A comparative study on the use of information technologies in the development of students' ability to comprehend what they listen to and watch

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of a computer-aided method called ELVES and video-aided instruction on the development of young students' ability to comprehend what they listen to and watch. Using the video-aided instructions and computer-aided ELVES method, it also analyses the likelihood of the video-aided instruction method being used with different techniques, and compares the instructional methods involved with levels of student success of three different experimental groups. An analysis of the students' post-test results shows a considerable difference in favour of the computer-aided ELVES method for achieving the target behaviours.

Keywords: Information technologies; video-aided instruction; ability to comprehend what is listened or watched; language teaching; ELVES method.

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Introduction

In both mother-tongue and foreign-language instruction, listening and watching are two of the primary ways of communicating and learning, as they are the skills needed to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate messages accurately. Audio-visual aids having become widespread in all spheres of life and being used throughout instruction makes instruction in listening and watching necessary. Through the development of these skills, students should improve such metaskills as classifying, categorising, questioning, associating, criticising, and deducing from what they listen to and watch.

Many studies have been made of students' reading and writing skills in both foreign-language and mother-tongue instruction (Lin & Sriyothin, 2008; Berardo, 2006; Liu, 2000). However, the importance of listening skills has been addressed much later than the skills of reading, writing, and speaking, even though it is the first skill used in the learning process. Listening has long been regarded as a reflexive behaviour similar to breathing, and little effort or instruction has been undertaken to improve it (Miller, 2003; Nunan, 1999; Graham-Marr, 1997; Burely-Allen, 1995).

Establishing a teaching-and-learning environment by using painting, music, visual imagination, theatre, and drama throughout the activities for developing word attack skills when the occasion arises has advantages (Sever, 2001; Shandall, Schramm, & Seibert, 2003; Kavcar, 1999). Similarly, videos are compatible with constructivist education due to their potential to bring real-life situations and problems into classrooms, where they are widely used (Hult & Edents, 2003; Friel & Carboni, 2000; Daniel, 1996; Cannings & Talley, 2003; Bucalos, 2003).

ELVES is another method teachers have used for this purpose in recent years. It enables students to focus on a subject better prior to listening through a step called *excite*, followed by steps called *listen*, *visualise*, *extend*, and *savour*, and contributes to the level at which students retrieve particular items of information (Levesque, 1989; Yangin, 1998).

The literature, however, does not address which of these methods is more likely to be successful in improving students' ability to comprehend what they watch. It therefore seems useful to compare them and analyse which techniques can be used with which situations in order to guide teachers in establishing learning environments through the use of information technology.

Literature

Gilbert (2004-5) found that teachers preferred to provide information through listening, but students chose to obtain it visually, resulting in a complicated learning process, whilst Kavcar (1999) found that the more students participate actively in mother-tongue instruction and the more of their sense organs that become stimulated, the more likely they are to be productive and successful.

Sever (2001) noted that the texts selected for mother-tongue instruction should be suitable for the acquisition and development of narrative skills and emphasised the need to diversify the instructional process with different stimuli, and also that activities aimed at developing word attack skills should be converted into teaching-and-learning environments using such narrative means as painting, music, theatre, and drama when suitable occasions arise.

Using computer, video, and Internet-based materials in educational activities eases teachers' class-management problems, increases students' and teachers' attention levels, and enhances the learning-and-teaching process's effectiveness (Melvin & Horton, 1996; Deborah, 1998; Christine, 1999; Beers, Paquette, & Warren, 2000; Kablan, 2001). This means that the use of audio-visual tools can overcome difficulties in text education.

Hult and Edents (2003) found video-aided teaching to be an effective and interpretive educational method for evaluating student skills, and Friel and Carboni (2000) found video-based education to have the potential to support alternative experiences. However, Daniel (1996) found that adopting a constructive education approach through bringing real situations and problems into the class environment can make teachers' work easier (Cannings & Talley, 2003). Bliss and Mazur (1996) showed that joined classes using educational videos can help students develop decision-making mechanisms and critical-thinking skills related to conditions which are realistically improbable or which would be dangerous for students to learn directly from experience. However, Bucalos (2003) found no difference in student achievement between those receiving video teaching and those using traditional methods,.

Shandall, Schramm, and Seibert (2003) found that children's literature can be used to develop the skills required for discovering, concentrating, summarising, and listening, and concluded that students experienced development in their visual-imagination and listening skills through it. They advised teachers to display good listening skills by modelling visual images which would provide development in comprehension and listening. Kavcar (1999)

pointed out the importance of the use of such methods as group work, dramatisation, demonstration, and assigning research-based homework, as well as such traditional methods as narration, question-and-answer, and analysis.

In addition to the studies examining the effects of technology on young individuals' read-write skills (Underwood, 2000; Hartley, 2007), Stanton (2004) focused on collective narration with 5-7 age group by developing a tool, which was developed on a wide and two-dimensional plane and capable of writing, drawing and bridging. In pre-tests and post-tests of the study, students were told the same story and asked to compose a story themselves. The researchers determined that the stories composed by the experimental group were better organized. This result is also an indicator of the improvement in thinking skills of the experimental group.

Another teaching method that can be used in language education is the ELVES method summarised in this study's introduction. Yangın (1998) showed the positive effects of the ELVES method on listening comprehension in his study of first-grade students. As noted in the introduction, ELVES is an acronym of *excite*, which involves the remembering of foreknowledge through attention-getting and by motivating the children, *listen*, *visualise*, which involves animating, *extend*, which involves developing and elaborating, and *savour*, which involves assimilating and jogging students' memories (Levesque, 1989; cited by Yangın, 1998).

The excite step consists of starting up a discussion among students during which they can express their foreknowledge of the video's contents before reading the text. During this step teachers should pose questions associating the children's experiences with the text's main idea, topic, and characters, and may also chair the discussion.

The listen step involves orienting the children towards guessing, as the meaning may not be aggregated at one point in the text. When listeners become capable of confirming or rejecting the guesses they need to be oriented toward remembering the story's main idea, and when they are capable of guessing they should be encouraged to take the floor to express their views and feelings.

The visualise step encourages envisaging, which is particularly important for helping children to make inferences. Children may envision different images whilst listening to a story, and it is necessary to provoke them into sharing these images that are in their minds by expressing them in words.

The extend step encourages the listeners to link their foreknowledge to the new knowledge the story presents, as this enables them to make use of the meaning at the maximum level. Storytellers may ease their listeners' listening comprehension by posing questions to them.

The savour step involves activities that enable listeners to structure the meanings derived from their listening comprehension, as they need some time in order to narrate the feelings and ideas from the story so that the text becomes embedded in their minds.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of the use of a computer-aided ELVES method on student success. It also analyses the likelihood of whether the video-aided instruction method can be used with different techniques and compares these techniques in terms of student success.

It will seek to answer the questions of whether any meaningful differences exist between a group exposed to the ELVES method and one exposed to a video-aided instruction technique in terms of;

1. comprehending the text's topic, main idea, and supporting ideas,

2. determining an event, place, time, character, object, and the elements related to those contained in a text,

3. determining the cause-and-effect and purpose-and-result relationships in regard to the events in a text,

4. whether the role players in the video during the application of video-aided instruction in a group are the students' classmates makes any significant difference,

5. if any difference can be found in terms of discovering implied meanings in a text,

6. if any difference can be found in terms of students' ability to interpret emotions, opinions, and dreams by putting themselves in the place of characters, and

7. what the students think about the applications.

Methodology

This study, conducted according to a post-test experimental design, was carried out on three different experimental groups consisting of a total of 134 seventh-grade primary-school students (See Table 1). The students in the first experimental group received instruction by a

video in which their classmates played parts, those in the second group by a computer-aided ELVES method, and those in the third group by a video in which their classmates did not play parts. We used their first-term grade-point averages in their Turkish-language courses to determine the pre-study co-working groups.

Table 1. Research Design

Groups	N	Method	Post- test
Group I	45	Video Aided Ins.(students in the first group as classmates of those who took part in the video)	Applied
Group II	42	Computer Aided ELVES method	Applied
Group III	47	Video Aided Ins.(those who are not classmates of the students who took part in the video)	Applied

The teacher conducted the ELVES method applied to experimental group two with the aid of a presentation we prepared using MS PowerPoint (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). Turkish language teachers at the school conceived and scripted the three-act play the presentation used, which was called *The King and the Theatre*. The school's theatre club then produced and video-recorded the play for experimental groups one and three (See Figure 3).

Neither the video-educated students or those experiencing the computer-aided ELVES method had ever read the text of *The King and the Theatre* or seen its theatre adaptation. In order to induce the children to follow the educational methods carefully, we had the teachers distribute a video-watching form to the video-educated children and a presentation follow-up form to those who took part in the ELVES method and ask them to fill them in during the session.

Figure 1. A screen image of the ELVES presentation
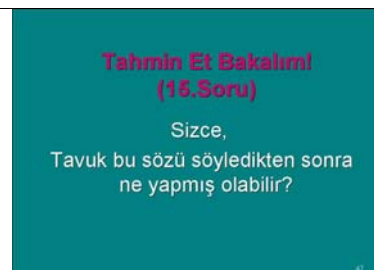
Figure 2. A screen image of the ELVES presentation

Figure 3. A screen image of the video, *The King And The Theatre*

The post-test applied to determine the students' success in learning the text consisted of 17 open-ended, matching, and fill-in-the-blanks questions testing their ability to determine the topics, the main and supporting ideas, the key words, and the implications of what they had heard, watched, or both, and the elements concerning the cause-and-effect and purpose-and-result relationships, place, time, and characters(See Table 2).

The students answered a total of 50 questions, 16 within the post-test and its sub-questions. We therefore conducted an evaluation of 100 points. We undertook the preparation of the answer key, point scoring, and assessment of answer sheets together with the school's Turkish-language teachers.

Table 2. Table of specifications regarding the post-test

Target behaviors: (Ability to comprehend and analyze what is listened to or watched)	Question No
1. Ability to make sentences through the use of words and phrases within the context of what is listened to /watched.	1
2. Ability to find out key words found in what is listened to/watched.	2
3. Ability to determine the topic of what is listened to/watched.	3
4. Ability to tell the main idea or sustaining emotion of what is listened to /watched.	4
5. Ability to realize supporting ideas/emotions in what is listened to/watched.	5
6. Ability to determine such elements as plot, place, time, characters and others in what is listened to/watched.	6,7,8
7. Ability to determine cause-effect relations in what is listened to/watched.	10,7
8. Ability to determine purpose-result relations in what is listened to/watched.	11,6
9. Ability to discover implied meanings in what is listened to/watched. .	13,7
10. Ability to summarize what is listened to/watched in a chronological and logical order.	12
11. Ability to build up questions regarding what is listened to/watched.	13
12. Ability to answer questions regarding what is listened to/watched.	14
13. Ability to make comparisons regarding what is listened to/watched.	15.
14. Ability to interpret events, emotions, ideas and dreams by putting oneself into the place of characters.	13.14.16
15. Ability to propose a variety of solutions to problems presented in what is listened to/ watched.	16

We used a feedback form consisting of six questions using a three-point Likert scale to determine how the students found the application. The feedback form generally made an

attempt to determine whether the application had aroused their interest in the lesson, what kind of problems they had experienced, whether they had enjoyed the application, and if they wanted to allocate more time to such applications.

Findings

In order to determine these research groups' relative responses to their computer classes, we compared their Turkish course grades during the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year using the one-way analysis of variance method and found no significant differences in regard to their achievement in their Turkish-language courses [F(2-132)=1.18, p=.31>.05].

In order to answer the research question about whether significant differences exist between the research groups in regard to their comprehension of the text's topic, main idea, and supporting ideas, we compared the group members' final test results using an ANOVA test, and found a significant difference in favour of the group who experienced the computer-aided ELVES method [F(2-132)=22.39, p< .05]. According to the Scheffe test we performed to establish in which classes this difference existed, the students in experimental groups one (X=3.28) and three (X =2.10) achieved lower results than those in experimental group two (X = 10.76). According to the homogeneity test, the test variances are homogeneous (p= .74 >.05). Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. ANOVA test results dealing with the success of comprehending the topic, main idea, and supporting idea.

	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Squares	f	Sig.	Mean Difference
Between Groups	1993.22	2	996.61	22.39	.000	I–II, III–II
Within Groups	5876.22	132	44.52			
Total	7869.44	134				

In order to answer the research question about whether significant differences exist between the research groups in regard to the identification of the event, place, time, entity, and elements related to these, we compared the group members' final test results using an ANOVA test and found a significant difference in favour of the group who experienced the computer-aided ELVES method [F(2-132)=61.27, p < .05]. According to the Scheffe test we

performed to establish in which classes this difference existed, the students in experimental
groups one (X=18.02) and three (X =15.10) achieved lower results than those in
experimental group two (X = 29.19). According to the homogeneity test, the test variances
are homogeneous (p= .104 >.05). Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4. ANOVA test results dealing with success in identifying the event, place,
time, entity, and elements related to these.

	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Squares	f	Sig.	Mean Difference
Between Groups	5089.69	2	2544.84	61.27	.000	I–II, III–II
Within Groups	5482.68	132	41.54			
Total	10572.37	134				

We found a significant difference in regard to the identification of cause-and-effect and
purpose-and-result relationships about the events in the text in favour of the group who
experienced the computer-aided ELVES method [F(2-132)=30.29, p < .05]. According to the
Scheffe test we performed to establish in which classes this difference existed, the students in
experimental groups one (X=10.09) and three (X =9.23) achieved lower results than those in
experimental group two (X = 15.02). According to the homogeneity test, the test variances
are homogeneous (p= .57 >.05). Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5. ANOVA test results showing the success of students' identification of
cause-and-effect and purpose-and-result relationships in regard to the events in the
text.

	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Squares	f	Sig.	Mean Difference
Between Groups	896.78	2	448.39	30.29	.00	I–II, III–II
Within Groups	1969.03	132	14.81			
Total	2865.82	134				

In order to answer the research question about whether significant differences in
achievement between the research groups occur when a classmate appears in the video, we

compared the groups' final test results using a t-test and found a significant difference in favour of the students whose classmates appeared in the video ($t_{(92)}$=3.32; p < .05). Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6. Independent t-test results in regard to the effect on student success of whether those having a role in the video were classmates.

Groups	N	Mean	t	sd	p
Group I*	45	37.16	3.32	.90	.001
Group III	47	28.13			
Total	92				

*Group I with a classmate in the video

In order to determine whether any meaningful differences may be found in regard to the students' ability to discover implied meanings in a text, we compared the groups' post-test results with an Anova test and found a significant difference in favour of the group who experienced the ELVES method in regard to their ability to discover implied meanings in a text [F(2-132)=40.792 , p < .05]. According to the results of the Scheffe test we conducted to determine at which grade between-group differences exist, the students in experimental groups one (X=2.46) and three (X=3.26) were less successful than those in group two (X=9.39). The homogeneity test found the variances to be homogeneous (p= .65>.05). Table 7 shows the test results.

Table 7. ANOVA test results in regard to the students' achievement in discovering implied meanings in a text.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.	Mean Difference
Between Groups	1314.48	2	657.24	40.79	.00	I–II, III–II
Within Groups	2126.78	132	16.11			
Total	3441.259	134				

In order to answer the question about the students' ability to interpret events, emotions, ideas, and dreams by putting themselves in the place of the characters in the text, we

compared the group members' post-test results with an ANOVA test and found a significant difference in favour of the group who experienced the computer-aided ELVES method [$F(2\text{-}132)=66.583$, $p < .05$]. According to the results of the Scheffe test we conducted to determine at which grade between-group differences exist, the students in experimental groups one ($X=5.23$) and three ($X=4.17$) were less successful than those in experimental group two ($X=12.41$). The homogeneity test found the variances to be homogeneous ($p= .399 > .05$). Table 8 shows the test results.

Table 8. ANOVA results regarding the students' achievement in interpreting events, emotions, ideas and dreams by putting themselves in the place of the characters in a text.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.	Mean Difference
Between Groups	1841.52	2	920.76	66.58	.00	I–II, III–II
Within Groups	1825.41	132	13.83			
Total	3666.93	134				

We analysed the answers in the feedback form to determine how the students found the application and found that 67% of those in experimental group one, 57% in group two, and 47% in group three responded that they thought that the time given for the applications was adequate. Between 80% and 90% of the students in all three groups also responded that they enjoyed their application and wanted to go ahead with it, and 88% of the students in experimental group one, 96% in group two, and 73% in group three responded that they believed that the application had aroused their interest in Turkish-language lessons. Only 2% of the students in group one and 7% in group two found the application difficult and boring, and only 4% to 12% of the students in all three groups responded that they experienced such problems as technical and classroom ones during the applications. Table 9 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 9. Student's views of applications attending the study.

Questions of the feedback form	(Group III) (%)			(Group II) (%)			*(Group I) (%)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
The applications aroused my interest in Turkish-language lessons.	0	27	73	0	4	96	0	12	88
I was provided with sufficient time to complete the activities in the application.	12	41	47	3	40	57	3	30	67
Problems I experienced with the application prevented me from comprehending the subject.	58	30	12	93	3	4	54	32	12
I want to allocate time for such applications in extracurricular environments.	2	16	81	4	0	96	1	18	81
The application was a difficult and boring one.	60	4	36	90	3	7	84	14	2
I enjoyed the application; it was entertaining.	1	17	82	2	4	94	0	19	81

1: Disagree, 2: Neutral, 3: Agree   * Group I with a classmate in the video

Discussion

This study compared a computer-aided ELVES method with a video-aided instruction method supported by different techniques in terms of student achievement in responding to text instruction. It also obtained feedback from students about the applications.

This study found that in terms of a) comprehension of the topic, main idea, and supporting ideas of the text, b) identification of the event, place, time, entity, and elements related to these, and c) identification of cause-and-effect and purpose-and-result relationships in regard to the events in the text, the computer-aided ELVES method is more effective and successful than the video-aided one.

This study also found that the group who experienced the ELVES method achieved at significantly higher levels in regard to the two important text-comprehension-studies target behaviours of a) being able to interpret events, emotions, ideas, and dreams by putting themselves into the place of the characters in a text and b) being able to discover implied meanings in a text. This difference in the students' achievement can be explained by the use of "guess-what?" sections prepared according to the ELVES method, as these trigger analysis of text structure and thinking. In particular, "guess-what?" questions posed during the extend and savour steps may be the primary factors creating this difference. These

findings agree with those of Yangın (1998) and Cayci and Demir (2006) demonstrating the positive effects of the ELVES method on student listening and comprehension skills.

According to another findings of study, within the area of video-aided education also found that the appearance of classmates in a video has positive effects on student achievement, with students paying more attention and focusing on the subject more during video-aided instruction to those course-material videos in which their classmates take part. The results of this research match up with the results which assert that video-aided teaching to be an effective and interpretive education method for evaluating student skills and have a potential to support alternative experiences (Hults&Edents, 2003; Friel&Carboni 2003), and also support the studies which have concluded that establishing a teaching-and learning environment by using theatre and drama throughout the activities for developing word attack skills when the occasion arises has advantages (Sever, 2001; Shandall, Schramm, & Seibert, 2003; Kavcar, 1999). However, the students might have had difficulties in associating their classmates with the roles, having known them beforehand, and could have had a critical eye on them. This could be a limitation to employing this technique, which may be among the reasons it performed more poorly in text instruction than the ELVES method. Perhaps future studies could use cartoon characters and classmates within the same scenario and then observe any differences in the students' attention and achievement. When the final test scores on five different target behaviors the study sought to answer regarding listening/watching skills are analyzed, it can be observed that there was some difference in favor of the group exposed to computer aided ELVES method. This conclusion raises a question as to which target behaviors are developed through computer aided ELVES method in the most efficient manner. With this purpose in mind, when the final test scores of Group II exposed to ELVES method on each target behavior were analyzed separately, it was discovered that they proved to be more successful in identifying the event, place, time, entity, and elements related to these (%83.4), and interpreting events, emotions, ideas and dreams by putting themselves in the place of the characters in a text (%82.73). This is followed by identification of cause-and-effect and purpose-and-result relationships in regard to the events in the text (%75.1), comprehending the topic, main idea, and supporting ideas (%71.73) and achievement in discovering implied meanings in a text (%62.6) respectively. These results (Stanton et al, 2004; Hartley, 2007) are analogous to those of the study on collective narration to children.

As for the students' opinions about the activities; most of the students in all the three experimental groups stated that they had enjoyed the activities and their attachment to the Turkish course had increased, and the number of students who stated that the given time was adequate was lesser in the third experimental group (those who are not classmates of the students who took part in the video) than that in the first and second groups (Group I= 67% Group II= 57% Group III= 47%). Similarly, more of the students in the third experimental group, compared to those students in the other groups, thought that the research had been difficult and boring (Group I=2; Group II=3; Group III=% 36). The reasons of these findings can be juxtaposed as follows: students in the third experimental group are lacking of the activities which would orient them to thinking throughout their studies, lack of a training based on user control, lack of the elements which could keep the attention alive, and students need to listen the story another couple of times to comprehend. It may be inferred that the students in the first and the second groups comprehended the story faster and got less bored; thanks to the questions asked in the Elves method for the second group, and the status of the students in the first group as classmates of those who took part in the video. This result also explains the inversely proportional relationship between experimental groups' rates of enjoyment for training activities and end-test points.

Conclusion

Thanks to computer aided Elves method, the students of the experimental group moved from being passive watchers/listeners and internalized the story. In addition they were able to identify elements related to events, place, time and characters and answer the questions more successfully. Furthermore, they were able to empathize with characters in the story and thus had more capability to interpret events, emotions, ideas and dreams. This can be interpreted as the fact that such questions under the section "Guess what?" in computer aided ELVES method as "What would you do?" and "Do you think this is a right behavior?" may have led to thinking on the part of students. This study also found that besides finding the applications interesting and enjoyable, most of the students in the experimental groups faced no problems related to the time or the use of programme. It could therefore be hypothesised that a positive correlation exists between positive opinions about the applications and academic achievement.

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Research findings are important for intersecting different information technologies and methods in order to eliminate the problems and difficulties encountered whilst teaching texts during language instruction and therefore ensuring more effective instruction designs.

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