Ciencias de la Educación

Artículo de revisión

Reciprocal Learning for listening comprehension

Aprendizaje recíproco para la comprensión auditiva

Aprendizagem recíproca para compreensão auditiva

Evelyn Carolina Macias-Silva [I]
maciasevelyn@hotmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7593-6952

Marco Antonio Aquino-Rojas [II]
marcoaquino111@hotmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2252-8397

Edgar Eduardo Heredia-Arboleda [III]
eheredia@unach.edu.ec
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4099-9811

Adriana Carolina Lara-Velarde [IV]
alara@unach.edu.ec
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2270-6843

Correspondencia: maciasevelyn@hotmail.com

I.   Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación Mención Inglés, Ingeniero en Administración de Empresas Turísticas y Hoteleras, Magíster en Pedagogía para la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, Docente Ocasional Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador.

II. Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación Con Mención en Inglés, Ingeniero en Administración de Empresas Turísticas y Hoteleras, Docente Ocasional Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador.

III. Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación Profesor de Idiomas Inglés, Magister en Enseñanza del Inglés como Idioma Extranjero, Docente en la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador.

IV. Tecnóloga en Asistente de Gerencia, Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación Profesora de Idiomas Inglés, Magister en Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, Docente en la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador.

Abstract

Reciprocal learning involves the interaction of students while working with their peers. Thus, it is the objective of this article to present the advantages and implications of reciprocal learning applied to listening comprehension. In addition, it presents the application Liu and Bu´s study, applied to our context. Methodologically, a bibliographic review was carried out, delving into previous studies carried out on the subject and the importance of listening for the acquisition of other communication skills such as writing, reading and speaking. Finally, it is concluded that there is a gap in the research that involves listening comprehension and that reciprocal learning has very broad advantages.

Keywords: Reciprocal learning; listening comprehension; skills; english language.

Resumen

El aprendizaje recíproco implica la interacción de los estudiantes mientras trabajan con sus compañeros. Así, es el objetivo de este artículo presentar las ventajas e implicaciones del aprendizaje recíproco aplicado a la comprensión auditiva. Además, presenta la aplicación del estudio de Liu y Bu, aplicada a nuestro contexto. Metodológicamente, se realizó una revisión bibliográfica, profundizando en los estudios previos realizados sobre el tema y la importancia de la escucha para la adquisición de otras habilidades comunicativas como la escritura, la lectura y el habla. Finalmente, se concluye que existe un vacío en la investigación que involucra la comprensión auditiva y que el aprendizaje recíproco tiene ventajas muy amplias.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje recíproco; comprensión auditiva; habilidades; idioma en inglés.

Resumo

A aprendizagem recíproca envolve a interação dos alunos enquanto trabalham com seus colegas. Assim, é objetivo deste artigo apresentar as vantagens e implicações da aprendizagem recíproca aplicada à compreensão auditiva. Metodologicamente, foi realizada uma revisão bibliográfica, aprofundando estudos anteriores realizados sobre o tema e a importância da escuta para a aquisição de outras habilidades de comunicação como escrita, leitura e fala. Por fim, conclui-se que existe uma lacuna na pesquisa que envolve a compreensão auditiva e que a aprendizagem recíproca apresenta vantagens muito amplas.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem recíproca; compreensão auditiva; habilidades; língua inglesa.

Introduction

Reciprocal learning involves interaction of students' while they work with their peers (two or more) to understand the content of the classes (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). Students build their understanding by interacting not only with their peers but also with their teachers. This section covers a review of literature and previous studies related to the reciprocal listening activities and listening comprehension. Authors coincide that the interaction should be conducted inside and outside school boundaries (Liu & Bu, 2016). The interaction to promote learning needs to be positive. It means students' exchanges should be harmonious and equal. Ballinger (2013) defined this model as students "both learning language from and teaching language to a classmate" (p. 134). In this context, students are called novice and experts. They are novice in the L2 and experts in their L1. One of the 21st century skills is collaboration. Within collaboration, students have to respect their differences and backgrounds (Sato, 2004). This author pointed out learning integrates experience and content (Sato, 2004). In this model, students cooperate developing the tasks with specific roles. Mosston and Ashworth (2002) sustained that the roles are performer and observer.

The process students undergo is one student performs the task while the other observes and later provides feedback based on the performance. In this model, the role of the teacher is facilitator of the activities. The teacher moderates the interactions and clarify students' misunderstandings.

Ballinger (2013) added that when students work in pairs they do not have the necessity to speaking accurately.

Thus, this may end up in fossilization of mistaken structures. However, this model raises the opportunities of students practicing the language. These authors use the model by peer interaction. The research included students that dominated two different languages. Students participate naturally in their own language and teach the peers.

Leykum et al. (2011) considered reciprocal learning as a "shared, ongoing and interactive process among all providers and staff" (p. 25), this study was conducted in medicine field, though. For these authors, reciprocal learning implies the insights peers get from one another. The insights become motivators to additional insights from the peer and in this wait it becomes a recurring spiral process of learning.

This model shares some principles of active, autonomous, and collaborative learning. However, it focuses on collaboration rather than individual learning. The goal of this model is to transparent students' learning by collaborating to improve their performance through feedback. It differs from active learning because the latter is self-driven (Brown & Campione, 1998).

Collaborative learning, on the other hand, can be understood as groups working together in a common task and students depend on one another to finish it (Mitnik et al., 1998). Autonomous learning tends to be individual and the goal is to become autonomous.

On the other hand, listening is called the Cinderella skills due to the lack of research in this skill (Tomlinson, 2013). EFL learners face several difficulties when they are exposed to listening comprehension activities. Listening is a complex process (Dehham et al., 2018). Its importance relies on what Siegel (2015) highlighted that a normal person may spend 45% of the time listening to others. For students to comprehend what they are listening, they need to be exposed to different types of accents and recorded materials (Heredia, 2018). However, Dehham et al. (2018) pointed out that some of the difficulties students have when listening in L2 involve the accent of the people talking and the quality of the resource. Other difficulty is the lack of listening skills due to listening teaching (Heredia, 2018). Cope and Kalantzis (2012) suggested teachers to focus on listening for information and not in language structure. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) reported that in lesson planning, listening activities tasks are text-oriented.

Prior Research and Data

There are not studies that have used reciprocal learning to improve listening comprehension. Some authors have implemented reciprocal teaching not learning to improve writing (Ghorbani et al., 2013). There are very few studies that have implemented a strategy to improve listening comprehension (Sarani et al., 2014). There is extensive research in education of medicine (Leykum et al., 2011; Noel et al., 2013). Ballinger conducted a study to improve English and French of students whose native language was French and wanted to learn English and students whose native language was English and wanted to have an immersion class in French (2013).

Regarding listening, there are few studies that have used a strategy to improve listening comprehension (Heredia, 2018). There are mainly theoretical revisions of the problems of listening EFL students' have (Graham, 2006, Nowrouzi et al., 2015).

The present study has attempted to deepen about the importance of reciprocal learning model for listening comprehension and its applicability.

Development

Listening is very important for people's daily lives Saricoban (1999) describes that "communication is a two-way process: a message cannot be communicated unless there is someone to receive it. " Within the oral communication process, listening is the reception process, which allows developing personal relationships between individuals. Oxford (1993) and Celce-Murcia (1995) relate that about 45% of the time spent in communication is dedicated to listening. Thus, it is considered that a skill that must be improved is listening.

On the other hand, various researchers point out that social interaction requires great listening skills. Also for verbal exchanges, those who do not possess this ability are at a social disadvantage. Schilling (2002) states that listening is a fundamental skill at work and diminishes mistakes. Terrell and Krashen (1984) emphasize that in addition to its general meaning, listening helps in the language acquisition and learning processes. In addition, the way through which the human being learns to speak is considered. Through listening, children learn to reproduce the sounds they hear from the people around them. Then over time they build their language and can communicate with others whereas deaf children cannot acquire this skill. In addition, learning a language is an advantage that allows the brain to develop. On the other hand, the activities in the classrooms must provide linguistic information to the student, but in many cases they cannot be explained in the correct way. Additionally, listening has been shown to be a critical element in foreign language learners learning. More precisely, it facilitates the appearance of other language skills such as speaking, reading and writing. Listening is the first step to oral fluency and precision and is a way to develop speaking skills. When a student can listen correctly, speaking develops naturally.

Similarly, reading is conditioned by the ability of students to listen. Being receptive skills, both listening and reading share some similarities. Thus, listening is considered a basic element in the emergence of written expressions. Ronald and Roskelly (1985, p.85) indicate that if students have not learned to listen, they cannot write. This is how it results in an active process that requires the same skills. According to these researchers, the way people listen corresponds to their writing style.

From another perspective, Hasan (1998) reveals that "both the ability to listen and to write can be used to support each other, in the feeling that writing activities can be developed from listening activities and at the same time from listeners they need the help of the written form to understand the auditory tasks ".

With this background, the importance of listening is very crucial for communication, social interaction, language and the development of other language skills such as speaking, reading and writing is clearly shown.

With these precepts, this model has several advantages. Baxter (1999) mentioned it develops metacognition. Students reflect on how they learn. Students describe the process of what they are doing. Student take turns to be the teacher. Due to students have to speak out to describe their learning process, this organization of ideas aids in retention of the information. It provides opportunities for students to practice the language (Ballinger, 2013).
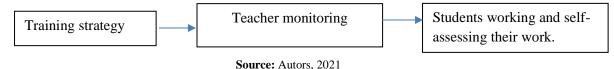
First, this model can work with fixed groups. In Liu and Bu's study, authors reported that one limitation is the constant change of teachers and students. This means students have to adapt to a new pair (2016). Another limitation is the role students have in their groups, if they are working in groups. Some students may dominate the participation, and shy students may not participate as expected. Shared responsibilities may be another limitation, what if one student is not responsible enough. Ballinger (2013) added that students may focus on fluency rather than accuracy and in the long run this practice may cause fossilization. Lastly, students will ask help from teacher because they do not trust their pairs' feedback. If the model implies different teachers, Ballinger (2013) reported that teachers should agree on the planning of the lessons and the strategy instruction. In this author's study, the teachers did not collaborate in the design of the lesson plan or in the implementation.

Applicability

Similar difficulties were observed in a group of students of a private university in Guayaquil. The teacher-researcher took a diagnostic test and the lowest grades were in listening comprehension. Students did not understand concrete information in the recordings, which is a standard for A1 students, according to the Council of Europe (2020). Their participation was not active when they have to listen. In Liu and Bu (2016), listening activities were done after class in a computer and

classroom based class. In this institution, students choose a pair with whom they teach one another the content of the class. Taking the information from Liu and Bu's study, classes will include: clear instruction, make the platform user friendly and updated, explicit assessment, and teacher's monitoring. The application in my context will be divided in three phases. The first to train students in the strategy.

| Training strategy | → | Teacher monitoring | → | Students working and self-assessing their work. |

Source: Autors, 2021

To this purpose, the teacher will share videos and will role-play similar situations with volunteers. This model has not been implemented in the local context. In the international context, there are very few studies. This makes it difficult to find good examples to follow. In this phase, a rubric will be constructed with the students. So, they know how to conduct the reciprocal learning, and how to provide feedback. The second phase will be the teacher monitoring the groups or pairs. In this phase, the teacher will observe and provide feedback. There can be whole class sessions to provide guidelines to the students. The last phase is students working along and self-assessing their individual and group work. Due to Covid-19 quarantine, classes must be 100% online. This will make the different phases go slowly. The teacher and the students can use zoom or google meet for the first phase. Students can role-play in the break-out rooms. The teacher can monitor by entering the small rooms. The teacher can also share material with students to their mails or through WhatsApp groups. To evidence students work, they can video record their sessions and send to the teacher. They can also share a file in Google drive. This will help the teacher monitor the task.

The main limitation of implementing this model is internet availability for the synchronous meetings. Another limitation is the willingness of students to learn from their peers and not rely only on the teacher. Because this is a new model, there is a gap in research regarding the application of this model in EFL settings.

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Vol 7, núm. 1, Especial Febrero 2021, pp. 1096-1105
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Conclusions

The advantages of reciprocal learning outweighed the disadvantages, although this conclusion can be expanded if it is subsequently applied in larger groups of students and especially if they are applied in face-to-face classes. Despite this, it will be worth implementing this model to improve a skill that is not given much attention: Listening. Second, there is a significant gap in research in terms of the application of this model in English as a foreign language settings and in the Ecuadorian context. By applying this strategy, students can benefit from increasing awareness of their learning, practicing languages, and retaining content. There is also a gap in research involving listening comprehension. Finally, it is expected that the application of this strategy will contribute to improving not only listening comprehension activities but in English proficiency as a whole. The benefits of including both variables will fill the gap in research as stated previously.

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