An ESP Internet-Based Program to Develop EFL Iraqi College of Police Cadets' Listening Skills

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Abstract

This research investigated the effectiveness of using an ESP internet-based programto develop Iraqi Police Academy Cadets' EFL listening skills. Participants of the research were t w o groups of third year stage of Iraqi police Academy (one experimental and one control). Instruments of the research were an EFL listening test. The experimental group was taught based on the ESP online program and the control group received regularinstruction. Post-test and scale were administered to both groups after the program has been applied. Results showed that experimental group outperformed the control group. This indicated that the program had a significant impact on developing EFL listening skills and increased the cadets` listening skills performance. Therefore, it is concluded that using an ESP online course is effective in developing EFL listening skills for Iraqi College of Police Cadets and increase their Achievement towards learning English language skills.
Key words: ESP Online Program, EFL Listening Skills.

(الخلاصة)

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من تأثير استخدام برنامج اللغة الإنكليزية لأغراض خاصة القائم على الإنترنت لتطوير مهارات الإستماع لدى طلاب كلية الشرطة العراقية.

اعتمدت الدراسة على التصميم شبه التجريبي. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف ، تم استخدام عدد من الأدوات: (١) استبيان مهارات الاستماع . و (٢) اختبار مهارات الاستماع القبلي والبعدي.

تكونت عينة البحث من ٦٠ طالب من السنة الثالثة في كلية الشرطة العراقية والذين تم اختيارهم بطريقة عشوائية. تم تقسيم المشاركين إلى مجموعتين. تجريبي (تم تدريسه من خلال برنامج عبر الإنترنت) والتحكم عن بعد والمجموعة الاخرى درست بالطريقة التقليدية (تدريس وجهاً لوجه) .

أشارت النتائج إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات الإختبار البعدي للمجموعتين لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. بالإضافة إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات الإختبارين القبلي والبعدي للمجموعة التجريبية لصالح الإختبار البعديّ لمهارة الإستماع . قدمت الدراسة الحالية دليلاً على أن استخدام برنامج التدريس عبر الإنترنت كإستراتيجية في تنشيط التدريس والتعليم وكان فعالًا في تعزيز مهارات الإستماع باللغة الإنجليزية لطلاب كلية الشرطة العراقية وزيادة تحصيلهم في تعلم مهارات اللغة الإنكليزية الأخرى.

تعتبر هذه الدراسة من الدراسات المهمة في الوقت الراهن في ظل وجود جائحة كورونا العالمية التي اثرت على كل دول العالم مما تسبب في غلق المدن والجامعات بحيث اصبح التعليم الإلكتروني حاجة ملحة في ظل الظروف الحالية .

خلصت الدراسة وأوصت بأهمية استخدام برنامج اللغة الانكليزية للأغراض الخاصة عبر الإنترنت والذي له تأثير كبير على تعزيز الإستراتيجية في التدريس وتعلم الإستماع والمهارات اللغوية الأخرى وزيادة دافعية و تحفيز المتعلمين نحو تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية . وتساعد هذه الدراسة الباحثين في التعلم الالكتروني من خلال النتائج التي توصلت اليها بحيث تشكل طريقا توجيهيا للباحثين في استخدام تكنولوجيا التعليم في معظم الجامعات

Introduction:

Learning English nowadays is becoming a requirement for students from different countries around the world, especially when it is the language of instruction. A strong interest in listening skills should be considered to develop good communication skills. Acquiring listening skills is definitely essential in learning a language. According to (Richards, 2010), the main purpose of listening in learning a second language is to support comprehension of spoken dialogue. Teachers find listening to be the most difficult skill to teach due to a variety of factors related to planning and learner attitudes (Wilson, 2010). Most teachers still use traditional methods to teach listening skills. This technique is unproductive as learners get tired of listening to English, especially communication and conversation as it is time consuming. Many strategies have been employed to develop listening skills in the classroom through face-to-face interactions, new technological techniques, or a combination of both techniques known as blended learning. Technology and multi-tool learning environments are becoming more important.

Recent scientists have confirmed that Internet applications and tools have the potential to dramatically change the way we share information, meet new people, and interact with friends, family, and colleagues. For this reason, these Internet tools are very popular among people all over the world, especially in everyday educational settings.In the current research, the researcher conducted motivation scale in form of a questionnaire items to learn about students' motivation, perceptions and opinions of the teaching materials used to teach listening skills, and increase their achievement towards learning English. Results showed different opinions regarding online or face-to- face teaching methods. Additionally, while many students prefer virtual instruction for its flexibility in time, research results suggested

the impact of using the ESP Internet-based program to develop cadets' listening skills and increase their achievement towards learning English language skills.

Review of Literature and Related Studies:

-Listening Comprehension Skills:

Nature and Importance of Listening Comprehension Skills:

Listening is often defined as the process by which one can understand spoken language. It is a lively and sensible process by which listeners focus on taking out the essential information from the spoken language, comprehend its meaning and understand its function, and produce linguistically appropriate output through combining them with the contextual clues and their background knowledge" (O`Malley, Chamot, and Küpper, 1989, p. 282). Listening is a psychological process which takes place on a cognitive level inside people`s heads, and a social phenomenon, which develops interactively between people and the environment surrounding them. Listening is a multifaceted process with which one is required to be understood to teach it, and consequently, appraise it before being incorporated with phonological facets (Tyagi, 2013).

Listening is one of the most important skills for everyday communication. If we are not able to listen effectively, messages will be easily misunderstood and communication will break down. The importance of listening skills can be seen as First, it plays a vital role in communication and social interaction. Second, listening is very important for students' academic success. Third, it facilitates the acquisition of other language skills, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is important in the communication process in general. Adrian (2002) described listening as the queen of communication because the more the listeners understand what they hear, the more they can speak well. Listening also plays an important role in social interaction. For instance, most jobs need the ability to listen and receive information from others because if individuals have limited listening skills, they will not be able to interact properly (Smith, Finn, and Dowdy, 1993).

In the past, listening was seen as a neglected skill, but now it is an active skill for learners' minds and requires more attention in language learning (Hamed, 2003). In the same context, the importance of listening comprehension for academic success was mentioned. It should be studied as steps or stages. The following are the stages of listening:

- Hearing refers to the response caused by sound waves stimulating the sensory receptors of the ear; it is physical response; hearing is a

perception of sound waves; it means you must hear to listen, but you need not listen to hear.

- Understanding: is a process which helps to understand symbols we have seen and heard. People must analyze the meaning of the stimuli they have perceived.
- Remembering is a process by which an individual has not only received and interpreted a message but has also added it to the mind's storage bank."
- Evaluating is a process by which an active listener (not a passive one) can take part in listening. The listener weighs evidence, sorts fact from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message.
- Responding is the final step which necessitates that the receiver completes the process through verbal and/or nonverbal feedback; because the speaker has no otherway to determine if a message has been received. This stage becomes the only overt means by which the sender may determine the degree of success in transmitting the message" (Tyagi, 2013).

Listening has an important role both in daily life and in academic contexts as it is crucial for people to sustain effective communication. In spite of the importance of listening in the development of the communicative and cognitive skills, it did not start to take its place in language teaching curriculum for long years. However, in recent years, with the emphasis given in communication in language teaching, listening started to take its long-deserved place in language programs. Although there are different perspectives to teaching listening, the success of each perspective somewhat depends on addressing and minimizing the listening comprehension problems experienced by language learners.

Online Language Teaching and Learning and its important in TEFL.

Many researchers have suggested and offered evidence of superior outcomes with online learning as opposed to traditional face-to-face modes of learning. The advantages they pointed out included elimination of barriers of cost, time, distance, and socio- economic status while allowing individuals to take more responsibility for their learning, which became lifelong (Stansfield, 2004). Many recent research in both practitioners and academics alike have shown tremendous interest in online learning which referred to the delivery of training, education and collaboration using various electronic media, but predominantly the internet whose tools have given the greatest impetus to the development of online learning. It is

remarkable that online learning is used by educational institutions which regard intellectual capital as a primary source of revenue and use online learning to increase the learner's motivation (Cross, 2004). Most researches indicated advantages of online learning, such as greater flexibility;providing any place, any time learning; opportunities for learners to access resources not available locally; and broader possibilities for collaboration (Matthews-Aydinli, 2005).

Researchers and other scholars agree that teaching online is not the same as teaching face to face (F2F) and many educators are challenged by and ill-prepared for the transition from the F2F to the virtual classroom. Therefore, even if language teacher educators have mastery of their content and teaching methodology in physical classrooms, they need to acquire new skills for teaching online and institutions need to provide the resources necessary for this professional development. Online technology provides the opportunity to integrate ESP, the tools, and devices to design activities for a variety of learning situations advantages (Richardson and Swan, 2003). Abrams, (2003) in his research has shown that online communication with native speakers has positive learning effects as it enables language learners to have oral communication with real audiences and provides them with authentic language experiences.

Researches Related to Using Online Teaching Program in Enhancing Listening skills:

Many researches have investigated the impact of using online teaching course on developing learners' listening skills, and increase achievement towards learning language skills. For example, Banditvilai, (2016), investigated the use of blended learning (BL) to develop students' language skills and learner autonomy in Asian university situation. This type of learning incorporated computer education with face-to-face communication with a teacher. The study shed light on the results of using ESP teaching in classes in Thailand where e- learning strategies were used in parallel with traditional classroom language teaching methods of the four language learning skills. The study concluded that online exercise is straight forwardly advantageous to improve the four essential language skills as well as autonomous learning and learners' motivation.

In addition, Novitasari (2019), conducted a study to assess twelve ESP Online learners' perception and experiences with collaborative ESP online learning in their listening class. The data were obtained by utilizing questionnaires and interviewing the learners. The findings revealed that most learners perceived collaborative learning positively. Collaborative learning

effectively helped the learners learn in a comfortable environment. By implementing collaborative learning, the learners could work together to solve problems, get meaningful feedback, and trigger confidence which led to more opportunities to practice ESP listening and speaking activities.

Moreover, Elkomy (2020), aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using MassiveOpen Online Courses (MOOC) on developing EFL secondary school students' listening skills and their self-directed learning. The research adopted the quasi- experimental design with one group pre-post-test. The participants consisted of 20 students of 1st secondary stage at Future Language Schools in Tanta who were taught through the MOOC. Data were collected through using the following instruments: course topics checklist, a pre-post listening comprehension skills test, a self - directed learning scale (SDLS), a speaking assessment rubric and a student reflection log. Findings of the study revealed that participants' performance in listening, and self-directed learning was improved significantly. The effect size of the course was found to be high, and it was recommended to use MOOCs as an effective technique in teaching EFL skills.

Pilot Study:

To determine the students' competence in listening skills, the researcher administered an EFL pilot listening skills test to (20) third year stagefor Police Academy cadets. The following tables show the results.

Table (1): Listening Comprehension Skills' Test Results

Listening	Score	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentof Mean (%)
Listening for Main Idea	4	0.75	0.639	18.8%
Listening for Specific Details	4	1.45	0.605	36.3 %
Guessing the Meaning of Difficult Words	4	1.60	0.598	40 %
Making Inference	4	1.25	0.639	31.3%
Listening for Gist	4	0.55	0.605	31.8%
Total degree of Test	20	5.60	1.603	28%

Results of the pilot study as shown in tables (1) asserted that EFL Iraqi Police Academy cadets are not at the desired level in listening and speaking skills as clear in each of the defined skills' mean scores.

Statement of the Problem:

Based on the researcher's observation, review of literature and the results of the pilot study, the research problem was stated as follows "EFL third year stage cadets have weaknesses in their listening comprehension skills. Consequently, it became essential to find a solution for this problem,

so a proposed an ESP internet program was designed to enhance cadets' listening skills, and promote their achievement towards learning English language skills.

Research Questions:

This research attempted to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of an ESP internet-based program to develop Iraqi PoliceAcademy Cadets' listening comprehension skills?

What is the impact of using an ESP internet-based program on improving (IPACs) Iraqi Police Academy Cadets' listening skills?Hypotheses:

This research attempted to verify the following hypotheses:

1. "There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the experimentalgroup and the control group in the mean score of the listening posttest in favor of the experimental group".
2. "There is a statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the mean score of the pre- and post-administration of the listening skills test on the   experimental group in favor of the post administration".

Purpose:

The present research aimed at enhancing EFL listening skills of Iraqi Police Academy cadets and their achievement towards learning English language skills using an ESP internet-best program.

Significance:

The present study could be significant for cadets-students, teachers, curriculum designers and researchers:

- For Students:

The research provided them with activities and opportunities to enhance their   listening skills inside and outside the classroom setting, enabled them to use more communicative, cooperative, collaborative and competitive active learning strategies and created a motivated, and positive learning environment for them through:

1. Providing cadets, students information about important topics; (ESP online program (internet-based learning), listening for teaching EFL.
2. Helping students to better learn the English language through the ESP online program.
3. Encouraging students to learn through online programs.
4. Promoting learners to get better involved in learning activities and tasks.

5. Solving the problems that Iraqi cadets face in EFL listening skills, and further, could motivate them towards learning the English language, and improving their online learning experience to fulfill their needs.

- For Teachers:

Drawing the attention of teachers to integrate listening skills into an ESP online teaching program activity, and effectiveness of using an ESP internet-based program in promoting listening skills.

- For Curriculum Designers:

Benefited curriculum designers from the outcomes of the present research in preparing a suitable curriculum for the future stage of teaching students, and stressing on the importance of integrating technology in designing listening, tasks and activities of English language to increase motivation and facilitating teaching.

- For EFL Researchers:

Providing researchers with some insights into improving EFL listening skills and increasing achievement through using an ESP online teaching program, and paving the way for other future researchers' studies to use online teaching strategies to improve   other language skills.

Delimitations:

The current research was delimited to the following:

1. Designing an ESP internet-based program grounded on the most updated available internet applications intended to improve Iraqi Police Academy cadets' listening skills.
2. A sample of 60 cadets at the Iraqi Police Academy in Baghdad-Iraq, randomly selected to enroll in classes during the years 2022-2023.
3. It is limited to some selected some listening sub-skills.

Research Methodology:

Participants:

A sample of (n=60) EFL cadets were selected as representative of the whole population (N=300) of the Iraqi Police Academy third year stage cadets. The participants were secondary school graduates and their age ranged between (20-22) years. They come from different types of social group regardless of their economic factor, religion affiliation, and they are carefully selected in accordance with the level of college policy and criteria. The two groups were compared in terms of homogeneity before the application of the program.

Design:

First, quasi experimental design was adopted in the current research. Participants   of the research were divided into two equal groups: a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group was taught EFL listening and speaking   skills using the online teaching program activities, while the control group was taught the same skills using the traditional method which was recommended by Teacher's Guide of the given ESP textbook.

The quasi- experimental research design was employed in the current study precisely to determine the effect of the implementation of an ESP internet-based program on improving Iraqi EFL Police Academy Cadets' listening skills in Iraqi college of police. The pre-test was applied before implementing the program. Then, after the treatment, the post-test was applied.

Additionally, the quantitative qualitative method was used to determine any marked differences between experimental group and control group. Descriptive statistics in the form of percentage and grading system were used to make a comparative analysis between these two groups.

 Collecting standardized information from participants through quantitative methods is appropriate with the research question (Robson, 2002). The qualitative method examined further how other variables such as an ESP internet -based program had a significant impact on the development of listening and speaking skills among the Cadets of Police Academy.

Research Instruments:

The following instruments were employed in the present study to give answers to the research questions:

  1- An EFL Listening Skills Test to assess the cadets' level in listening comprehension skills before and after the treatment.
  2-Course Topic Checklist used to decide the most important topics that are suitable for the sample of the research to be included in the online ESP program.
  3- A Proposed ESP Internet - based program designed by the researcher usedto develop cadets' listening ability and increase their achievement towards learning English language skills.

Results and Discussion:

The results of the research were statistically analyzed in terms of its hypotheses and they were discussed in the light of the theoretical background and related studies. Research results were reported as follows:

Testing the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis stated that

"There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the experimental group and the control group in the mean score of the listening post test in favor of the experimental group".

In order to test this hypothesis, a t-test was used. Table (2) illustrates the results.

Table:2

Comparing the control and the experimental groups performance in the post- administration of the listening skills test

Skills	The group	N.of cases	Means	S.D	df	t.Value	Sig.
Listening forthe main idea	Control	30	1.37	0.765		8.329	0.01 Sig.
	Experimental	30	2.80	0.551			
Listening for specific details	Control	30	3.27	0.521		6.947	0.01 Sig.
	Experimental	30	3.97	0.183			
Guessing the meaning of difficult words from context	Control	30	2.77	0.568	58	2.999	0.01 Sig.
	Experimental	30	3.20	0.551			
Making Inferencs	Control	30	2.33	0.661		4.367	0.01 Sig.
	Experim ental	30	3.07	0.640			
Listening forgist	Control	30	1.43	0.568		11.219	0.01 Sig.
	Experimental	30	3.27	0.691			
Total score of Test	Control	30	11.67	1.626		11.430	0.01 Sig.
	Experimental	30	16.30	1.512			

Table (2) indicated that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in individual listening skills and the total score of the test in the post administration in favor of the experimental group, where all the values of (t)
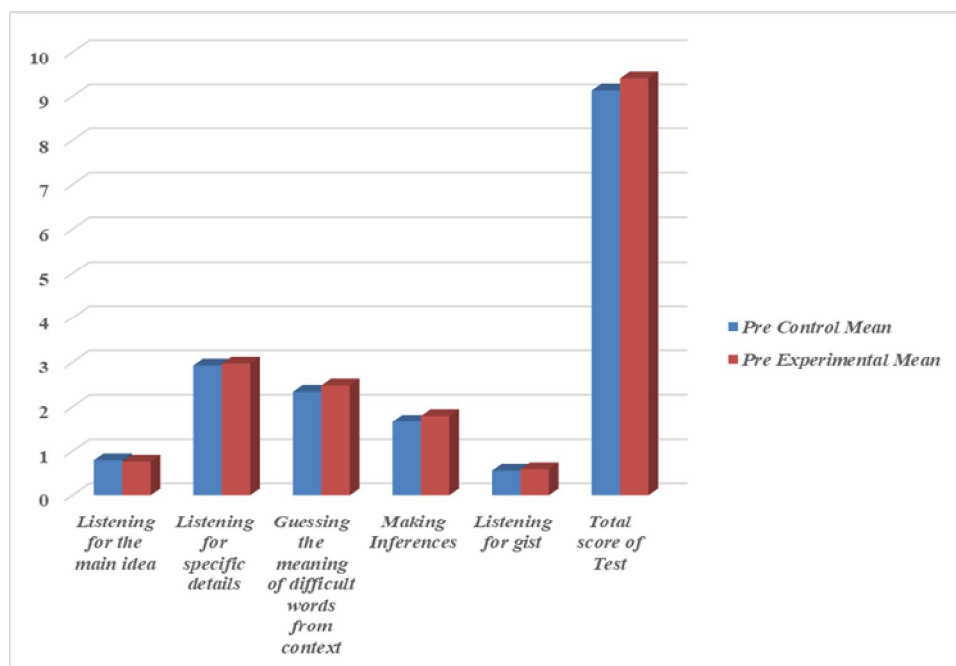
were statistically significant at(0.01) level. These results validated the first hypotheses. These differences can be attributed to the use of ESP online program.

Differences between the experimental group and the control group mean score in all sub skills of the post administration of the listening test are graphically illustrated in the following figure.

Figure: 1

The mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the post administration on the listening test skills and the total score

Testing the Second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis stated that: "There is a statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the mean score of the pre- and post-administration of the listening skills test on the experimental group in favor of the post administration".

To test this hypothesis, a t-test was used. Table 5 indicates the results.

Table (3)
Comparing the listening performance of the Experimental group on the listening posttest

Skills	The group	N.of cases	Means	S.D	df	t.Value	Sig.
Listening forthe main idea	pre – test	30	0.77	0.679		14.560	0.01 Sig.
	post – test	30	2.80	0.551			
Listening for specific details	pre – test	30	2.97	0.320		14.748	0.01 Sig.
	post – test	30	3.97	0.183			
Guessing the meaning of difficult words from context	pre – test	30	2.47	0.937	29	3.612	0.01 Sig.
	post – test	30	3.20	0.551			
Making Inferences	pre – test	30	1.80	0.805		7.346	0.01 Sig.
	post – test	30	3.07	0.640			
Listening forgist	pre – test	30	0.60	0.621		17.302	0.01 Sig.
	post – test	30	3.27	0.691			
Total score ofTest	pre – test	30	9.40	1.773		15.956	0.01 Sig.
	post – test	30	16.30	1.512			

Table (3) indicated that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students of the experimental group in the pre and post administration in individual listening skills and the total score in favor of the post administration, where all the values of (t) were statistically significant at the level of Significance (0.01) level. These results validated the second hypotheses. These differences can be attributed to the use of ESP online program.

Differences between the experimental group scores in the pre- post administration of the listening test in all the sub skills of the test are graphically illustrated in the following figure (2).

Figure: 1
The Mean Scores of the Experimental Group in the Pre – Post Administrations of the Listening Test and the Total Score
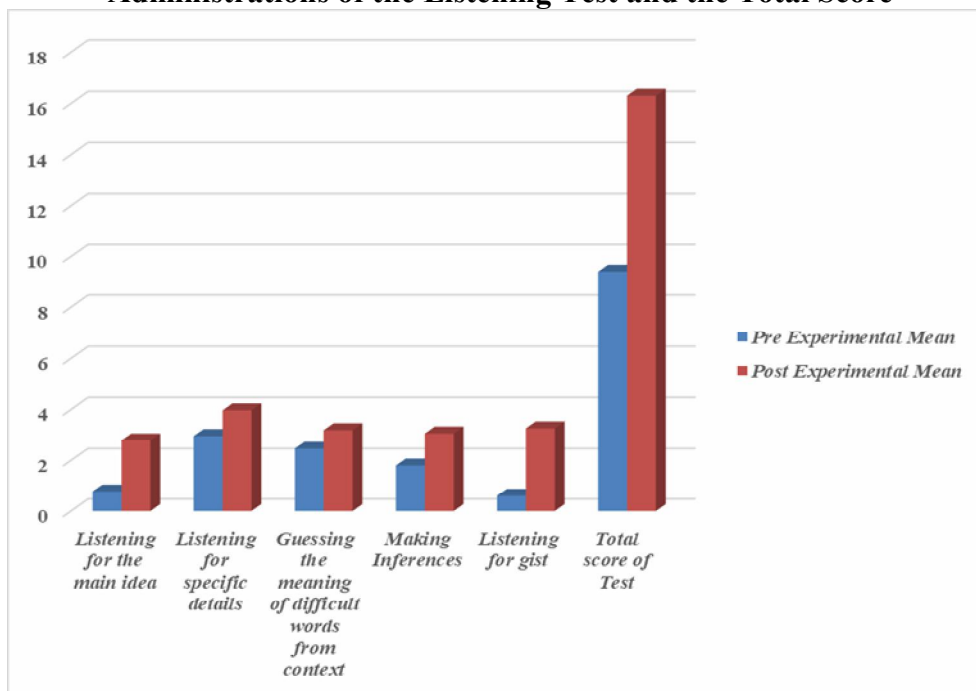
Conclusion:

According to data analysis, discussion, and results, it was concluded that an ESP internet program enhanced English listening skills for Iraqi College of Police cadets and increased their achievement towards learning English language skills. These results are   clear as t- values   were highly significant at 0.01 level. Also, results of the experimental group in the post test were better than those of the pre-test and better than the results of the control group.

These encouraging results were attributed to the designed ESP program and also to the positive impact of the learning environment. Encouraging learners to be autonomous and applying learning-centered approach helped greatly to achieve such results. As a matter of fact, listening and speaking are intrinsically related to each other, and used in teaching language skills, and we cannot separate between them. So, the more we are understanding what we heard effectively, the mor we can speak well (Tyagi,2013).

Moreover, diversity of exercises, additional activities and quizzes included in the program were so helpful and provided learners with enough practice to improve their listening significantly. Additionally, collaborative activities and communicative pair and group work were so effective in the students' success and raised their performance level towards learning listening, and other language skills. In brief, ESP online courses offered a better learning environment for the cadets, activated shy students, developed their listening skills, increased cadets' interaction.

Suggestions for Further Research:

This research suggested the following points:

Based on the findings of the current research, the following points are raised for further research:

1- Conducting a follow-up study on this research to see whether ESP has the same influence on other language skills (speaking, reading and writing).
2- Administering ESP learning programs on different Learners (i.e., any other ESP learners).
3- Conducting the experimental treatment on larger samples.
4- Conducting the ESP programs with other affective variables more than motivation (i.e., self-regulation, anxiety, autonomy).

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