Utilizing a Project Based Learning Strategy to Improve Listening Comprehension Skills among Students of Specific Education

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Abstract:

The current study aimed at improving EFL listening comprehension skills of 3rd year class teacher students at Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University using a project based learning strategy. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. The 30 participants of the study were 3rd year class teacher students enrolled in the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University of the academic year 2024/2025. A listening comprehension test was designed to be the instrument of the study. The test was pre-and post-administered to the study group. It was found that the results of the post-test out performed those of the pre-test for the same study group. Results of the study assured that the project based learning strategy has a positive effect on improving EFL listing comprehension skills for the group study.

Key words: EFL listening comprehension, project-based learning strategy, Egypt.

استخدام إستراتيجية التعلم القائم على المشروع لتنمية مهارات الفهم الإستماعي لدي طلاب كلية التربية النوعية

مستخلص البحث:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تطوير مهارات الفهم الإستماعي للغة الأنجليزية لطلاب الفرقة الثالثة معلم فصل بكلية التربية النوعية ، جامعة الزقازيق بإستخدام إستراتيجية التعلم القائم على المشروع وقد إستخدمت الباحثة المنهج شبه التجريبي المعتمد على التصميم القبلي و البعدي،وقد إشتملت عينة الدراسة على ٣٠ طالبا من طلاب الفرقة الثالثة بكلية التربية النوعية، جامعة الزقازيق في العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٣/٢٠٢٤ ، وقد تم تصميم إختبار الفهم الإستماعي للغة الأنجليزية ليكون أداة الدراسة، وتم إجراء الأختبار القبلي والبعدي لعينة الدراسة ، وقد فاقت نتائج الأختبار البعدي عن الأختبار القبلي لعينة الدراسة لنفس الأختبار وقد أكدت نتائج الدراسة أن إستراتيجية التعلم القائم على المشروع لها تأثير إيجابي على تحسين مهارات الفهم الإستماعي للغة الأنجليزية لدى الطلاب المشاركين بالدراسة.

الكلمـات المفتاحيـة: الفهم الإستماعي للغـة الإنجليزيـة، إسـتراتيجية الـتعلم القائم على المشـروع، طلاب الفرقة الثالثة بكلية التربية النوعية، جامعة الزقازيق.

1. Introduction:

Listening comprehension plays an important role in daily communication and in the educational process too. Listening comprehension is an essential language skill that is naturally developed prior to speaking skill and that affects the development of both reading and writing skills. In order to be good in using a language, EFL learners should successfully perform these skills. Thus, listening comprehension should be developed.

Listening comprehension skills have not been given much importance like other aspects of communication skills, but it is true that listening skills play a major role in the success of one's communication skills. Only a good listener can be a good speaker. A baby starts speaking only by listening to the words spoken by his family members. So a child first learns to speak his mother tongue and then other languages like English, Spanish, and French (Haris, 2010).

Oxford (1990) stated that in spite of the importance listening comprehension in the development of the communications skills, it did not take its place in language teaching curriculum for long years. In recent years, listening started to take its long deserved place in language program besides speaking, reading and writing.

- Importance of Listening Comprehension

Listening skill is essential in foreign language learning because the key to learn a language is to receive language input. Acquisition takes place when learners have sufficient comprehensible input. Hassan (2000) and Hamouda (2013) stated that listening comprehension provides the appropriate situations for the acquisition and expansion of other language skills. Listening comprehension skills provide means of interaction for learners, expand and their vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Rost, 2001). The importance of listening comprehension is that it helps listeners to understand the world around them.

- Types of Listening Comprehension.

Listening is considered as an active process in a accepting and cultivating the sounds in particular languages in the purpose of understanding the information conveyed by speakers. According to Nunan (2002) there are six types of listening which must be given more attention namely Intensive Listening, Selective Listening, Interactive Listening, Extensive Listening, Responsive Listening and Autonomous Listening.

- Strategies of Listening Comprehension

Listening is a receptive skill that plays a crucial role in learning English because it is language modality used in direct conversation (Hanifa, 2014). Listening strategies are techniques or activities that

contribute directly to the comprehension of listening input. The strategies in learning, including listening skills, are generally divided into three main categories: Cognitive, Metacognitive, and socio Affective (Nurhidayati et al, 2020).

The three strategies above are indirect in that they focus on students so that the teacher only become a facilitator and students can decide and have the opportunity to be more involved in learning. According to Glogger et al. (2012), students who use a variety of strategies are more successful than students who use only one strategy. Using several strategies greatly influences learning outcomes.

- Skills of Listening Comprehension:

Listening comprehension involves a combination of many different skills that everyone needs to understand to succeed in language learning. Many researchers have indicated that listeners need to employ a number of specialized skills while listening. Their success at understanding the content of what they hear depends on their expertise in these skills.

Richards (1985), provides two lists of listening skills. Conversational and Academic listening skills. Concerning conversational listening skills, they involve the ability to:

- Discriminate distinctive sounds of the target language.
- Recognize stress patterns of words.
- Recognize functions of stress and intonation
- Recognize reduced forms of words.
- Guess the meaning of words from the contexts in which they occur.
- Detect meaning of Words from the contexts in which they occur
- Distinguish between literal and implied meanings of sentences.
- Recognize the communicative functions of utterances.
- Use real world knowledge and experience to work out purposes and procedures.
- Predict outcomes from events described.

According to Richards, Academic listening skills include the ability to:

- Identify purpose and scope of lecture.
- Recognize key lexical items related to subject.
- Recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
- Detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter.
- Follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, and audio visual.
- Recognize instructional learner tasks (e.g. warnings, suggestions, recommendations, and advice instructions).

- **Micro skills relevant to academic listening include the following:**

- Ability to deduce meanings of words from context.
- Ability to recognize function of intonation to signal Information structure (e.g. pitches, volume, and key).

- Ability to infer relationships (e.g. cause, effect, conclusion).
- Ability to identify role of discourse markers in signaling structure of a lecture (e.g. conjunctions, and adverbs).
- Ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g. major ideas, generalizations, hypotheses, supporting ideas and example).

- Challenges of Listening Comprehension.

According to Azmi et al. (2014), there are a lot of difficulties that learners may encounter in the listening comprehension processes. The purpose is to be aware of these problems and try to solve them. Some of these problems are:

1- Quality of Recorded Materials
2- Cultural Differences
3- Accent
4- Unfamiliar Vocabulary
5- Length and Speed of Listening

- The Related Studies:

Abd El-Aty (2023) conducted a study aimed to develop EFL listening comprehension skills via using Google Classroom. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. Participants of the study were sixty first year secondary school students. Instrument of the study was an EFL listening comprehension test. Findings of the study showed that the treatment group students outperformed the non-treatment ones in the EFL listening comprehension test. Accordingly, it was concluded that the Google Classroom platform had a positive effect on EFL listening comprehension skills of the secondary stage students.

Abd-El Aziz (2023) conducted a study aimed to investigate the effect of A competency Approach based Program on developing learners' EFL listening comprehension performance at Misr International University. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. The participants were 40 College students enrolled at Misr International University. Instrument of the study was a listening comprehension test. Results revealed that the treatment group students outperformed the non-treatment ones in the EFL listening comprehension test. Accordingly, it was concluded that A Competency Approach based Program had a positive effect in developing EFL listening comprehension skills. It was also recommended that teachers should apply a Competency Approach based Program to develop learners' EFL listening comprehension performance.

Tran et al (2020) conducted a study entitled Insights into listening comprehension problems. A Case Study in Vietnam. The study aimed to determine the English listening comprehension problems of Vietnamese high School students participants were 368 eleventh grade students. The study adopted mixed-method approach the collected quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content

analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the English listening comprehension problems were due to perception, parsing, and utilization. In particular, students encountered Phonological and lexical problems (i.e high speech rates and challenging vocabulary, semantic and Syntactic Problems (i.e. Long utterances), and discoursal problems (i.e implied meanings, unfamiliar topics and organization of ideas).

El- Naggar (2019) conducted a study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the brain-based learning program suggested by the researcher in enhancing EFL secondary school students' listening comprehension, speaking skills and decreasing their anxiety. Participants were 30 secondary school students. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. Instruments of the study were first; listening and speaking skills tests, second; the listening and speaking anxiety scales to compare the degree of students' listening and speaking and anxiety before and after the instruction of the suggested program. The findings of the study showed that the proposed brain based learning program had a positive effect on developing students' listening and speaking skills and decreasing their anxiety.

2- **Project Based Learning (PBL)**

Project is defined as a complex task that is based on challenges facing students; it has been completed, within set period of time. A project is derived from realistic problems facing students and it might be in the form of presentation, exhibition, publication, etc.

- **Nature of Project Based Learning (PBL) :**

Schneider (2002) defines PBL as Learning which involves knowledge and action, where students are taught concepts and parts of the curriculum. Moreover, BL can help students use their knowledge to tackle real- world problems and challenges. Helm and Katz (2011) ensure that utilizing PBL with students creates more chances for knowledge acquisition, skills, and dispositions. It helps students in asking questions, carrying out research, and making wise decisions regarding their course of studying.

- **Stages of project based- learning (PBL)**

AL-taban and NaJi (2020) identified four sequential and interrelated stages that PBL strategy goes through**:-**

1- **Choosing the project:** in this stage the project is being chosen depending on learner's desires, their levels, abilities, experiences, and capabilities.

2- **Planning the Project:** Students feel ownership of the project when they have an active role in deciding activities to be implemented know what materials and resources to be accessible to students. Student has to design a timeline for the project that guide. Then when they appear to be going in a direction that has no connection to the project.

3- **Implementing the Project:** project implementation is the process of putting a project plan into action to produce the products or services. In this process, students work collaboratively and choose their primary rules.

4- **Evaluating the Project:** This stage is continuous from the beginning of the project to its end, it refers to the importance of grading students by using a variety of assessment methods, Evidence of progress needs to be regularly monitored and recorded.

- The role of teacher and student in project based- learning (PBL)

Throughout PBL, the teacher works as a guide, motivator, facilitator, model, ideas generator, feedback provider, and resource of information. He solves problems encountered by students, as he supervises the students' projects. Abu Al Nasr and Zaki (2018) emphasize that teacher has the ability to analyze the needs of students and evaluates student's, performance to be certain that students have access to information required for success.

The researcher argues that the teacher in PBI has a different role from that in the regular method. Throughout PBI the teacher organizes the activities and tasks for learners and monitors how they interact with each other in order to carry out the task. Finally, students evaluate their final projects and the way they project them.

- Characteristics of project based- learning (PBL).

Faris (2018) stated that in order to assign students specific activity within the PBI strategy, the activity must include the following characteristics:

1. Defining a problem or topic in which the student feels excited and challenged.

2. Providing necessary skills for students to enable them to succeed in the task.

3. Focusing on self-management skills and urging students to study critical thinking skills that help them reach important outcomes for their learning.

4. Making decisions where students should be able to make independent decisions at all stages of the project.

Project based learning is also characterized by its ability to train and qualify students to develop their different skills in thinking, problem solving, and self-learning (Al-Taban 8 Naji, 2020).

- Advantages of PBL:

Project - Based Learning has many advantages for both teachers and students.

Many academic researchers support the use of PBI in schools to. Engage students in the learning process, boost their co-operative learning skills, and improve their academic performance. Abut Nast and Zaki (2018) state the following advantages of PBL:-

1. Improving their awareness about the rules of healthy competition.
2. Encouraging the individualization of Learning.
3. Taking into account the individual differences among students.
4. Increasing students' self-confidence, developing their Love of work, and encouraging them to be innovative and creative.

Bani Fawaz (2018) provides a set of advantages that characterize PBL as teaching strategy:

1. It allows the formation of social relations among students through raising the spirit of co-operation and increasing their intimacy.
2. It requires critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration which are considered the 21st Century Skills.
3. It requires validating knowledge and creating. Something new.
4. It includes feedback evaluation, verification, and many challenging tasks.

- Project - based learning and listening comprehension skills

Different types of language skills, such as Listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are used in daily life communication. These skills are called the four main language skills. When People learn their native language, they usually learn to listen first, then to speak, read, and finally write. Thus, listening comprehension should be developed.

Thus, EFL teachers should be aware of the innovative strategies, such as project-Based learning, that could help them improve their students listening comprehension skills. Project-based learning is an instructional strategy that is student-centered, so the teacher becomes a coach that encourages students for collaboration. Since PBL is motivating, empowering, and challenging to language learners, it usually results in building learner's confidence, self-esteem, and improving students, language skills.

Some Scholars have suggested the use of PB1 to develop the English language skills of learners and to alleviate the issue of lack of listening skills among students. Jung et al. (2001) highlights the importance of applying PBL strategy to develop LCS as the integration of language skills is a common practice in PBL. He discovered that the nature of PBL which is collaborative, autonomous, and flexible matches the Fundamentals of Learning Listening Comprehension skills.

- Studies related to project based learning

It has been widely agreed that integrating PBL into the EFL classes provides many benefits. El-Agha (2022) conducted a study aimed to identify the effectiveness of the Project-based learning strategy in developing the speaking skill of the ninth grade students. The researcher used the quasi-experimental method. Participants were 89 students. The researcher designed the research tool represented in a rubric for speaking skills. The results showed that project-based learning has an effective

impact on developing speaking sub skills of 9th graders. i t also showed that project based learning helps develop other English Language skills.

Rozal et al (2021) conducted a study aimed to analyze the effect of project-based Learning with you tube presentations as a final project on the Cognitive domain online learning outcomes in English for physics subjects. The study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method. The design of the study was post-test with a non-equalivodent design. Participants were 32 fourth semester students. Instrument was test.The results showed that the treatment group outperformed non-treatment. Ones in learning achievement; thus PBL has a significant effect on the cognitive domain.

Migdad, et al. (2019) conducted a study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of a web 2.0. Enhanced project-based learning instructional program on Jordanian EFL eleventh-grade students. The participants of the study were forty-three female students. The study used a quasi-experimental design. The researcher used a pre/posttest. The results of the study showed that the proposed instructional program was effective in improving speaking fluency and accuracy of grammar and Vocabulary.

2. Problem of the Study

The problem of the current study could be stated in the poor performance of some listening comprehension skills of 3rd year class teacher students enrolled in the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University.

This problem was proved by studies conducted by the researcher. Some of these studies are conducted at local level, such as the study of (Abd-El-Aty (2023), Abd-El Aziz (2023), Al -Naggar (2019), Khalil (2017), and the study of Helal (2016). Furthermore, there are studies conducted at international level such as the study of Tran et al. (2020) Duong et al. (2016), and the study of Yeldham et al (2016).

3. Purpose of the Study

The current study aims at improving some EFL listening comprehension skills of 3rd year class teacher students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University using a project-Based learning.

4. Questions of the Study

The present study attempts to answer the following main question:

What is the effect of utilizing a project-based learning strategy to improve listening comprehension skills among students of Specific Education?

This main question could be sub-divided into the following questions:

1- What are the EFL listening comprehension skills suitable for 3rd year class teacher students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University?

- To answer this question, the researcher prepares a listening comprehension questionnaire and submitted it to the Jury members to assess its validity.

2- To what extent class teacher students have successfully performed these skills?

- To answer this question, the researcher pre-administered listening comprehension test to the study group in order to identify their pre-academic level.

3- How could project based learning strategy be used to enhance the listening comprehension test of 3rd year class teacher students?

- To answer this question, the researcher post-administered the listening comprehension test to study group to identify their post-academic level.

4- Is project-based learning strategy effective in improving 3rd year class teacher students listening comprehension skills?

- To answer this question, the researcher conducted the treatment sessions utilizing projects-based learning to improve the study groups' listening comprehension skills.

5. Significance of the Study

This study could be significant to:

1- 3rd year class teacher students to improve their listening comprehension skills.

2- EFL teachers as it might provide them with a list of some EFL listening comprehension skills and project-based learning strategy that could help them to develop their listening comprehension skills.

3- It also provides them with practical procedures of using PBL to improve their listening comprehension skills.

6. Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to:

1- A group of 30 3rd year class teacher students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University.

2- Some EFL listening comprehension skills.

3- Project-based learning strategy.

4- The second term of the Academic Year 2024.

7. Terms of the study

Main terms of the study could be defined as follows:

1. Listening Comprehension.

According to Jinhong (2011) listening comprehension is not only a process-oriented activity in which listeners need to deal with the input actively step by step, but also a creative activity in which listeners construct or assign meanings based on the given information of their experience and background knowledge.

Operationally, listening comprehension is the ability of 3rd year class teacher students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University

to identify the main idea, identify key words, and identify the purpose of the speaker(s). It is also the ability to take notes while listening, guess the meaning of unfamiliar words, and listening for specific information (details), such as (Names, Numbers, and years). It also could be defined as the ability to differentiate between facts and opinions, summarize the basic events or main points of the text, follow sequence of events and ideas, deduce cause and effect relationship, and use context to make predictions.

2. Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is a model of learning activity that briefs the students life by allowing them to promote and resolve real problems (Baghoussi Zoubida El Ouchdi, 2019), project-based learning can also be described as a collaborative inquiry-based teaching method where students are integrating, applying and constructing their knowledge as they work together to create solutions to complex problems (Guo et al., 2020).

8. Delimitations of the study:

This study is delimited to the following points.:

This study is delimited to:

1- A group of 30 3rd year class teacher students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University.
2- Some EFL listening comprehension skills.
3- Project-based learning strategy.
4- The second term of the Academic Year 2024.

9. Instrument of the study:

The researcher designed the following instruments:
- EFL listening comprehension skills questionnaire
- EFL listening comprehension skills test.

10. Participants of the Study:

The study included only one group namely the study group it included 30rd year students, enrolled at class teacher program, faculty of specific education, zagazig University. Listening comprehension test were pre and post administrated to the study group.

11. Results of the study:

Results of this study is reported in terms of the study hypotheses

Validating the study hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

It has been hypothesized that " There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and the post listening comprehension test administration , in favor of the post listening comprehension test administration.   A paired samples t-test was used as shown in (table 1).

Table (1)

t- test results of comparing of the pre- and post-measurements of EFL **Listening Comprehension Skills Test.**

skills	Test	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t. value	df
Listening Comprehension Skills	Pre	30	40.6	2.7	23.8	29
	Post	30	61.9	4.5		
Linguistic dimension	pre	30	19.8	2.7	4.4	29
	post	30	32.8	2.9		
Total	pre	30	58.7	7.9	22.3	29
	post	30	91.3	4.5		

**Significant at (0.05)

Table (1) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and the post of the experimental group in favor of the latter in EFL listening comprehension test, t-value being (22.3). It is significant at (0, 05) level. So, the first hypothesis was validated.

Hypothesis 2:

It has been hypothesized that "A project-based learning strategy has a positive effect on listening comprehension skills" Cohen's equation was used to verify this hypothesis as shown in table (2)

Table (2)

t- test results of comparing of the pre- and post-measurements of EFL **Listening Comprehension Skills Test.**

skills	Test	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t. value	df	Effect size
Listening Comprehension dimension	Pre	30	40.6	2.7	23.8	29	0.86 Large
	Post	30	61.9	4.5			
Linguistic dimension	pre	30	19.8	2.7	4.4	29	0.85 large
	post	30	32.8	2.9			
Total	pre	30	58.7	7.9	22.3	29	0.88 large
	post	30	91.3	4.5			

**Significant at (0.05) The impact is measured through Cohen's equation

As indicated in table (2), the final value of Cohen's equation for the experimental group, comparing its pre to the post administrations in listening comprehension skills test is (0.88). Based on that, it has been concluded that there are impacts of a Project-Based Learning Strategy on the students 'listening comprehension Skills

- The Results:

1- There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post administrations of the listening comprehension skills test results, in favor of the post-administration results.

2- The project-based learning strategy has a positive effect on listening comprehension skills after administrated the strategy.

12- The conclusion:

Based on the results of the present study, the following could be concluded:

Based on results of the current study, it could be concluded that project based learning has been proved to have a positive effect on developing EFL Listening Comprehension skills. Teaching listening comprehension by using project-based learning strategy has enhanced participant's ability to identify the main idea of the text, Key Words, the purpose of the speaker, reduced forms of words, stress patterns, discourse markers, and cohesive devices. It also helped them to properly take notes while listening, guess the meaning of unfamiliar words, listen for specific information, follow sequence of events and ideas, deduce cause and effect relationship, and use context to make predictions. Project Based Learning also helped them to discriminate the distinctive sounds of English, it also helped them to differentiate between different communicative functions of utterances, different sentence patterns and figure out the grammatical functions of words. In addition, it helped students to differentiate between facts and opinion and summarize the basic events or main points of the text.

The study group students became more active in learning listening comprehension. They were actively participating in the listening activities throughout the sessions. Furthermore, they showed their Contribution to the overall teaching and learning process. They were giving their opinions all the time regarding the use of the project based learning strategy and asking for information they did not know.

Listening comprehension is a challenging skill to be improved learned and assessed. EFL learners encounter some challenges regarding improving their listening comprehension such as limited vocabulary, speed delivery, cultural differences, insufficient time for practice their listening, speaker's different accents, and lack of body language. More attention should be given to address such challenges. EFL teachers need to provide their students with a lot of opportunities for practicing their listening comprehension skills. They should consider utilizing more interesting, realistic, and engaging study material and teaching activities suiting their student's academic level, interests, and preferences.

Project- based learning depends on utilizing real-world work assignments on time-limited projects to achieve certain objectives. People learn most effectively when working on real-time problems that occur in their own work setting. Doing so enables learners to practice listening comprehension as it facilitates student's practice of various listening comprehension tasks. It provides EFL learners with opportunities to work together.

13- Suggestions for further research:

In the light of the study results, the following research areas could be suggested:-

1. Investigating the relationship between project-based learning strategy and other language skills, such as reading, speaking, and writing at different stages.
2. Exploring the relationship between project- based learning strategy and teaching linguistics, such as phonology, morphology and semantics, etc.
3. Investigating the relationship between project-based learning strategy and teaching literature, such as drama, novel and poetry.
4. Considering the relationship between project-based learning and students' oral communication skills.
5. Considering the relationship between project-based learning and students' written communication skills.
6. Considering the relationship between semantic mapping and improving listening comprehension skills.
7. Improving Listening Comprehension skills using oral fluency.
8. Examining the relationship between students' listening comprehension skills and speaking performance.
9. Studying the relationship between listening comprehension skills and students' grammatical competence.
10. Investigating the relationship between listening comprehension skills and research skills.

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