THE STRENGTHS AND DRAWBACKS OF LYRICSTRAINING IMPLEMENTATION IN BASIC LISTENING COURSE

Patricia Angelina
Sanata Dharma University
correspondence: patricia@usd.ac.id

Abstract
Development in ICT has resulted in innovations in terms of new applications and software to use in education, one of them is in the English language teaching. This study aims to find out the strengths and drawbacks of LyricsTraining implementation as one example of the web-based CALL in the Basic Listening course, one of the obligatory courses in the English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University. LyricsTraining is a website that integrates audio and video taken from YouTube with the song lyrics. It allows the students to play the music video and requires them to type in the missing lyrics or choose from the options provided. Survey was used as the method of this study, involving 30 first semester students from one class of Basic Listening course as the participants. Questionnaire with close and open-ended questions was used to gather the data. The results of this study describe the strengths as well as the drawbacks of the implementation of LyricsTraining in the Basic Listening course experienced by the students.

Keywords: Computer Assisted Language Learning, Basic Listening, LyricsTraining

Introduction

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. Among the four skills of English, listening is often perceived as the most difficult skill to learn by the EFL learners in Indonesia. The first reason is about their ability to identify the English sounds correctly. Although English is a universal language, it has various accents and dialects. For example, the sounds of English which are spoken in America are very different from the sounds of English which are spoken in Scotland. The second reason is related to the speed of the speaker. The average talking speed of native speakers is about 150 words to 180 words in a minute, which is considered very fast for the EFL learners. Therefore, they often have difficulties when they have to identify what the speaker says and have to understand the meaning at the same time. Furthermore, there are not as many resources for listening materials available as for the other English skills, which make the listening skill is often neglected and not prioritized in the English language teaching (Nation & Newton, 2008). In addition, there are also factors that are influential to the EFL learners' interest in practicing their listening skill such as the equipment required for the students to be able to play the listening materials independently, the quality of the audio as well as the characteristics of the speakers such as the accent, voice, tone, etc (Field, 2009).

In the English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University, the students are trained to become future English teachers. Every English skill and element is

taught separately to ensure in-depth understanding and mastery of all the skills and elements. Basic Listening course is an obligatory course that focuses on improving the students' basic listening comprehension. In this course, the students are introduced to the sounds of English and elements such as pairs of sounds, sounds at the end of words, contraction and stress. The listening activities in Basic Listening course mainly focus on gap-fill activity or multiple choice exercises.

English songs are one option of materials that can be used to help the students to have more contact with English (Harmer, 2007). Through songs, they can study all the English sounds and elements required to pass the course. Nevertheless, despite the great potency that songs have, they are only used for an ice-breaking activity or given in-between listening exercise as a refreshing activity. Therefore, this study is important as it discusses the strengths and drawbacks of the use of songs as a viable option to teach listening skill through the use of LyricsTraining, a game-based activity for songs presented in an interesting and fun manner that can be used independently by students both inside and outside the classroom.

Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following questions: (1) What are the strengths of LyricsTraining implementation in the Basic Listening course? And (2) What are the drawbacks of LyricsTraining implementation in the Basic Listening course? This study is expected to serve as an additional reference for conducting further studies on the implementation of LyricsTraining or other web-based CALL applications that can be used to teach English skills to the students.

Computer Assisted Language Learning

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the use of computer application to learn or to teach languages (Chapelle, 2001). CALL is usually implemented in an academic context by the teacher (O'Donoghue, 2014). The teacher normally brings the required equipment or demonstrates how to use it in order to enable the learners to use it in other places (Davies, Walker, Rendall & Hewer, 2012). By implementing CALL, the learners can have unlimited access to resources. Furthermore, they have the flexibility and freedom to choose the activities that are interesting for them and also suitable to their own level and speed (Davies et al, 2012).

The emergence of the Internet in 1993 has brought more advancement in CALL. World Wide Web as one form of the internet technology development has a major contribution for language learning. The most recent branch of CALL is web-based CALL, the web-based language learning that provides and explores the materials, learning source and application. Web-based CALL provides various formats of recorded materials to be accessed by the learners at even no cost (Harmer, 2007). Web-based CALL is more interactive when it is used in the teaching and learning process. It allows learners to figure out their own learning as well as provides them unlimited access to the online database sources. Therefore, web-based CALL is able to enhance the motivation of the learners as it offers them an interactive learning experience.

LyricsTraining

LyricsTraining is an interactive self-study website (Web 2.0) that uses authentic, interesting and current materials available on YouTube for language learning to take place (Mills, 2010). Due to the advantage of Web 2.0 in which installation on the hard drive is not required, the users only need an internet browser and an internet connection to the world wide web (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). By logging into the website www.lyricsTraining.com, the users will be able to play the music videos provided on YouTube in an easy and fun method in order to improve the users' listening skill in particular. This website aims to assist users to practice their listening skills through songs that are presented in an exciting game mode.

While listening to the songs, the users have to fill in the missing lyrics of the selected song by either choosing from the provided options or typing in the words into the running missing lyrics blanks on the screen. The users will gain points if their answer is correct, and more points will be given if they can spend less time in answering. On the other hand, when the users provide an incorrect answer, their scores will be reduced and the video will pause until the correct answer is selected. The users are also allowed to repeat the certain part of the video to obtain the correct answer, allowing continuous spelling correction. When there are too many incorrect answers chosen, the game will end. Scores are saved in the system and displayed on the leader board to allow users to compete with other users around the world.

Basic Listening Course

Basic Listening is a compulsory course offered in semester one in English Language Education Study Program, Sanata Dharma University. It is designed to introduce students to the English sounds and elements such as pairs of sounds, sounds at the end of words, contraction, singular and plural sounds, non-released final consonants, contractions and stress. The materials also include short various discourses for elementary level such as practical dialogues, comparing information and information transfer. On completing the course, the students will be able to recognize meaningful English sounds and elements, as well as to comprehend various short discourses for elementary level.

Related Studies

There were some studies conducted on LyricsTraining. A study on LyricsTraining implementation to improve listening comprehension skill was conducted by Garcia (2015) in the Universidad Veracruzana. The study employed action research as the method and involved twenty English students studying a BA in English language. The results of the study showed that LyricsTraining helped to improve the students' listening comprehension.

Another study was conducted by Azhari and Adnan (2018) from the State University of Padang on the use of Lyric straining website in improving the students' listening comprehension in senior high school. The study explored the procedures for English teachers to use Lyric straining website as the listening learning media which can motivate the students in the senior high school level.

The previous studies mainly focused on the implementation of lyric straining to improve the students' listening comprehension. This present study, however, would like to explore other strengths of lyric straining besides the improvement of the students' listening comprehension. In addition, the present study also tries to find out any possible drawbacks of Lyric straining implementation experienced by the students in the university level.

Method

This study employed survey method, which is conducted to collect data from a pre-defined group of respondents in order to obtain insights on some particular issues. The obtained data would then be used for better improvements on further implementation of the topics (Burns, 2010). This survey conducted in this study aimed to identify the strengths and drawbacks of Lyric straining implementation in the Basic Listening course.

This study was conducted in the English Language Education Study Program of Sonata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia from August 2019 to November 2019. The participants of this study were 30 students who were enrolled in the Basic Listening course in the English Language Education Study Program, Sonata Dharma University.

Questionnaire was used as the instrument in this study. There were two sections presented in the questionnaire. The first section provided close-ended statements with Likert

Scale. The second sections provided open-ended questions. Data were gathered by distributing the questionnaire to the participants of the study by the end of the semester.

Results and Discussion
Strengths of Lyric straining implementation in Basic Listening Course
Based on the results of the questionnaire, there are two main strengths that can be identified from the Lyric straining implementation in Basic Listening course.

1.   Improving Students' Academic Achievement
There are three areas of academic achievement presented in the questionnaire: pronunciation, vocabulary and listening ability. The complete results of the questionnaire statements addressing the possible strengths of LyricsTraining in terms of the academic improvement is shown in the table below.

Table 1. Questionnaire Items on Academic Achievement

ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
LT has helped me improve my English pronunciation	0%	10%	80%	10%
LT exercises helped me copy the native speakers' accent	0%	10%	70%	20%
LT has exposed me to a lot of new vocabulary	0%	0%	90%	10%
LT exercises have helped me to learn vocabulary more efficiently	0%	20%	60%	20%
LT has improved my English listening ability	0%	10%	70%	20%
LT is an efficient listening practice tool for improving listening abilit y	0%	20%	70%	10%

Note:

SD	: Strongly Disagree	A	: Agree	
D	: Disagree	SA	: Strongly Agree	

Majority of the students (80%) considered that these exercises helped them improve their pronunciation. By listening to the singer's pronunciation, reading and typing its lyrics, they had an opportunity to clearly hear how a word is pronounced, which was very useful for EFL students. From the open-ended question, one student stated "The exercises allow us to identify our pronunciation mistakes". In addition, most students (70%) mentioned that these exercises helped them to understand the native speakers' accent and copy them. As a result, the students can now sing English songs using correct pronunciation.

Almost all students (90%) agreed that LyricsTraining exposed them to a lot of new vocabulary. In the type mode, to be able to score well in LyricsTraining, the students have to type in the words in question in the blanks with correct spelling. When they made a mistake, they were required to try again until they typed in the correct word with accurate spelling. After the exercise was over, the students were given the complete lyrics and asked to identify the specific words that they were struggling to find. The goal was to know if those words could be stored in their memory. After that, they were asked to find the definition of those words in the lyrics' context. From the open-ended question, one student stated "I learn new words, which then turn into understanding the meaning of the sentences, and finally I can

understand the whole song". In addition, most students (860%) also agreed that these exercises helped them to learn vocabulary more efficiently. Doing these exercises using multimedia materials were interesting for students and thus enriching their vocabulary.

The majority of the students (70%) agreed that the use of LyricsTraining has improved their listening ability. In addition, 70% of the respondents also stated that LyricsTraining has been an efficient listening practice tool for improving their listening ability. Almost half did not know all the words they typed. However, being unaware of the word you are listening to, but being capable of typing it, might show that the listener can listen and comprehend what is being said. Therefore, these exercises might actually help students improve their listening comprehension skill. From the open-ended question, one student stated "I improve a lot on my listening ability. LyricsTraining was very interesting and helpful". The interface as well as the operation of LyricsTraining which resembles more of a game than a test made the students willingly repeat the exercises and even browse for other LyricsTraining exercises. As a result, their English listening ability improved because of the constant exercises that they did.

Almost half did not know all the words they typed. However, being unaware of the word you are listening to, but being capable of typing it, might show that the listener can listen and comprehend what is being said. Therefore, these exercises might actually help students improve their listening comprehension skill.

2. Increasing Students' Learning Motivation

Statement six until statement twelve in the questionnaire are related to the effects of LyricsTraining on the students' learning motivation. The complete results of the questionnaire statements addressing the possible strengths of LyricsTraining in terms of the academic improvement is shown in the table below.

Table 2. Questionnaire Items on Learning Motivation

ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
I will use LT outside the class	0%	30%	60%	10%
LT improves my motivation in learning English	0%	20%	60%	20%
LT helps reduce the pressure for learning English	0%	20%	70%	10%
LT is a helpful learning aid in improving my learning motivation	0%	20%	60%	20%
LT makes learning English interesting	0%	10%	70%	20%
I am eager to learn my favorite English songs	0%	10%	70%	20%

Most of the respondents (60%) agreed that LyricsTraining has improved their learning motivation. LyricsTraining also succeeded to help reduce the pressure for learning English for 70% of the participants. According to the majority of the participants (60%), LyricsTraining was a helpful learning aid in improving their learning motivation. LyricsTraining has made learning English became something interesting for 70% of the participants. Implementing LyricsTraining can provide an amicable atmosphere which made most students (70%) eager to learn their favorite English songs. Most of the students (60%) also stated that they would use LyricsTraining outside the class.

The answer of the first open-ended question also showed that almost all students are motivated to learn English more when they use LyricsTraining for learning. One student stated "My learning interest toward English is increased because of LyricsTraining. It never

happened to me before. To my surprise, learning English could be so interesting". LyricsTraining plays the videos along with the lyrics. The students are given the freedom to choose from a wide variety of options. As a result, the students might show more interest in practicing listening.

Drawbacks of LyricsTraining Implementation in Basic Listening Course

The drawbacks of LyricsTraining and the suggestions for a better implementation of LyricsTraining were asked in the open-ended question in the questionnaire distributed to the students at the end of the semester. Based on the results of the questionnaire, there are two main drawbacks that can be identified from the LyricsTraining implementation in Basic Listening course.

1. Constant Pop-Up Advertisement

LyricsTraining uses Flash Player, which is an insecure add-on to most browsers. The site also tells users that they use their own cookies and that by continuing to browse on their site, the user has agreed to their use of cookies. Cookies are used to track a user's habits on a site to customize the web page and to collect data. Therefore, there were pop-up advertisements that often disturbed the students' concentration when doing the exercise. The display size of the pop-up advertisement sometimes covered parts of the lyrics, which made it not conducive for the students to type in the words that is necessary to play the game and gain high scores by completing the task as fast as possible.

In addition, some pop-up advertisements also contained adult content. This is also a concerning issue for the teachers and the parents due to the possible effect it causes on the students who are not ready yet. Therefore, LyricsTraining may not be appropriate for middle school students and younger. It also may be inappropriate for some adults that have conservative religious or cultural beliefs.

Teachers should pay more attention to these issues. They will have to be very selective in selecting the songs that will be used as the exercises. They need to make sure that the content of the videos is suitable with the age of the students. Before the exercises begin, teachers should also give instructions to the students on what they need to do when the advertisements pop up on the screen so that the students will not be much disturbed. The ideal students' age range will be those in the senior high school and the university level students.

2. Absence of Clues

There are some problems that made it difficult for the students to listen correctly. These problems are the pronunciation and accent of the native speakers singing the songs. One student stated that "It was very difficult for me to understand the singers' pronunciation". Another student added "I often made mistakes and some lyrics were too difficult for me because of the foreign accent". Most of the participants stated that they repeat doing the exercise at least once. It was because they got a low score and wanted to get higher score for that exercise. Thus, it can be concluded that pronunciation was one of the main obstacles that the hinder the students from getting a good result during the exercises.

In addition, almost of the students stated that they had spelling issues. Some English words are not pronounced the way they are written. When the students could not type in the words with accurate spelling, the videos will pause until the correct answer is typed. Many students ran out of time because they randomly press a letter on the keyboard in order to figure out the first letter of the word in question so that it would be easier for them to guess the word correctly. Not being provided a clue to help the students when errors appear was a problem that prevented them from finishing the exercise. The students are allowed to use dictionary to help them during the exercise. Nevertheless, using a dictionary was time

consuming for and was regarded inefficient for a timed activity that penalizes any delays. Therefore, the spelling errors was another main obstacle in overcoming the listening exercise successfully.

It will be a great additional feature if LyricsTraining can provide hints or clues for the users when they cannot type in the correct word in the third attempt. Teachers can also provide the clues manually by pairing up the students so that one of them can be the one providing the clues when the other one plays the game. The first clue can be given in the form of the first letter of the word. The second clue can be the last letter of the word, and the third clue and the next one after that can be any letters in the middle of the word. Penalties can be given in the form of reduce points from the total score obtained by the students, depending on how many clues that they require in guessing the word correctly.

Conclusion

The students seemed to have a positive attitude when they used the LyricsTraining website. They appeared to have accepted it as a tool to improve their listening and suggested changes as well as positive and negative feedback on its use. Based on the results of the study, there are two main strengths of LyricsTraining in its' implementation in the Basic Listening course in the English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University. The first strength is that LyricsTraining improves the students' academic achievement, especially in terms of their pronunciation, vocabulary mastery as well as their listening ability. The second strength is that LyricsTraining increases the students' learning motivation. The students also identify two main drawbacks of LyricsTraining implementation in the Basic Listening course. The first drawback is the constant pop-up advertisement which is disturbing the students' concentration in doing the exercises. Teachers can try to manage this issue by carefully selecting the songs that are going to be used as the exercise. Teachers can also provide instructions to the students on what to do when the pop-up advertisements appear. The second drawback is the absence of clues provided to help the students finish the exercise. Teachers could try to solve this by pairing up the students so that they can get the necessary clues from their partner when needed.

References

Azhari, O., & Adnan, A. (2018). The use of lyricsTraining website to improve students' listening comprehension in senior high school. *JELT, 7*(3), 578-586.

Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology. in Education.

Burns, A. (2010). *Doing survey in english language teaching: A guide for practitioners.* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.

Chapelle, C. (2001). *Computer applications in second language acquisition foundations for teaching, testing and research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, G., (N.D.). CALL (computer assisted language learning). Retrieved on April 1, 2019 from https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/61.

Davies, G., Walker R., Rendall H., & Hewer S. (2012). Information and communications technology for language teachers (ICT4LT). Retrieved on April 1, 2019 from http://www.ict4lt.org/en/en_mod1-4.htm#whatiscall.

Enfield, J. (2013). Looking at the impact of the flipped classroom model of instruction on undergraduate multimedia students at CSUN. *Techtrends, 57*(6), 14-27.

Field, J. (2009). *Listening in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garcia, C. A. B. (2015). The use of lyricsTraining website to improve listening comprehension. *MEXTESOL Journal, 39*(3), 1-13.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language Teaching*. Harlow: Longman.

Mills, D. J. (2010). LyricsTraining.com. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language, 14*, 2. Retrieved on April 1, 2019 from http://www.tesl-ej.org/pdf/ej54/m3.pdf.

Humphries, S., & Burns, A. (2015). "In reality it's almost impossible": CLToriented curriculum change. *ELT Journal, 69*, 239–248. doi:10.1093/elt/ ccu081

Nation, I.S. P., & Newton, J. (2008). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. New York: Routledge.

Lage, M. J., Platt, G. J., & Treglia, M. (2000). Inverting the classroom: A gateway to creating an inclusive learning environment. *The Journal of Economic Education, 31*(1), 30–43. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1183338

Lee, G. (2009). Speaking up: Six Korean students' oral participation in class discussions in US graduate seminars. *English for Specific Purposes, 28*, 142– 156. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2009.01.007

Lockwood, Brinks. (2014). *Flip it! Strategies for the ESL classroom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Milman, N. B. (2012). The flipped classroom strategy: What is it and how can it best be used? *Distance Learning, 9*, 85–87.

O'Donoghue, M. (2014). *Producing video for teaching and learning. Planning and collaboration*. New York: Routledge.

Rajesh, M. (2015). Revolution in communication technologies: impact on distance education. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education-TOJDE, 16*(1), 62- 88.

Solomon, G. & Schrum, L. (2007). *Web 2.0: New tools, new schools*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.

Spino, L. A., & Trego, D. (2015). Strategies for flipping communicative language classes. *CLEAR News, 19*, 1–5.

Vaughan, M. (2014). Flipping the learning: An investigation into the use of the flipped classroom model in an introductory teaching course. *Education Research and Perspectives International Journal, 41*, 25-41