

Teaching Listening Skills to EFL Students Using AI-Driven Technology-Based Media

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to find how much AI can be useful or as an aid in developing listening skill. A review has been made to past studies as well as the recent developments and innovations made by linguists and teaching community, yielding relevant observations. The present writing is an attempt at exhibiting how much the latest technology is effective which has been tailor-made to suit determined purpose directed at developing the listening skills of EFL learners. It is well established being significant and continues to gain importance in serving needs of education, sparking interest among students and teachers, the latter for innovating delivery of lessons. Teaching EFL college level students uses English as the medium of instruction for language teaching subjects. It is, however, noticed that difficulties crop up at school, where the students use native language for learning syllabi-related subjects, and where it is noticed that there is low comprehension capacity in the learners that needs to be pushed up to learn second language with success. The present research effort has brought to light the difficulties experienced by students in English learning as they struggle to reach a reasonable level of learning with success. This is despite there being other materials to use where old/traditional system is otherwise thought adequate. Modern approaches were brought into use by which AI-powered tools have removed difficulties they used to experience learning the traditional way resorting to written prescribed books; they experienced that books were monotonous and boring. The researchers made quite a few studies in different educational institutions and recognized the ability of AI aided media to make listening skill learning and teaching of English interesting and easy. AI has enabled educators to develop material and make it user-friendly and student-oriented for facilitating language learning easy. Language Listening builds enhanced capacity enabling EFL students to hear sounds of words of English using AI-aided tools. The present paper has discovered the utility of modern virtual tools as significant in facilitating learners' success in developed listening skill. Tools which are created using AI have proved very help as they extend tremendous help in increasing and developing practical listening skills of not only the teachers but also, and primarily, the EFL students.

Keywords: AI (Artificial Intelligence); Listening Skills; Media in ELT; Teaching; Learning; English; Technology-Based Media.

1. Introduction

Ours is the era which is technology-driven. Technology is vital and unavoidable in our life as it is rendering service without fatigue or argument and has no feelings and emotions. It is neutral to all human beings. It is not affected by caste, religion or colour, creed or ritual considerations. It is empowered, of late, by Artificial Intelligence (AI) which acts as friend, philosopher and guide to man. Its capability is increasing day by day. Its arm, ICT (Information & Communication Technology) provides information of all affairs in which humans are engaged throughout the world. It serves through a cluster of networks and operational applications and aided by search engines like Google. It enables man to cope with modern society challenges and opens myriads of opportunities to multiple activities. It executes orders with real time discipline. Post offices are being (or have been) closed and replaced by email communication networks. The courier service operates via airways. Wi-fi connectivity and 5G or 6G broadband connectivity links parties instantly thus global markets have come closer and, in fact, imaginary concept of global village is reality now. Trade, human interaction (movement of men, material and technical knowhow) and business transactions are settled online. Money transfers take no time through bank-related devices and applications. Nearly everything is moving from real to virtual. Online teaching and learning are also in place. Online discussions, dialogues, meetings and information sharing have made education more accessible through personal touch has started missing. We have learned how to encash opportunities in the emerging vibrating and challenging societal set-up which is smeared with all pervading and affecting digital environment. In the schools and colleges and other educational institutions, we find in education field that pupils right from the nursery and kindergarten stages are exposed to digital functions to amuse and attract them to school environment which otherwise such children disliked rather abhorred attending; they used to cry at the very mention of school. Thus, the young generation is well acquainted if not versed in the use of AI-powered tools for learning. EFL learners find such tools easy, interesting and attractive. With such a technological revolution moving human society forward, technology is widely used for its integration into the educational system. Technology is so powerful that variety educational AI tools have been made, and being improved, with innovative ideas to provide delight of using them. Luxury-oriented life-style promoted by consumerism demands comfort, convenience and happy living environment. Thus, educational institutes have also come up with happy, interesting and over-conducive environment. AI has helped education to create devices, apps and tools to make learning interesting and easy. In this emerging environment, EFL learners must feel happy and strive to acquire proficiency in English language and in use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) using its magnificent apps. . In our present situation, there is no alternative but to learn English s EFL to face the market challenges. Virtual classes are the preferred mode and face to face classes are held only in exceptional circumstances.

Technology developed ‘Internet’ which can provide reliable and easy way for mining data and required knowledge parcels. It allows students to get work done more easily. Also, students can take quizzes and exams more efficiently, and teachers can hold online classes that are generally accepted as very effective. Today’s students live in the digital age. Although we should be taking advantage of technology, technology can mean that learning is no longer confined to fixed physical location. To facilitate and improve the learning process, it is the concern of educators

to find and develop applications directly related to imparting listening skills to the learners as per their choice of apps and tools. It is no secret that the present-day students have become technology savvy. In fact, all people in any vocation or retired cannot think of leaving Mobile phone aside; they are highly attached nay addicted to it. Experience shows that lesson-content should be pictorial and entertaining, and it should fascinate their attention. The content should reduce or eliminate completely any redundancy. Presence of such redundancy was, and is, one of the biggest shortcomings of the traditional mode of imparting instruction.

2. Literature Survey

As per studies made by Maulina (2015 and 2019; Maulina & Rusli (2019); and Zainal et al (2022), the authors have come to conclusion that working by learners in groups paves way to have courage to venture into even difficult part of learning, and the teachers must also recognise this requirement and provide motivation for this in-group and independent self-study mode of learning. Students can and should share their experience, bring to light any difficulties or raise query to seek proper answersto questions that spring up in their minds.

Observations made by these researchers state that Technology (AI) has enabled the learners much more responsive and show higher success rate as compared to what they achieved with at the level of efficiency when technology was not in use Traditional mode of learning was used).

N their study conducted by Putra et al (2021); Saputra et al (2021); and Rasyiid et al (2021) that Technological development proved mother of modern media; these are considered and, in fact, are inseparably and closely related. Theirs is like organic linkage as that of child and mother; especially during the latter's pregnancy, which subsequently blossoms up as 'instinct' and the relation remains so throughout life. Both are made for each other and serve the cause of education helping learners acquire skill in not only listening but also in other aspects or process of teaching and learning modes with efficacy and showing desired/required success rate.

In the opinion of Andriyani et al (2022), the purpose of technology-use is not only confined to learning listening by the students but also it facilitates researching, collaborating, and solving issues early in the learners' life and this factor plays significant role in planning career and achieving happy or desired results. The import of these authors' study results is that in the modern technologically influenced working and education environment, technology alone will prove saviour and facilitator for career growth and personal development. The authors suggest that to make the young at early stage learn how to use technology-tools, the educational institutions will play important role in developing the listening or other skills and impart knowledge to EFL learners. Many initiatives were put in train in the recent past to design and produce AI-aided tools for teaching EFL students and others using modern technology with advantage. As of now, the educators/teachers bring about necessary integration of technology with education system to deliver series of lessons on diverse topics. It is easy and comfortable to use since the learners nowadays are fast becoming aware of how technology works; it also helps teachers in accommodating students' diverse learning styles.

Technology can serve as the source for improving students' productivity and achievement (academic and otherwise). Teachers and students are now equipped with technology as part of the teaching-learning approach, and technology-based media has contributed to the new learning approach and learning preferences, increasing access to information and ease of acquiring relative skill in creativity arena. The authors have said that use of technology in teaching listening skills to students is advantageous since it helps easing process and lessening the teacher's preparatory time for conducting review and execution of lesson content and so, the teachers ready for class without delay.

In the opinion of Jalongo (2012), it is essential to work urgently for enhancing and developing the learning process to move ahead and provide latest applications to further smoothen and strengthen teaching English to EFL learning students. With such enabling capacity building, it decodes sound-signals to condense into language characters, interpreted for understanding. This capability would further improve skills to give better interpretation and processing of information and ultimately leading to gain more knowledge. It is observed that the resultant comprehension strengthens capacity to better interaction capability, needed in the working world and in own living style re-engineered due to penetration of technology, also true of learning listening and improving quality of communication in general.

Advancements in technology aided by AI are creating numerous innovative techniques and availability of multimedia with the latest features are opening up great opportunities with regard to enhancing listening skills. As of now, when we look into the classroom setting, we are faced with variety of technological tools which have become the most effective tools for teaching English listening skills.

No two opinions exist in regard to the usefulness of technology, especially AI tools, facilitating and aiding EFL learners in developing and improving listening and other skills.

According to Willis (2018), good communication skills do not denote only listening: such skills do go far beyond listening aspect of communication. Listener has to focus on what others are saying or what he/she hears around him/her. Listener can then decode the information or messages through interpretative skill. In listening process, one has also to make conscious effort to avoid making unintended understandings which may be caused unconsciously in the process of interpretation.

According to West (2021), listening is not a child's play. It is no doubt a strenuous effort on the part of learners of listening skill to accomplish proficiency in English language learning including listening. In current digital era, technology has provided solutions: there are technology-based tools and devices since developed by teachers most assiduously. When it comes to choosing the easiest and available tools, awareness or knowledge may be there or the teachers may have to give guidance to choose the most suitable one to develop listening and other skills further. The selected tools will surely be interesting and attention grabbing engaging learners as by instinct. Skill development accrues from repeated use of the tools. Technology discharges functions of friend, guide and facilitator; students can benefit from its various tools.

It was Guglielmo Marconi who is credited with the first invention of Radio in late 1895. It was unwired gadget/machine which he gifted to the world at large. It is portable and easy to operate.

Its mechanism and operational technicalities apart, it proved useful for teaching listening skill in the schools. Being an effective audio aid device, Radio is also teaching medium. Listen to the broadcast and interpret its meaning for use in the relevant field of human activity. It engages student-learners in improving their listening skills. Despite Television have made its impressive entry in households and educational institutions coupled with its effectiveness and attractive features, radio still serves equally good purpose in education as far as communication technology is concerned. Lulu (2021) supports the foregoing contribution of Radio and adds that Radio is not only medium of teaching listening but also it teaches speaking.

From the foregoing discussions, it can be stated that technology-based tools serve useful purpose in teaching listening skills. Technology makes significant impacts on language learning process. Various technological tools are at the learners' service which can be used to benefit them in becoming better listeners. These tools prioritize process steps for enabling learning listening skill. EFL students learn in digital (binary) technology engulfed environment, as per their choice of time and space or location; and understanding simultaneously their environment which may be limiting factor because no communication across borders can be without any context. On the part of teachers, they can compile interesting and interactive discussions of their lessons. The teachers can use digital tools quickly and that too in the most interesting and enjoyable way. Almost all the least educated and those in humble avocations are used to handling mobile phone and digitally operate their bank accounts independently. Therefore, there is no problem in learners of EFL handling Technological tools of learning including those used for improving listening skills. However, as in normal manual listening, active listening is possible if distractions as barriers are kept to the minimum. The impact of technology-based materials which contain interesting and attractive visuals goes a long way to promote motivation and enhance interest among students, especially EFL learners.

Comments on Literature Review

According to Stephen Krashen, There are bright chances of EFL learners learning listening skills from those who are adept in native language and possess nuances of EFL. This means that natives speak English with the accent and pronunciation that clothes native tone and carries not only localized context but also cultural ethos. Through listening, the awareness in the English language could be awakened and later on improved through constant practice. Keeping this in mind, the non-natives also tone down their speaking style to the level of that found in native speakers. This adjustment paves way to correct understanding communication message in the context and culture. Listening, in my opinion, can be learned best by listening to radio broadcasts and viewing TV shows. There are special channels and apps dedicated to education which includes listening and speaking of the foreign language. These two media are the commonest ones found in all homes and institutions.

There are audio-books available which are treated as good material to understanding language and develop listening skills too. Teachers provide guidance about how to use them and encourage the learners to reproduce or narrate in own words the contents selected for listening. Loud claims are made favouring the use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in order to develop EFL Listening skills. There is variety of audio-visual aids which can be used for learning listening skills. Recent entry of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in all fields of work, education

included, AI-powered tools have appeared in wide range and variety. Teachers take upon them the task of fulfilling their responsibility to guide learners to choose the relevant tools, audio-books, and devices or gadgets to achieve success in improving listening skills.

It is matter of survival in the emerging global scenario where digital transactions are taking place in mind-boggling numbers every day. Researchers such as Ampa (2015) have supported using of , multimedia for imparting listening skills, and also teaching other skills. They emphasise upon going the digital way and make aggressive planning to move with times and, in the process, educators and policy makers play positive and emergent role in giving due weightage to the education system as a whole. Teachers need to be trained and re-trained to learn use of multi-media and other AI-aided tools with efficiency. So, they, in turn, teach the ELF learners with confidence and ease and also to produce innovative session plans and develop lesson designs to make them interesting apart from being educative.

3. Method

This paper identified the researched works on this topic to determine the extent to which those studied outcomes reveal the effectiveness of AI-aided technological tools to teach English learners including EFL learners. These selected sources are reproduced above.

4. Results and Discussion

Teaching of listening skills to EFL learners, at whatever level in educational institutions of learning, using AI-powered tools prove effective to the learners. Technology-based media make teaching and learning more accessible and operationally easy with no hassles whatever, to begin with. Future teachers will shoulder responsibility for making continuous efforts first to examine feedback and then solve the hurdles or difficulties faced by the learners. Using AI-generated applications and tools/devices will prove significantly adaptable since it creates collaboration resulting in enhancement of the students' capacity to listen and interpret the communication. The capacitating AI tools with bring about interest in the EFL learners to devote time as the tools will provide interesting content and will make understanding also easy and contextually right because of availability of attractive as well as interesting material.

AI tools possess tremendous untapped (uncovered) potential which is bound to prove helpful using its devices. Technology-based tools serve the needs of the educators, readers, and researchers and motivate educators to continue innovating to integrate technology into the education system by redesigning methods and reorienting approaches to teaching the newest way. Arguments are advanced by both the scholars and educators about the integration of technology with education system and style since this integration using AI tools. Technology will prove highly useful and helpful in achieving the goal of teaching EFL students' English language listening to make them proficient in the language, enable them to be interactive in contextual environment, be employable and acceptable in the global scenario.

It is now accepted by all those connected with the education system that technology is significant factor as far as teaching listening skill is concerned. Technology exerts great influence on the modalities and paradigm formulation in making education effective and interesting too. The EFL learners must be made to learn. It requires innovative thoughts and their implementation so that the learners get attracted to the AI tools with commitment, zeal and enthusiasm. It is true that technology is not going to be static; it makes rapid strides in the current era when we see man wishing not only treading on the moon like on the earth planet but also entertaining wish to adapt to the atmosphere there to permanently settle there and create goods and services for comfortable living. In such an era, technology applicable to education is also going the rocket speed and the teachers and educators have responsibility to keep updated and continue making innovations to transform the education system or the convenience of learners who must feel keenness to learn all languages, not only English to make them versatile professionals and high grade performers. Remember that we are living in knowledge society and it is driven by forces that use AI and allied tools to plan, implement and research results, so is the case of EFL learning by the EFL learners who bank upon AI tools for doing better at learning language and perfecting communication in context and keeping culture in centre-stage. AI-powered tools and its other applications serve as keys to open up opportunities in modernising and revisiting education and with it the learning listening with upgraded skill.

Podcast Application in Teaching Listening: Research in science & technology was the preserve of the few developed countries because results could not be predicted in a time frame and expenditure was heavy which lesser developed or developing nations could ill afford as their economies were laggards, moving at snail's pace. Reasons are that there was resources crunch and scientists were far and few between. Education did not produce scientific talent. As of now, many nation states have started importing technology and some of them entering into collaborative arrangements. In such emerging scenario, Artificial Intelligence has emerged as the latest facilitating giant in the scientific world. Other countries have started adapting to this environment and started adopting AI-driven applications for all possible activities and also in education system. Podcast application is one of the most advanced applications which has accelerated the modernising process in education. AI-aided tools are being used for imparting instruction in language learning including teaching-learning EFL to native learners with good results. Learning language and listening too has become easy, interesting and satisfying to both the teachers and learners. It would be pertinent to quote a study entitled "The effectiveness of podcast application in teaching listening" which proves beyond an iota of doubt its role in presenting unique mode of quality teaching of English to EFL learners. The students also find this application offering music-soothing help like mothers' lullaby, and without reservation: humans entertain bias at times and discriminate between students, Podcast does not do so. Listening to Podcast is a pleasure unbounded and exhilarating.

Greek philosopher, Plato, has stated that classical poetry and classical/instrumental music activates the mind just as gymnastics builds healthy body. Similarly Podcast is both activating and musical application, essential AI application tool, not to be kept unused; doing so at the peril of learning in education domain. In view of the effectiveness of Podcast, it is termed by learners as a boon bestowed by God and blessing from the Almighty Allah (God) to the teaching community. This can be used by the language learners without any body's help. It is better than

self-study books which gained popularity in the past. Many such self-help books were published in the US. Other nations followed suit later to join the bandwagon. Researchers on topics relating to learning English by native students are unanimous about the universal acceptance of Podcast application.

Umpteen researches have been done with respect to effectiveness of multimedia including Radio and TV and the results have given green signal to adopting multi-media for teaching/learning language. EFL students can gain a lot from using the AI tools and multi-media machines/gadgets. There are applications (Apps) galore and it is the duty and rather responsibility of the teachers of language to elect the ones they consider most suitable to the target-learners and for the target content clothed by the syllabi or curricula. Designing the lesson session and guiding learners is not an easy task. The task has to be done with attention, commitment and advance planning. Facilitation extended with selected tools needs also to be monitored to find blocks in time for taking remedial action. Feedback from students is also essential because they are the AI tool-users and they only will feel hassles or difficulties in comprehension or in any other count. These tools help learners pick up words unknown before to add to their vocabulary, pick up phrases not heard before and add to their mental store idioms that they never heard or used before or could not understand in their true context before. Pronunciation is as essential to grasp as tone, tenor and words or phrases, etc. Many benefits are reaped using AI tools and multi-media. Only boning is via practice and keenness to learn and improve language.

There has been revolutionary progress in telephony over the past three decades or so. We have taken a long journey starting from hand operated fixed and wired telephone containing dialing system to wireless mobile hand set with multiple features – containing wallet, internet, messaging, calculator, lock, whatsapp, and many more. Such miracles are due to invention of micro-chips and semi-conductor. It is but natural that these mobile phone sets are now among the electronic gadgets on our command and easily available to facilitate teaching and learning. "Mobile Based Media as the Solution in Teaching and Learning Listening Skills": This is a research article written and published by Elfiona et al (2019) in which the researchers have concluded that Mobile-based tools serve the teachers and learners to great extent. This device is one great asset with large capacity and used by learners and teachers alike in teaching listening learning of English language where students are natives, English obviously is not their first language. .

We know that bound books were once the only media to teach and learn. Of late, e-books have appeared in e-library. Now, to our pleasant surprise, audio-books have been created. Books otherwise also are our best friends. We can read and re-read them at our convenience. They cannot disappear as TV programmes or Radio broadcasts do. Reading books is now considered ineffective mode of learning as compared to the AI-driven apps and tools. The technological tools are available with multiple pleasant features and using them gives pleasure, vanity and sense of being civilised compared to others who continue to use old or traditional methods or modes or equipment. AI tools contain dramatized content that keeps user always in cheerful mood. A happy user learns the easy way and does not feel tired nor does he experience fatigue; and no boring moments visit him/her. The learner is encouraged to look into the topic critically

and is free to make comments and furnish suggestions for making content more informative or easier to comprehend.

5. Conclusion

Power or energy was once measured in terms of biological power such as one horse power, two horse power, etc. because those old days, horse was used widely as it could be domesticated and trained easily. Besides, it looked handsome and was also sturdy animal which could run and jump. Later, it was used in sports and war as also always for travel uphill/downhill, and in plains too. It was symbol of royalty and authority also. It is considered loyal and intelligent animal. Machines entered our life after lot of experiments, now we travel by air and on the sea. Man's curiosity coupled with ingenuity did not stop at that. Man invented many things, produced bombs and lethal weapon, for mass destruction. Man developed nuclear power which is used for peaceful purposes and for destruction too. All this is clear indication that we are living in knowledge society equipped with empowering inventions and discoveries. We have computers, wi-Fi communication connectivity, and satellite communication networking capability. We have mastered space and we have developed Artificial Intelligence (AI) as extension of robotics. Talking of role of AI in education, we can proudly claim that introduction of Mass-media, Radio, TV and AI-powered apps and tools, and also Mobile technological devices, etc have made teaching highly technical and learning very interesting, easy and attractive through technology-aided tools. There have been various studies in the past two to three decades which found the AI tools and other technological devices and equipment (including apps) very highly significant accelerators of development in increasing advanced tools for teaching and learning languages. EFL learners can now conveniently understand sounds, pronunciations and are in a position of building expanded vocabulary by adding new words, learned through AI tools and using other technological devices as great facilitators in learning process and easily available having been proliferated all over the world. Effort has been made in this paper to discuss research studies as also various tools and devices being used with advantage. The technology-based media (including Mobile Media and AI tools) have been discussed in this paper, such as Mobile-Based Media, Multimedia Technology, Podcast Applications, Radio News, and Mobile-Based Audio-books. Merits in each case have also been discussed. Using these tools, single or in suitable combination have produced successful results in teaching and learning English to EFL learners who have expressed delight in using these tools and devices (including apps).

Studies discussed above have stated flow of happy results and gave forecast of good impact on teaching and learning process to the delight and convenience of both teachers and students whose sole aim is to improve their teaching/listening skills and resolving listening difficulties on the part of student-learners of English. This paper shows that the student-learners become productive individuals on gaining success. It is stated to be the result of using technology-produced media in the process of teaching listening skills causing no monotony, discomfort or inconvenience; students/learners putting up smiling countenances displaying felt delight.

In the middle east, particularly in Saudi Arabia, serious thought may be given for adopting multi-media tools (AI-driven) and devices in both online and offline teaching English to EFL student—learners.

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