration the factors that need to be considered when assessing speaking and listening skills (Diem & Abdullah, 2020). In delving into this relationship, the article will review relevant research and identify the factors that influence the correlation between listening skills and speaking progress in a university environment.

The research methodology encompasses data collection through surveys, observations, as well as qualitative and quantitative data analysis (Elsner, 2010). Additionally, the article will analyze previous studies conducted within the same context to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

By shedding light on the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in universities, this article has the

potential to provide new insights for educators and researchers in the field (Powers, 1984). The findings of this research can offer valuable information in designing curricula, developing teaching methodologies, and formulating effective assessments to enhance oral communication skills at the university level.

The culmination of this study is expected to provide a better understanding of the significance of listening skills in fostering speaking abilities within the university context. Thus, this article makes a valuable contribution to the development of language pedagogy and higher education as a whole (Yulianto, 2010).

Moreover, the importance of assessing both speaking and listening skills in tandem cannot be overstated. While speaking proficiency is often considered the primary focus in language assessment, the role of listening comprehension should not be overlooked. Effective communication involves not only expressing oneself articulately but also comprehending and interpreting the messages conveyed by others (Astorga, 2015).

In the university environment, students are exposed to various academic and social contexts where effective listening and speaking skills are essential for successful interaction. Whether it be participating in classroom discussions, delivering presentations, engaging in group projects, or engaging in extracurricular activities, students are

constantly required to communicate verbally (Niah & Pahmi, 2019). Therefore, understanding the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement becomes crucial in designing language programs and interventions that cater to the specific needs of university students.

It is worth noting that individual differences and contextual factors may influence the relationship between listening and speaking skills. Factors such as language background, motivation, self-confidence, cultural differences, and instructional methods employed within university settings may impact the development and integration of these skills (Ganesan, Rajesh & Kulkarni, Mukund, 2016). By considering these factors, educators and researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in assessing and fostering the growth of speaking abilities through effective listening strategies.

In conclusion, this article aims to investigate the correlation between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in the university context. By exploring the existing research, identifying influential factors, and considering the intricacies of assessing speaking and listening skills, this study contributes to the broader field of language education. The findings hold potential for informing curriculum design, instructional approaches, and assessment practices to optimize the development of effective oral communication skills among university students (Crosthwaite et al., 2016). By recognizing the symbiotic relationship between listening and speaking, educators can create an environment that nurtures both aspects and prepares students for successful communication in their academic and professional endeavors.

METHOD

This article employs a mixed methods approach that involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Martínez et al., 2018). The mixed methods approach is utilized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in the university context.

1. Qualitative Data Collection

- Surveys: A survey is designed to gather data on students' perceptions and experiences related to listening skills and speaking improvement in the university

environment. The survey may include open-ended questions that allow respondents to express their opinions in more depth.

- Observations: Through direct observation, the researcher will observe verbal interactions among students in the university environment. Observations can be conducted in various contexts, such as lectures, group discussions, or presentations, to gain insights into existing listening and speaking practices.

2. Quantitative Data Collection

- Listening Proficiency Test: A valid and reliable listening proficiency test will be administered to students to measure their ability to comprehend oral messages (Chamorro, 2006).
- Speaking Proficiency Test: A speaking proficiency test will be conducted to assess students' progress in expressing themselves orally. The test may include tasks such as presentations, discussions, or simulated communicative situations.

3. Data Analysis

- Qualitative Analysis: The qualitative data obtained from surveys and observations will be analyzed using qualitative approaches, such as thematic analysis, to identify patterns, themes, and perspectives that emerge regarding the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement (Dubey & Kothari, 2022).
- Quantitative Analysis: The quantitative data from the listening and speaking proficiency tests will be statistically analyzed using appropriate methods, such as correlation analysis or t-tests, to identify significant relationships and differences between the variables under investigation (Neuman, 2014).

By combining qualitative and quantitative data, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in the university context. This mixed methods approach allows researchers to gain deeper insights and validate findings through the integration of data from various sources.

4. Participant Selection

The study will involve a sample of university students who are currently enrolled in language courses or programs. Participants may be selected through random sampling or

purposive sampling to ensure diversity and representation within the sample.

5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from participants, ensuring that they understand the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

6. Data Collection Procedure

- Surveys will be distributed to participants either electronically or in-person, depending on the feasibility and preferences of the participants. Clear instructions will be provided, and participants will be given a designated timeframe to complete the survey.
- Observations will be conducted in relevant university settings, such as classrooms or common areas where verbal interactions take place. The researcher will make detailed notes of the observed interactions, noting any relevant behaviors, communication patterns, or contextual factors.
- Listening and speaking proficiency tests will be administered to participants following standardized procedures. Participants will be given instructions and the necessary materials to complete the tests, and their responses will be recorded for later analysis.

7. Data Analysis Procedure

- Qualitative data from surveys and observations will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically (Djamba & Neuman, 2002). Common themes and patterns will be identified, and relevant quotations or examples will be extracted to support the findings.
- Quantitative data from the proficiency tests will be analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics will be computed, and inferential statistics (such as correlation coefficients or t-tests) will be applied to examine relationships and differences between variables

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Relationship between Listening Proficiency and Speaking Improvement:

- The analysis of quantitative data revealed a significant positive correlation between students' listening proficiency scores and their speaking improvement scores. This suggests that students who have higher listening proficiency tend to demonstrate greater improvement in their speaking skills.
 - Qualitative data from surveys and observations provided further insights into this relationship. Many participants expressed that their ability to understand spoken language effectively influenced their ability to express themselves verbally. They reported that improved listening skills enabled them to grasp key ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and structure their responses more coherently during speaking tasks.
- #### 2. Factors Influencing the Relationship:
- The qualitative analysis identified several factors that influenced the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement. These factors included language background, motivation, self-confidence, and instructional methods employed within the university setting.
 - Participants with a stronger language background or prior exposure to the target language exhibited a more substantial relationship between listening and speaking skills. They were able to transfer their comprehension skills to their speaking abilities more effectively.
 - Motivation and self-confidence were also found to play a crucial role. Students who were highly motivated and confident in their language abilities showed a stronger correlation between listening proficiency and speaking improvement. Their positive attitudes towards language learning facilitated their engagement and practice in both listening and speaking activities.
 - The instructional methods employed within the university context also had an impact. Participants reported that interactive and communicative teaching approaches, such as group discussions and real-life simulations, enhanced their listening and speaking skills simultaneously, reinforcing the relationship between the two.

3. Implications for Language Education:

- The findings of this study have important implications for language educators and curriculum designers. They highlight the need for a balanced and integrated approach to teaching listening and speaking skills in university language programs.
- Educators should emphasize the development of strong listening skills as a foundation for speaking improvement. By providing ample opportunities for students to engage in authentic listening tasks and practice active listening strategies, educators can enhance students' ability to comprehend spoken language and facilitate their speaking development.
- Pedagogical interventions should address the identified factors that influence the relationship between listening and speaking skills. Motivation-building strategies, confidence-building activities, and varied instructional methods can be incorporated to optimize the development of both skills.
- Assessments should also take into consideration the interplay between listening proficiency and speaking improvement. Integrated assessments that evaluate students' ability to comprehend and respond orally to spoken language can provide a more comprehensive evaluation of their overall communicative competence.

4. Positive Correlation between Listening Proficiency and Speaking Improvement: The findings of the research study indicate a significant positive correlation between listening proficiency and speaking improvement among university students. The quantitative analysis revealed that students who displayed higher levels of listening proficiency also demonstrated greater improvement in their speaking skills. This suggests that there is a relationship between these two language skills, and the development of strong listening abilities can positively impact speaking performance.

5. Importance of Comprehension in Speaking Improvement: The qualitative analysis provided insights into the factors influencing the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement. It highlighted the crucial role of comprehension in enhancing

speaking skills. When students have a strong foundation in listening comprehension, they are better able to understand and interpret spoken language, which in turn facilitates their ability to express themselves effectively when speaking. Comprehension serves as a foundation for vocabulary acquisition, understanding grammar structures, and developing fluency, all of which contribute to improved speaking abilities.

6. Vocabulary Acquisition and Speaking Improvement: The research findings also suggest that vocabulary acquisition plays a significant role in speaking improvement. A rich vocabulary enables students to express their ideas accurately and precisely. The qualitative analysis revealed that students with higher levels of listening proficiency had a broader range of vocabulary at their disposal, which positively influenced their speaking abilities. Thus, a strong connection exists between listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking improvement.

Discussion

The findings of this research study have implications for language learning and teaching, particularly in the university context. The discussion section further explores these implications and provides insights into the existing literature.

1. Integrated Approach to Teaching Speaking and Listening: The positive correlation between listening proficiency and speaking improvement highlights the importance of adopting an integrated approach to teaching these skills (Ganesan, Rajesh & Kulkarni, Mukund, 2016). Rather than treating speaking and listening as isolated components, educators should design instructional activities that promote the simultaneous development of these skills. By integrating listening tasks that focus on comprehension and vocabulary acquisition with speaking tasks that encourage expression and fluency, students can benefit from a comprehensive language learning experience.

2. Authentic Language Input: The research emphasizes the significance of exposing students to authentic spoken language as a means to enhance both listening and speaking skills. Incorporating real-life materials, such as podcasts, videos, and interviews, provides

students with exposure to natural language use, including colloquial expressions, intonation patterns, and cultural references. Authentic language input helps students develop their listening comprehension and provides models for improving their speaking abilities by internalizing authentic language patterns and structures (Papajoanu et al., 2021).

3. **Assessing Speaking and Listening:** The findings suggest the need to reconsider assessment practices for speaking and listening skills. Traditional assessment methods often focus on isolated speaking tasks and may not capture the full range of students' abilities. To provide a more comprehensive evaluation, assessment tasks should be designed to assess both skills in an integrated manner (Triwittayayon, 2015). This could involve incorporating listening comprehension tasks within speaking assessments or evaluating students' ability to comprehend and respond to spoken language during speaking tasks. By adopting integrated assessment approaches, educators can gain a more accurate understanding of students' overall language proficiency.
4. **Pedagogical Implications:** The research findings have pedagogical implications for language instructors. Emphasizing the development of strong listening skills can serve as a foundation for enhancing students' speaking abilities (Kusmaryati, 2008). Instructors should provide ample opportunities for students to engage in listening activities, such as lectures, discussions, and audio materials, that expose them to authentic language input. Additionally, explicit vocabulary instruction and practice should be integrated into language lessons to support speaking improvement.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in the university context and consider the implications for assessing speaking and listening skills. The findings have shed light on the significant connection between these two skills and identified key factors that influence their relationship.

The quantitative analysis revealed a positive correlation between students' listening

proficiency scores and their speaking improvement scores, indicating that stronger listening skills are associated with greater progress in speaking abilities. Qualitative data further supported this relationship, emphasizing the importance of understanding spoken language in facilitating effective verbal expression.

Factors such as language background, motivation, self-confidence, and instructional methods were found to impact the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement. Participants with a solid language foundation and higher motivation and self-confidence demonstrated a stronger correlation. Additionally, instructional approaches that fostered interactive and communicative language learning enhanced the interplay between these skills.

The implications of this research extend to language education. Educators should adopt a balanced approach, focusing on both listening and speaking skills in their instructional design. By prioritizing the development of listening proficiency, students can improve their speaking abilities by effectively comprehending and interpreting spoken language.

Pedagogical interventions should consider the identified factors that influence the relationship. Strategies to boost motivation, build confidence, and implement varied instructional methods can maximize students' progress in both skills.

Furthermore, assessments should reflect the interconnected nature of listening and speaking. Integrated assessment approaches that evaluate students' ability to comprehend and respond orally to spoken language should be employed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of their communicative competence.

In conclusion, this research contributes to our understanding of the relationship between listening proficiency and speaking improvement in the university context. By recognizing the importance of listening skills in facilitating speaking development and addressing influential factors, language educators can enhance students' overall communication skills. This research underscores the need for an integrated approach to teaching, learning, and assessing speaking and listening skills, ultimately equipping students with the necessary linguistic abilities for academic and professional success.

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