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TITLE OF THESIS:
‘EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY ON YEAR 3 FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS’ PROGRESS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION.’

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Table of Contents

Abstract 3

Acknowledgements 5

Rationale 6

Introduction 7

Aims of the Study and Research Questions 10

Chapter 1: Literature Review 12

Chapter 2: Results 15

Chapter 3: Discussion 21

Conclusion 29

Appendix 30

Works Cited 36
Abstract

Although listening comprehension skills in foreign language learning are quite important, there has been relatively little research surrounding the impact of the use of technology on improving these abilities among Caribbean students. This study attempted to examine this impact of using technology within or outside of the classroom setting to improve student’s listening comprehension progress. This study was carried out by means of distributing questionnaires, in order to collect data from final year foreign language students (academic year 2016-2017) at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. This sample population was best suited because it comprised of third year students –both male and female- who were learning Spanish, French or Portuguese. The focus on these three foreign languages added to the diversity of this study because the results of each were compared to observe the similarities and differences among them. 50 questionnaires were distributed and then collected.

The findings of this study showed that technology has a great impact on year 3 foreign language students’ progress in listening comprehension, especially those studying Spanish. Technological tools or ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) are not always used in every class for the other two languages, –French and Portuguese– but the respondents indicated that their classes would be less productive without those devices/media.

The results of this study can be of use to Caribbean foreign language instructors, who wish to investigate and determine the best technological tools that they can use in the classroom, in order to help students improve in listening comprehension.
Definition of key terms

*Listening comprehension* is an interactive process which usually occupies a section of a foreign language course. Using this method, the listener tries to construct meaning from what he/she hears. The oral input is processed by discerning the different sounds and using one’s background knowledge of vocabulary etc., which is usually acquired prior to listening.

*Technology* can have many broad definitions but for this study, it refers to any type of device or machine that has been developed or designed from scientific knowledge, which enables the transmission/sending and receiving of information. Using technological tools, students can access various forms of audio content which can enable them to practice their listening comprehension skills.

*Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)* are various software and devices such as audiovisual systems and computers respectively, which allow users to store, transmit and operate with information.
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Rationale

This thesis aims to determine the extent to which the use of technology in listening comprehension classes has impacted the progress of third year foreign language students at the University of the West Indies, Ste. Augustine Campus. There is a great need for research that focuses on these key aspects such as the impact of technology and the progress of students in the area of listening comprehension of a foreign language, in the Caribbean. Although I am reading for my Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish, I saw the need to extend the scope of this study to more than just one foreign language. By incorporating the French and Portuguese languages as well, this can give way to comparisons among different aspects of each, in order to recognize what leads to the progress of certain students as opposed to others who may study a different language. Through the carrying out of this study, we can recognise whether technology is hindering or improving the listening comprehension skills of our foreign language students, which in turn justifies the academic value of this project.
Introduction

In many schools around the world, technology is employed to enhance the learning process of students. Different forms of technology in the classroom setting allow for more fun, enjoyable and also productive classes. Tablets are used instead of books, a Smartphone can carry out almost all the functions of a computer, and even social media is becoming more and more useful to send and receive information useful to teach a class subject. The topic that will be explored in this research paper is the examining of the impact of the use of technology on year three (academic year 2016-2017) foreign language students’ progress in listening comprehension.

When looking toward the future as well, students are more equipped for a fast-evolving technological world by the added exposure they receive from incorporating technology in the learning environment. Many jobs in the past which did not have any technological component are now digitizing and keeping up with the 21st century trends. There are even jobs where an individual can be responsible for ‘tweeting’ as often as possible every day in order for a company to get many followers, leading to a larger customer base.

The ubiquity of technology has made it even more pervasive in schools around Trinidad and Tobago as well. In this study, particular attention will be paid to the impact of the use of technology on year 3 foreign language students’ progress in listening comprehension, at the University of the West Indies. With foreign language students, there is a great need for technology in and out of the classroom. Learning a language takes practice with both listening and speaking of the target language. In some cases, mostly in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, the teachers of foreign languages are citizens of the country and not necessarily native Spanish, French or Portuguese speakers. Students are only lectured to by native speaking
professors at the university level. Therefore technology is used to get them more acquainted with
the various accents and native pronunciation of words and sounds.

In order to examine the impact of the use of technology on year 3 (or final year) foreign
language students’ progress in listening comprehension, questionnaires were distributed to 50
students in total, at the Centre for Language Learning at the University of the West Indies. These
students were selected based on the foreign language courses they were studying, which are
offered at this language learning centre. This method of convenience sampling of subjects was
fast, inexpensive, reliable in terms of credible data being collected, and the subjects were readily
available. The questionnaires were distributed during the last 10 minutes of the listening
comprehension classes of Spanish, French and Portuguese students.

With this method of data collection, one can investigate how technology’s impact on the
classroom environment has affected Caribbean students’ progress in foreign language learning –
more specifically on the improvement of their listening comprehension skills. Technology’s
impact on this area of listening comprehension is the main focus for this study because it is a
vital part of learning to comprehend any language. According to a journal article by Dr Arafat
Hamouda, –as sourced from Gilakjani and Ahmadi 2011– it has been tested and proven that, “of
all the time taken to learn or understand a language, listening makes up 40-50%; speaking
occupies 25-30%; reading uses 11-16%; and for writing, about 9%” (Hamouda, 114). Therefore
listening as well as comprehension are indeed important when striving to learn, comprehend and
then speak a language. For example when toddlers are learning to speak, they would first listen
to what is being said to them in order to comprehend the words, and then they are able to acquire
a language and produce it themselves.
For this study, the Spanish French and Portuguese classes were targeted in order to have data that reflected a variety of languages and how the use of technology to teach them have helped or hindered the students’ progress.

To conclude, this study can be quite relevant for the field of Caribbean Studies as it can show the progress that technology has made in foreign language learning in the Caribbean. This in turn can aid in a better understanding of Caribbean society and culture, for example in the case of some countries acquiring other languages as their second official language. Trinidad and Tobago is on the way to establishing Spanish as its second language, so this study can aid in portraying some of the reasons why technology facilitates this. As evident from the review of literature chapter of this research paper, there hasn’t been much research conducted to observe and examine how technology can impact on students’ listening comprehension of a foreign language. This is what the present research tries to demonstrate, while considering that listening comprehension is not the most important means of learning a language, but it is quite crucial.
Aims of the Study

This study strives to examine, in an in-depth manner, the extent to which using technology in listening comprehension classes of third year foreign language students can impact on their progress in the specified course field. It aims at:

1. Finding out which technological tools have the greatest impact on the students’ progress.

2. Determining the students’ progress in various aspects of listening comprehension due to the use of technology in their classes.

3. Deducing whether or not the students believed that their ages influence the impact of technology on their listening comprehension progress?

4. Finding out whether the students thought either the lecturer or various technological tools took precedence over the teaching of their listening comprehension class.

5. Providing research for this topic that can relate to the Caribbean demographic.

Research Questions

The present aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What technological tool/tools have the greatest impact on the students’ progress in listening comprehension?

2. To what extend have these foreign language students progressed in the component of listening comprehension?
3. Do the ages of the students influence the impact of technology on their listening comprehension progress?

4. Do the students think that the lecturer or various technological tools take precedence over the teaching of their listening comprehension class? Do they think there is too much dependence on the use of technology and not enough instruction from their lecturer?

5. How can this research be of use to the Caribbean Demographic? Does this topic have any importance for Caribbean foreign language learners?
Chapter 1:

Literature Review

Technology has facilitated and improved the different ways in which we can receive and send information. In these modern times, one seldom finds a classroom setting where some form of technology is not employed to enhance the learning process, specifically of a foreign language, even in the Caribbean. Gary Motteram explains how digital technology’s arrival is beneficial to learning. He states that if a teacher is not quite confident in his/her skills of speaking a language, they can connect the class to others online via video conferencing sites such as Skype. This way, the students are able to converse, and they can also get acquainted with different accents and pronunciations which can be helpful if they plan to travel to foreign countries. Motteram also noted that this way of using digital tools can also assist the teacher with additional support for helping students to understand what is being taught. He however noted that many would argue that this can be a minor obstacle in cases where there are students who seem to be more tech savvy than their teachers and try to challenge their knowledge. This may cause the latter to refrain for using these technological advances available to the class which could have made a great positive impact the learners’ education. (Motteram, 2013).

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages recognizes the importance of the use of technology in a classroom setting for the improved acquisition of a foreign or second language. However, they argue that some school administrators are allowing the use of technological tools to control most of the students’ curriculum; meanwhile there are still certified, skilled language teachers that can be employed. The council argues that these qualified instructors are the best means of educating students when it comes to teaching a second or
foreign language and that they should not be replaced by these technological advances. The latter should simply be a tool for use by the teachers to enhance the learning process.

Many schools have different ways of structuring their class curricula. It is possible that some administrators have noticed a steady increase in students’ progress from using technology in most classes and this may be why it is relied on more heavily than certified language teachers. Although it may be arguable that these skilled instructors should not be completely replaced by technological helping tools, the main goal is to educate the students. Hence the best possible means to do so should take precedence over any other, so that progress in learning a language can be facilitated.

The goal of incorporating technological tools into the curricula of many schools is to enable the students to pick up on intricate sounds and pronunciations of the target language, but some question the extent of the effectiveness of media for learning languages. According to Clark (1983), “… media are mere vehicles that deliver instruction but do not influence student achievement anymore than the truck that delivers our groceries causes change in our nutrition” (Clark 445). This suggests that these technological devices and/or media used for language instruction simply serve one purpose that does not provide as much of a benefit for us than expected. Clark posits that they do not improve the students’ progress to a great extent. Jones, Vogely, 1998 also argue that even though technological devices of the highest quality are employed in the classroom, students still perform below average and seem frustrated when completing listening comprehension exercises (Vogely 67–80).

In my opinion, technological devices do more than just deliver instruction to students. They also influence their achievement. For example, students may only be exposed to their lecturer’s accent. However when some of these devices are employed, many different sources
can be accessed with people who have varying accents from a number of counties. Therefore this is one aspect of listening comprehension that will be improved due to the use of technological devices. This is also an area that will be explored when conducting research from a Caribbean perspective – observing whether students are better able to understand different accents of speakers by the use of technology in the classroom.

Not only are there modern uses of technology being incorporated in classes today, but also the continued use of traditional ICT (Information and Communication Technology) programs. Jewell, (as referenced by Motteram, 56) states that applications like Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Word can be used in classrooms to improve students’ language proficiency by employing these ICTs to share the results of research they have done in oral presentations. These assignments are structured in a way that allows the students to develop their confidence with a language (Jewell 2006: 176).

These traditional ICTs are also used in Caribbean educational institutions, but Jewel referred to secondary school classroom environments. Although these ICTs such as Microsoft PowerPoint and Word are employed in Universities in the Caribbean, they are not used alone. They are not employed quite often to facilitate pedagogy in the component of listening comprehension. These technological tools may pertain more to components such as reading and writing or grammar.

In conclusion, the issues pointed out in this literature review will be examined in the following chapter where the findings of this study are presented. We will observe if these figures calculated and views given from our respondents show any similarities to other studies that were reviewed, with respect to the impact of the use of technology on the listening comprehension progress of students.
Chapter 2:

Results

The data set collected comprised of 50 third year students of the University of the West Indies. 24% of which were male, (12 respondents) and 76% were female (38 respondents). Only one of the participants was above the age of thirty, while 49 of them were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. There were no respondents between 26 and 29 years of age. 21 participants studied Spanish, 16 studied French and 13 studied Portuguese. Figure 1 below shows a table of how many students in the study were doing each of the three foreign languages in question.

Figure 1: Pies chart showing how many respondents studied each of the three foreign languages.

According to the frequency of the use of technological tools in the listening comprehension component of the students’ classes, only one respondent (a Portuguese student) indicated that technological tools are rarely used in her listening comprehension class. 17 persons indicated these tools were sometimes used, while another 17 stated that they were used very often. 15 persons said that these technological tools were always used in their classroom. Among
those who stated that these tools were used very often, 11 were Spanish students and 4 were French students. Only 2 Portuguese students thought that technological tools were used very often in their listening comprehension classes. Among the 15 students who thought that these tools were always used, 13 studied Spanish and 2 studied French.

With respect to number 5 of the questionnaire (see appendix), 45 students agreed that YouTube was used in their listening comprehension class. 41 students agreed to audio files/podcasts/recordings, 38 to Smartphone/tablet, 40 to music/songs/radio, 26 to television (movies) and 5 to educational websites. No students indicated that they use Facebook, Skype, Online quiz games or Language learning apps (such as DuoLingo or FuenLtu) in their classes. These figures are presented in the following bar chart.

Figure 2: Bar chart showing the technological tools that are used in the respondents’ listening comprehension classes.

Question 6 of the questionnaire asked if the respondents thought that the technological tools previously pointed out, help them to improve in the listening comprehension component of
their class. 24 students (48%) agreed that they help to improve their listening skills. 19 students (38%) said that they ‘somewhat’ help them to improve, while 7 students (14%) said ‘not really.’

No students denied that these technological tools help them improve in their listening. When asked why some students chose the option of ‘not really’ or ‘no,’ various responses were given. These reasons will be discussed in the following chapter of this study.

When asked if they practise their listening comprehension outside of the classroom, 20 students (40%) said ‘yes,’ 27 students (54%) said ‘sometimes’ and three students (6%) said ‘no.’

Off those respondents who said ‘yes’ or ‘sometimes,’ 91% said they use the same technological devices/tools as previously mentioned. Meanwhile 8% said they don’t use the same devices/tools. Those who said they use different tools mentioned a variety of different other means, which will be discussed in the following chapter. They were also asked if their use of technological tools outside of the classroom for listening comprehension purposes were solely due to home assignments given and 56% said yes, while 44% said no.

Question 12 asked if the students thought that their listening comprehension class would have been less productive or more productive, if technological tools were not employed. 26 students (52%) said that their class would be less productive, while 2 students (4%) said that their class would be more productive. The other 22 students (44%) said that there would be no difference in productivity in their class without technological tools.

The respondents were then asked to choose an average percentage range to indicate how much they thought their listening comprehension skills had improved since their first or second year at the UWI. 2 students thought that they improved between 10-30%, 4 chose ‘between 30-50%,’ 23 chose ‘between 50-60%,’ 19 chose ‘between 60-80%’ and 2 chose ‘between 80-100%.’
No respondents chose the option “I don’t think I improved.” These are depicted in the following bar chart.

**Figure 3: Bar chart showing the average percentage range that the respondents thought they improved in listening comprehension since their 1st or 2nd year at the UWI.**

Question 14 asked the respondents to choose from a list of aspects that they thought have improved due to the use of technology in their listening comprehension class. These aspects included: Filtering background noises or other sounds; Coping with speaker’s speech rate; Interactions in the foreign language with other speakers; Background knowledge; Understanding of accents and; Listening strategies. The following bar chart shows which of these aspects the students believe have improved due to the incorporation of technology in the classroom. No participants gave suggestions for any other aspect they may have improved in.
Figure 4: Bar chart showing the aspects of listening comprehension that the respondents believe have improved due to the use of technology in their classrooms.

49 respondents (98%) agreed that their background knowledge of the language has improved. 46 students (92%) said that their interactions in the foreign language with other have improved. With respect to listening strategies, 42 students (84%) said that this aspect has improved and 36 students (72) agreed to the improvement of their ability to filter background noises when attempting listening comprehension. Understanding of accents and Coping with the speaker’s speech rate had the lowest number if students agreeing to these improvements – 10 students (20%) and 12 students (24%) respectively. No students suggested any other aspects of their listening comprehension that may have improved.

The following question aimed to identify how many respondents thought that their age influenced the impact of technology on their progress in listening comprehension. 28 students (58%) said that their age does not influence technology’s impact on their listening comprehension progress. 14 students (28%) said that their age ‘somewhat’ influenced
technology’s impact of their progress. The remaining 8 students (16%) said that their age does have an influence over technology’s impact on their progress. Various reasons for each group of responses were given, and they will be discussed in the following chapter.

The respondents were then asked whether they thought the lecturer or various technological tools take precedence over the teaching of their listening comprehension class. 28 students (56%) were of the opinion that the lecturer took precedence over the teaching of their class. The remaining 22 students (44%) thought that various technological tools took precedence.

Figure 5: Chart showing the mode of instruction that the respondents think take precedence over the teaching of their listening comprehension class.

The final question aimed to find out whether the students thought that there is too much dependence on the use of technology and not enough instruction from their lecturer in their listening comprehension class. 41 respondents (82%) said ‘no’ – that there isn’t too much dependence on the use of technology as opposed to instruction from their lecturer, while 9 students (18%) said ‘yes’ – there is too much dependence on technology and not enough instruction from their lecturer.
Chapter 3:

Discussion

There were many observations made when analysing the data that was collected. Firstly, there were more female respondents than male. This suggests that the opinions were mostly from female students and also that females are more likely to study a foreign language than males, in the classroom environment. There was only one perspective of an individual over the age of thirty, so this study comprised of mainly young persons. The Spanish students indicated that technological tools were either very often or always used in their listening comprehension classes. None indicated that they were neither sometimes nor rarely used. This shows the impact that technological tools have on the listening comprehension component of Spanish students’ classes. They tend to rely a lot on these aids to progress in their listening skills. French and Portuguese students sometimes or rarely use these tools in their classes so it is possible that they rely more on their lecturer/s to progress in their listening skills.

YouTube was the most used technological tool in these classes. This is quite understandable because this is a website where millions of videos can be accessed and used to aid in this component of a language course. The other tools used in these classrooms as indicated by the students are also quite efficient in learning a language. One can learn about the different accents of a language as well as some other techniques such as coping with the different speech rates. Audio files/Podcasts/Recordings were the second most used set of technological tools for almost all three of the foreign language classes observed. Many students also used Radio/Music/Songs, Tablets/smart phones and Television/Movies in their classes to improve their listening skills. The option with the least choices was Educational Websites, where only 5
students (10%) agreed that they used such tools. These students were all French students. No students mentioned that they use Language learning apps, online quiz games, Skype, or Facebook. Additionally, no students mentioned any ‘other’ devices or media used in their classrooms so this may suggest that there is a small amount of tools employed in listening comprehension classes at the UWI – in total, six devices or media types, as observed by this study. Therefore this answers the first research question that was previously presented in this study. Technological tools such as YouTube and Audio files/Podcasts/Recordings were most used and impact on the students’ learning the most, of all the other media/devices mentioned.

The majority of students agreed that the technological tools previously pointed out help to improve their listening skills. Of those who agreed, there was a mixture of Spanish French and Portuguese students. Some also said that those tools ‘somewhat’ helped them to improve. Of those who chose ‘not really,’ three (3) were Spanish students, two (2) were French students and two (2) were Portuguese students. The seven students who chose the option of ‘not really’ gave various reasons for their choice. One student said that there is need for a greater variety of tools – as mentioned earlier – and that they prefer more native speaking lecturers to teach their class. Two students thought that their lecturers were skilled enough and do not seem to be in dire need of the technological tools they use. The remaining four students thought that the lecturer actually has to intervene and explain what is not understood in the audios that are played and they can also repeat what was misunderstood in various ways to ensure good understanding. Therefore these students believe that the lecturer has the greater influence on their progress in listening comprehension. This is similar to an issue addressed in the literature review where some students are said to still feel frustrated after doing listening comprehension assignments, although these
high quality tools are used because for them, they still need their instructors’ input to ensure they understand what is said in some audios they listen to.

According to the data collected, the majority of students practise their listening comprehension outside of the classroom sometimes. The least number of students don’t practise their listening outside the classroom at all, while the remainder do so quite often. The majority of those who mentioned that they practise their listening use the same tools as mentioned before while a few others use different tools/devices. Some of these include: WhatsApp voice calls/regular telephone calls with foreign friends and listening to CDs with audio tracks. The respondents were also asked if their use of technological tools outside of the classroom for listening comprehension purposes were solely due to home assignments given and the majority (56%) said yes, while 44% said no. This suggests that most students don’t continue practising using these or any other technological tools when they leave class, unless they are given an assignment for homework that renders the use of these devices/media.

According to question 12, among those who said that their class would be less productive without technological tools being used, 14 studied Spanish, 8 studied French and 5 studied Portuguese. These suggest that Spanish students depend heavily on technological tools in their class, because more than half of the Spanish students who participated felt this way. The French students depend on a lot on technology as well, but not to the extent of the Spanish students, because exactly half of the French students felt as though their class would be less productive without the use of technology. For the Portuguese students, less than half said that there would be less productivity; therefore we can deduce that they do not rely heavily on technological tools in their class. Among the students who said their class would be more productive without technological tools, one studied Spanish and the other, French. Among those who thought that
there would be no difference in productivity, 6 studied Spanish, seven studied French and 8 studied Portuguese. For these students, these technological tools are useful, but they are not pertinent to their progress/ productivity in their listening comprehension class.

With respect to question number 13, the majority of students thought that they have improved between 50-70% in listening comprehension since their 1st or 2nd year at the UWI. Among those 23 students, 9 studied Spanish, 9 studied French and 5 studied Portuguese. The second largest percentage range chosen was 70-90% where 7 studied Spanish, 5 studied French and 7 studied Portuguese. Among those who thought they improved between 30-50%, 2 studied Spanish, 1 studied French and 1, Portuguese. Two students thought they improved between 10-30% and another two thought they improved between 90-100%. However, when focusing from a gender bases point of view, female tended to choose higher percentage ranges that males. Females thought that they progressed more than males since their 1st or 2nd year at the UWI. Only females (2 of them) chose the highest percentage range of 90-100% improvement. Meanwhile only males (2 of them) chose the lowest percentage range of 10-30% improvement. This suggests that males believe that they improved less over the years in their listening comprehension, than women.

According to the aspects of listening comprehension that the respondents believe have improved due to the incorporation of technology in the classroom, the majority agreed that their background knowledge of their language of study has improvement. The least chosen aspects were the Understanding of accents and Coping with a speaker’s speech rate. This suggests that foreign language students are lacking progress, mainly in these two areas. More attention should be paid toward improving the students’ abilities of coping with speech rates and understanding of different accents of a language. By analyzing the results of this and the previous question, we
have addressed the second research question of this study, which deals with the extent to which these foreign language students have progressed in the component of listening comprehension.

When asked whether the respondents thought their age influenced the impact of technology on their progress in listening comprehension, the majority said ‘no.’ Among those who said no, their reasons seemed similar when asked why their age does not influence the impact of technology on their progress. Short summaries of the various opinions were:

- Age does not impact on listening comprehension progress because the lecturers make it very accessible to get audio and YouTube videos related to our topics.
- Older persons know a lot about technology as well. Also, not all students learn via modern methods.
- Anyone can comprehend a language well using technology. It just takes practice. Progress comes from practice and being familiar with certain content, rather than age.
- Many older people are well versed in technology as well. The inventors of many technological advances were above the age of 40 when they started. Therefore, older people can progress just as fast as younger people in listening comprehension, with the use of technology.
- “If I were older, I still may not progress as much.”
- Older people can progress just as well, because they probably are learning the language longer than youths my age.

Some respondents said that their age somewhat influences the impact of technology on their progress in listening comprehension. The only respondent above the age of 30 also chose this option. The reasons for their answers were as follows:
- “As an older person, I find it difficult at times to keep up with the technologies used. I rely more on the lecturer.” (Respondent above age 30)
- Youths are sometimes better with technology than older people.

For those who responded that age their age does influence the impact of technology on their progress in listening comprehension, their responses were:

- “I believe that as a younger person, it's easier to learn and improve as we constantly use apps and different resources daily. We are more versed.”
- The forms of technology use today are easier to comprehend by younger people.
- “Younger people are more likely to hear the audio cleaner and comprehend better than older people.”

These responses show that different students have varying opinions as to whether their age influences the impact of technology on their listening comprehension progress, which was the aim of the third research question of this study.

With respect to question 16, the majority of respondents (28 students) thought that the lecturer took precedence over the teaching of their listening comprehension class. Among these students, 6 studied Spanish (inclusive of the only respondent over age 30), 11 studied French and 11 studied Portuguese. Of the remaining 22 students who thought that various technological tools took precedence over the teaching of their class, 15 studied Spanish, 5 studied French and 2 studied Portuguese. These results show that mainly Spanish think that technological tools take precedence over the teaching of their listening comprehension class. For Portuguese and French students, less technological tools are used and the lecturers control most of the instruction that takes place in their classes.
For the final question, the majority of students said that there isn’t too much dependence on the use of technology as opposed to instruction from their lecturer. This shows that the students believe that using these devices/media is actually helpful for the component of listening comprehension. It also suggests that they receive sufficient instruction from their lecturer/s but the technological devices used are also greatly needed.

Limitations of the study

When carrying out this study, there were a few obstacles encountered. In terms of the research method, the time chosen to distribute the questionnaires was during the third week of the first semester of the 2016-2017 academic year. During this time, most students usually attend all of their classes, however, when the questionnaires were distributed, some students were unfortunately absent from those listening comprehension classes. Some questions were also unanswered when the data was being analysed. These questions required short answer responses which students are usually not too eager to answer. They usually prefer multiple choice or checkbox questions as they are faster to respond to. It is possible that these unanswered questions were due to the questionnaires being distributed 10 minutes before the end of the listening comprehension classes so the students were probably eager hurriedly answer the questions so that they can leave class as early as possible.

Additionally, according to the demographic of the data set, there was only one respondent above the age of thirty (30), who studied Spanish. There were also no respondents between 26 and 29 years of age. Therefore the varieties of perspectives obtained were mainly from respondents between the ages of 18 and 25.
Applying this to the Caribbean

By paying attention to the progress made by the students who participated in this study, instructors can determine the best technological tools that can be employed to help students improve in the listening comprehension component of foreign language learning. This can be of great importance for other foreign language learners in the Caribbean as well because they can identify what technological tools are most used in classrooms. In addition, they can observe the various aspects of listening comprehension that are improved when these technological devices/media are employed, either in or out of the classroom.
Conclusion

The findings of this study conclude that the use of technology has a drastic impact on year 3 foreign language students’ progress in listening comprehension, especially those who study Spanish. We notice this because the majority of respondents (86%) said that the technological tools used in their classes have helped (or somewhat helped) them to improve in the component of listening comprehension. Although some students – mainly those who study Portuguese – said that they don’t usually employ technological tools in their classrooms, they agreed that their classes would be less productive without the use of these devices/media.

The majority of respondents also believed that there isn’t too much dependence upon the use of technology as opposed to instruction from their lecturer in their listening comprehension classes. These tools are simply the means by which the delivering of instruction by the lecturer/s can be assisted, in order to ensure understanding of the curricula and progress in the listening comprehension component of language learning. By analyzing the results in the previous chapters, it is concluded that the aims of this study were achieved and the research questions were answered.
Appendix

Questionnaire

Topic: Examining the impact of the use of technology on year 3 foreign language students’ progress in listening comprehension.

Greetings,

Firstly I would like to thank you for taking time to respond to my questionnaire. My name is Shanice Samuel and I am a final year student at the University of the West Indies, pursuing my Bachelor's degree in Spanish. I am currently conducting my final year research project which seeks to examine the impact of the use of technology on year 3 foreign language students’ progress in listening comprehension. As such, it would be greatly appreciated if you would participate in this questionnaire. Thank you again for your time and responses.

1. Please select the appropriate age category:

☐ 18-22

☐ 23-25

☐ 26-29

☐ 30+

2. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female
3. Foreign language of study:

☐ Spanish
☐ French
☐ Portuguese

4. How often are technological tools employed in the listening comprehension component of your class?

☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Very often
☐ Always

5. Which of these technological tools are used in your listening comprehension class? (Select all that apply):

☐ YouTube Videos
☐ Audio files/Podcasts/Recordings
☐ Facebook
☐ Skype
☐ Educational websites
☐ Online quiz games
☐ Radio/music/songs
☐ Television (movies)
☐ Learners’ own Smartphones/Tablets
Language learning apps (e.g. Duolingo or FuentU)

Other: ______________________________

6. Do you think that these technological tools help you to improve in the listening comprehension component of your class?

□ Yes
□ Somewhat
□ Not really
□ No

7. If your answer was 'not really' or 'no,' please state why.

Your answer:

8. Do you practise your listening comprehension outside of the classroom?

□ Yes
□ Sometimes
□ No

9. If so, do you use the same technological tools to do so?

□ Yes
□ No
10. Is your use of technology outside of the classroom solely due to home assignments given?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. What other tools do you use outside of the classroom to improve your listening comprehension skills?

Your answer:

12. Do you think your listening comprehension class would be less productive or more productive, if technological tools were not employed?

☐ Less productive

☐ More productive

☐ No difference

13. How much do you think you have improved in your listening comprehension skills since your 1st or 2nd year at UWI, due to the use of these technological tools?

☐ Between 10-30%.

☐ Between 30-50%.

☐ Between 50-70%.

☐ Between 70-90%.

☐ Between 90-100%.

☐ I do not think I improved.
14. Which aspects below have improved due to the use of technology in your listening comprehension class? (Select all that apply)

☐ Filtering background noises or other sounds
☐ Coping with speaker’s speech rate
☐ Interactions in the foreign language with other speakers
☐ Background knowledge of language
☐ Understanding of accents
☐ Listening strategies

Other:

15. Do you think that your age influences the impact of technology on your listening comprehension progress?

☐ Yes
☐ Somewhat
☐ No

16. Why do you think your age DOES or DOES NOT influence the impact of technology on your listening comprehension progress?

Your answer:
17. Which do you think takes precedence over the teaching of your listening comprehension class?

□ The lecturer

□ Various technological tools

18. Despite your answer to the previous question, do YOU think there is too much dependence on the use of technology and not enough instruction from your lecturer in your listening comprehension class?

□ Yes

□ No
Works Cited


The ACTFL. “Role of Technology in Language Learning.” American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 30 July 2012,

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