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UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LISTENING TO MUSIC AND PRONUNCIATION LEARNING: AN INVESTIGATION BASED UPON JAPANESE EFL LEARNERS' SELF-EVALUATION

Abstract:

In an attempt to elucidate relationships between listening to music and pronunciation learning, a classroom-based investigation was conducted with Japanese EFL learners (n=45). The subjects were instructed to listen to English songs they liked on YouTube, especially paying attention to phonologically similar vowel and consonant minimal pair words (e.g., LIVE and LEAVE). This kind of activity, which included taking notes, was regularly carried out in the classroom, and the same kind of task was given to the subjects as homework in order to reinforce the in-class activity.

The duration of these activities was eight weeks, after which the program was evaluated on a 9-point scale (1: the lowest and 9: the highest) by learners' self-evaluation. The main questions for this evaluation included 1) how good the learners had been at pronouncing vowel and consonant minimal pair words originally, 2) how often they had listened to songs good for pronouncing vowel and consonant minimal pair words, 3) how frequently they had moved their mouths to vowel and consonant minimal pair words of English songs, and 4) how much they thought the program would support and enhance their pronunciation learning of phonologically similar vowel and consonant minimal pair words.

It has been found, for example, A) that the evaluation of this program is by no means low (Mean: 6.51 and SD: 1.23), suggesting that listening to music may support and enhance pronunciation learning, and B) that listening to consonant minimal pair words in English songs and moving the mouth to them are more related to the program's evaluation (r =.69, p=.00 and r =.55, p=.00, respectively) than listening to vowel minimal pair words in English songs and moving the mouth to them (r =.45, p=.00 and r =.39, p=.01, respectively).

Keywords:

 music, pronunciation learning, EFL learners, minimal pairs, discrimination