The Effect of Pre-Listening Vocabulary Activities on B2 Learners' Listening Comprehension Performance

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Annotation: This exploratory action research investigates the effect of pre-listening vocabulary activities on B2 level English language learners' listening comprehension performance. The study was conducted in a classroom setting over a period of four weeks, using pre-listening tasks such as vocabulary lists, matching exercises, and keyword prediction activities before listening lessons. Findings suggest that pre-listening vocabulary activities significantly improve learners' listening comprehension, increase their ability to understand main ideas and specific details, and enhance overall classroom participation. The study concludes with pedagogical implications for English language teachers, especially those teaching intermediate (B2) learners in listening-focused lessons.

Keywords: Pre-listening activities, vocabulary, listening comprehension, B2 level, English learners, language teaching, action research, ESL/EFL.

Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition plays an important role in second language learning, especially for B2 level learners who are at an upper-intermediate stage of language

development. At this level, learners are expected to understand and use a wider range of vocabulary in different contexts, particularly in listening tasks. However, one of the main challenges they face is understanding and retaining new vocabulary while listening to authentic or semi-authentic speech.

Pre-listening vocabulary activities, such as introducing key terms, matching exercises, predicting topic-related words, and short contextual exercises, have been suggested as effective strategies to support listening comprehension. These activities help learners activate prior knowledge and reduce cognitive load during listening tasks.This study explores the effect of pre-listening vocabulary activities on B2 level English learners' listening comprehension performance in a classroom setting.

The research aims to answer the following question:

To what extent do pre-listening vocabulary activities influence listening comprehension performance in B2 level English learners?

This exploratory action research is significant as it provides practical insights for language teachers on how to improve listening instruction at the intermediate level and contributes to the growing body of research on vocabulary-supported listening strategies in ESL/EFL contexts.

Methodology

This exploratory action research was conducted in a classroom setting to investigate the effect of pre-listening vocabulary activities on B2 level English learners' listening comprehension performance. The study was carried out over a period of four weeks during regular English lessons.

Participants

The participants of this study were B2 level English language learners studying English as a foreign language. The group consisted of intermediate-level students who were

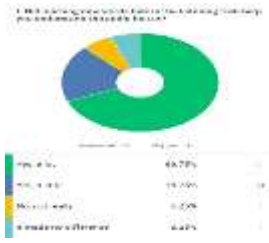
selected based on their language proficiency level. All participants were regularly attending listening classes and had similar exposure to English instruction prior to the study.

Procedure

The instructional intervention was based on the Dictogloss technique combined with pre-listening vocabulary activities. Before each listening lesson, learners were introduced to key vocabulary through matching exercises, prediction tasks, and contextual explanations. After the pre-listening stage, students completed a Dictogloss activity. They listened to a short text read at natural speed, took notes, and then worked in groups to reconstruct the text as accurately as possible.

Data Collection and Analysis

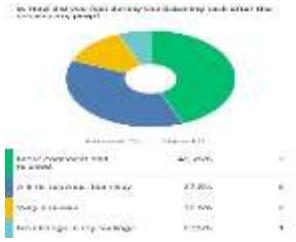
Data were collected through classroom observation, students' reconstructed texts, and short comprehension checks after each lesson. The researcher analyzed learners' ability to understand main ideas, use target vocabulary, and accurately reconstruct the text. The results were compared across the four-week period to identify changes in listening comprehension performance.



1. Did learning new words before the listening task help you understand the audio better?

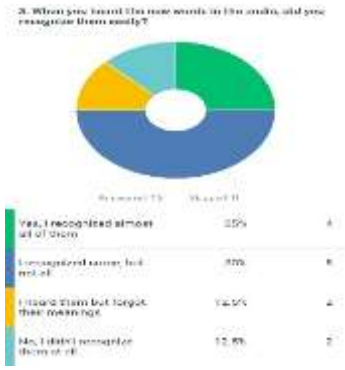
The bar chart shows that most students think learning new words before listening helped them understand the audio better. The majority (68.75%) said "Yes, a lot," while 18.75% said "Yes, a little." Only a small number of students said "No, not really" (6.25%) and "It made no difference" (6.25%)This means that pre-listening vocabulary preparation is very effective for improving listening comprehension. It helps students understand the

audio more clearly and reduces difficulty during listening tasks. Overall, vocabulary preparation plays an important role in supporting listening skills.



2. How did you feel during the listening task after the vocabulary prep?

The results show that the largest group of students (43.75%) felt more confident and relaxed after vocabulary preparation. 37.5% felt a little nervous but still okay, while 12.5% felt very stressed. Only 6.25% reported no change in their feelings.This means that vocabulary preparation helps students feel more comfortable during listening tasks. It reduces anxiety and increases confidence, although some students still experience stress depending on difficulty level. Overall, most students had a positive emotional response.

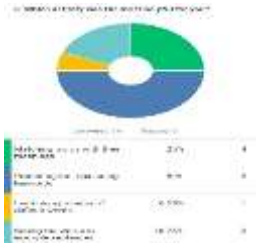


3. When you heard the new words in the audio, did you recognize them easily?

The pie chart shows that 25% of students recognized almost all of the new words. Half of the students (50%) recognized some of the words but not all. 12.5% heard the words but forgot their meanings, and another 12.5% did not recognize them at all. This means that while vocabulary preparation helps recognition, not all students fully remember or understand the words during listening. Some students still need more practice and repetition to strengthen vocabulary retention.

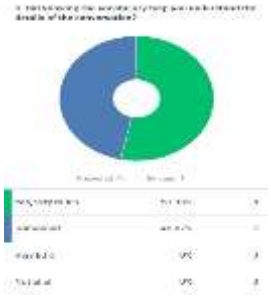
4. How many times did you need to listen to the audio to understand the main idea?

The results show that 43.75% of students needed to listen twice to understand the main idea. 18.75% understood after one listening, and another 18.75% needed three or more times. Also, 18.75% still did not understand the audio.This means that most students cannot understand the audio after one listening only. Repeated listening is necessary for better comprehension, especially at B2 level where speed and vocabulary are challenging.



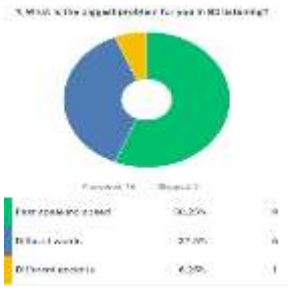
5. Which activity was the most helpful for you?

The pie chart shows that half of the students (50%) found predicting the topic using keywords the most helpful activity. 25% preferred matching words with their meanings, 18.75% chose seeing words in example sentences, and 6.25% selected learning synonyms.This means that students prefer activities that help them understand the general idea before listening. Predicting the topic makes listening easier and helps students prepare mentally for the audio.



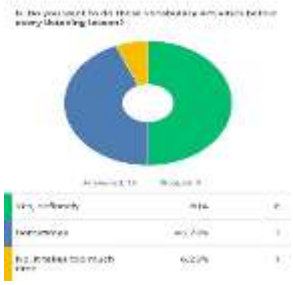
6. Did knowing the vocabulary help you understand the details of the conversation?

The results show that 53.33% of students said vocabulary helped them understand the details very much, while 46.67% said it helped somewhat. No students selected “very little” or “not at all.”This means that vocabulary knowledge is very important for understanding detailed information in listening tasks. Even partial vocabulary knowledge improves comprehension significantly.



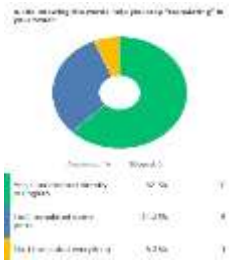
7. What is the biggest problem for you in B2 listening?

The results show that more than half of the students (56.25%) struggle with fast speaking speed. 37.5% find difficult words challenging, while only 6.25% struggle with different accents. This means that the main difficulty in B2 listening is not only vocabulary but also the speed of speech. Students need more practice with fast natural speech to improve understanding.



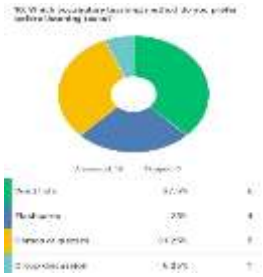
8. Do you want to do these vocabulary activities before every listening lesson?

The results show that half of the students (50%) want to do vocabulary activities before every listening lesson. 43.75% said “sometimes,” while only 6.25% said “no” because it takes too much time.This means that most students are positive about pre-listening vocabulary activities. They find them useful and helpful for better understanding of listening tasks.



9. Did knowing the words help you stop “translating” in your head?

The results show that 62.5% of students understood directly in English without translating. 31.25% still translated some parts, while 6.25% translated everything.This means that vocabulary knowledge helps students think more directly in English. It reduces the need for translation and improves fluency in understanding.



10. Which vocabulary learning method do you prefer before listening tasks?

The pie chart shows that the most preferred method is word lists (37.5%), followed by games or quizzes (31.25%). 25% of students prefer flashcards, while 6.25% prefer group discussion.This means that students like both traditional and interactive learning methods. Simple structured methods like word lists are most popular, but games also make learning more engaging.

Discussion

The results of this study show that pre-listening vocabulary activities have a strong positive impact on students' listening comprehension. Most students reported that learning new words before the listening task helped them understand the audio better, feel more confident, and reduce anxiety. This suggests that vocabulary preparation plays an important role in supporting listening performance. In addition, the findings indicate that students are able to recognize and use new vocabulary to some extent during listening tasks. However, some learners still struggle with remembering word meanings and fully understanding the audio, which shows that vocabulary knowledge alone is not always enough for complete comprehension. Another important finding is that most students need to listen more than once to understand the main idea of the audio. This highlights that listening at B2 level is still challenging, especially due to fast speaking speed and difficult vocabulary. Therefore, repeated listening combined with vocabulary support is necessary for better understanding. The results also show that students prefer structured and interactive vocabulary learning methods, such as word lists and games. This means that engaging and varied activities can increase motivation and improve learning effectiveness. Overall, the findings suggest that pre-listening vocabulary activities are highly beneficial, but they should be combined with other listening strategies such as repeated exposure, speed training, and pronunciation practice to improve overall listening skills.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of pre-listening vocabulary activities on B2 learners' listening comprehension. The findings showed that vocabulary preparation helped students understand listening texts better, increased their confidence, and improved participation. Most learners found these activities useful for understanding both main ideas and details. Although some difficulties remained, especially with fast speech, the results suggest that pre-listening vocabulary activities are an effective way to support listening comprehension. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to use vocabulary preparation regularly before listening tasks.

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