
The Use of Audio Recording during Lectures by E.M.P Students and its Effect on the Learning Process

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ABSTRACT: *Audio recording of lectures is becoming a more common tool in the hands of university students, especially in English for specific purpose classes; the objective of this study is to highlight the reasons, the benefits as well as the limitations of using such a tool in such circumstances. Furthermore, clarifying to what extent does audio recording support students of English as a foreign language, acquire knowledge and perform well in tests. The data collection tools used are both qualitative and quantitative research methods, exploited to determine the impact of EFL university students' use of audio recording. Individual interviews and questionnaires were conducted in the Department of pharmacy, Faculty of medicine, University of Djillali Liabes, Sidi Bel-Abbes. We gave the questionnaires to One hundred and fifty (150) second-year students. After coding and analysing the data, the main findings showed that audio recording of lectures influenced student's performance and attendance in numerous ways.*

KEYWORDS: Audio recording, Class attendance, E.M.P classes, Test Performance.

1. Introduction :

In the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of students recording lectures. The main reason behind that would be the mere accessibility to technology, the convenience of possessing devices that would have audio-recording as an incorporated good (like MP3 players, tablets, smart phones, laptops etc.)

The purpose of this article is to shed light on the use of audio recording by the students of English for medical purposes mainly the

second-year pharmacy students at the Department of pharmacy, Faculty of medicine, University of Djillali Liabes, Sidi Bel-Abbes. In addition to that, we wanted to highlight the benefits of such a tool and weigh the possibility of incorporating recordings as part of the teaching material in the university's pedagogic design.

This study avoids any issues in regard or related to ownership, data protection and potential misuse by students.

2. Personal experience:

As novice teachers of medical English, we always sought experimenting with students to find better ways to seize their attention, keep them engaged and motivated, as well as help them learn. Hence the reasons for this study.

Our experience with audio recording started in 2016, after the exam of the first semester. We were in charge of teaching a pharmacy class of two hundred and thirty (230) students, and since the attendance was not mandatory, we only had around eighty (80) students who attended the lectures on regular basis. After the first exams, we were expecting that from eighty (80) up to one hundred (100) students would have good grades. However, we were surprised to find out that most of the class had great grades.

When we asked around for the possible causes, some of our students responded that they used audio recordings of lectures, and either shared them with friends or used them to make useful notes and spread those notes across the class. Which motivated us to conduct the study.

3. Introducing the study:

This study considers the circumstances surrounding the enabling of Algeria students to generate their own audio recordings and the potential of such a tool to enhance and personalize the acquisition of English as a foreign language.

The data collection tools used were both qualitative and quantitative research methods, exploited to determine the impact of medical English students' use of audio recording on their language acquisition and their test results. Individual interviews and questionnaires were conducted in the Department of pharmacy, Faculty of medicine,

University of Djillali Liabes, Sidi Bel-Abbes. We gave the questionnaires to One hundred and fifty (150) second-year students, and interviewed thirty (30) of them.

4. The Objectives:

The aim of this study was to address the following key elements:

- Distinguish the nature of problems that may occur while recording lectures at university.
- Measure the proportions of the use of audio recording in E.M.P. classes.
- Identify and assess the impact of student-made audio recordings on their learning experience, and their frequency of attendance.
- And last but not least, distinguish the potential benefits of further work and establish whether audio recording assists students in becoming further autonomous learners.

5. Research questions:

We had a set of questions that needed answering, ones that pushed us to conducted this study, which if answered would reflect an aspect of teaching English that has been neglected, these questions that were:

1. What are the possible benefits of using audio recordings during an E.M.P lecture?
2. When and how do students access recorded lectures?
3. What outcome do recorded lectures have on student attainment, attendance and exam results?

6. Hypothesis:

According to Traphagan, et al, in their article entitled: “Impact Of class lecture webcasting on attendance and learning” Lecture recording is a popular technology that provides an opportunity to benefit students’ learning through aiding revision and catching up missed classes. These benefits can be particularly useful for students who attend English as a foreign language course. Promoting Learner-centeredness and support self-directed studying since students will typically be re-listening to recordings in the evenings in order to aid examination revision,

assessment preparation and the understanding of particular topics covered in the syllabus (Traphagan, et al., 2010).

Therefore, the notion of having an option to take notes retrospectively (i.e., after the end of the actual lecture) allowed students to consider the entirety of the lecture first. In a sense that they would be more focused on the moment and the lecture and more engaged knowing that they can always take notes at home after listening to the audio recording.

Concerning the access to recorded lectures, the frequency could vary from one group of students to another. Since it was found that High performing students tend to take an active approach to using lecture recordings, reviewing specific sections of lectures (sometimes multiple times), whereas other students are more likely to take a surface approach and passively play the whole lecture (Owston, et al., 2011), (Leadbeater, et al., 2013) Students would engage with lecture recordings after either each class, or once a week or just prior to term exams.

Regarding the effect of audio-recording on students' attendance, well it is to note that student's attendance is complex and many factors including work , family commitments, transport, illness, assessment, lecture style, beliefs about learning and scheduling would influence students' ability and decisions to attend class (Bailey & Steve, 2015) (Westrick, et al., 2009). However , according to a study done by Collie and al. The availability of lecture recordings is a consideration for students deciding whether to attend class, but the actual impact is dependent on the context and is generally smaller than other factors (Collie, et al., 2009).

Studies monitoring attendance where lecture recording has been introduced ,have observed increased attendance like the case of the study conducted by Westrick, et al., (Westrick, et al., 2009). In other studies ,no change regarding attendance has been noted , the case of the study presented by Bailey & Steve (Bailey & Steve, 2015) (Westrick, et al., 2009). And in other cases there were decreased attendance, which was the case of the study presented by Drouin (Drouin, 2013) (Westrick, et al., 2009).

Regarding the influence of recording lectures on test results, some studies claim that recorded lectures have little to no effect on student results (Leadbeater, et al., 2013); whereas other studies suggest that

higher-achieving students tend to supplement recorded with live lectures (Von Kinsky, et al., 2009)).

There are considerable educational benefits to recording for educational purposes:

According to Traphagan (Traphagan, et al., 2010) and Phillips (Phillips, et al., 2011) a more frequent access to recorded lectures leads to more flexible learning (anytime and anywhere access to learning materials, at the learners own pace.) Accessibility (particularly useful for students whose first language is not English), Practicality (with the ability to pause, repeat or revisit challenging lectures to increase understanding), positive results and learning behaviours.

It also provides students with learning materials in multiple formats to suit individual learning preferences; especially since the playback of those recordings has been shown to refresh student's memory, reflect on some notes and re-engage with their thoughts (Fidler, et al., 2006)

To support revision for examination, the preparation for assessment and the understanding of particular topics covered in the syllabus.

We can also mention some of the exceptions in which students get visits from other universities or even other countries in the form of guest-teachers and having recordings of those lectures would have tremendous value especially since they will not be seeing the guest-teacher again.

7. Results and discussions:

In our trial, we asked the second-year pharmacy students at the Department of pharmacy, Faculty of medicine, University of Djillali Liabes, Sidi Bel-Abbes, if they thought their recordings were useful and if they helped them become better students, a considerable number of eighty-five (85 student which is more than 56%) said that half of the time audio recording come in extremely handy, and that it helped them prepare for tests and examinations.

Furthermore, when asked of the reason for listening to the audio recordings, most students said that they used it to enhance understanding of concepts from class and fewer said to study for exams or to take extra notes.

Quoting some of the students we interviewed:” *I use audio recording to better understand the lecture and know every notion that*

had been mentioned.”. Another one said: “I use audio recording because I tend to remember what I hear better than what I read”. And a third student stated: “while listening to recordings I try to visualize myself back at the time of recording so that my memory would actually print the recording in my head”.

Regarding the frequency of using and listening to audio recordings, when second year pharmacy student were asked how often they used recorded lectures, more than one hundred students (102 students which is 68% of the total number) said that they used it half of time, which is a considerable number of times if we take into account the number of lectures students have per term.

And when they were asked where and when would they access those recording, all of them said that they listened to them at home in the evenings, and when it came to the frequency more than half of them, which was ninety-three students (93 which is 62%) said two to three times, weeks after the recording or just prior to exams.

Concerning the effect recorded lectures has on student attainment, attendance and exam results, when we addressed the question of How often do you miss a class because you knew you would have the recordings anyways? More than half of them answered sometimes (81 student around 54%) and the rest answered by rarely,

Therefore, we would say that there is a slight impact on the students’ attendance especially in classes where the presence is not mandatory.

When we asked them if they believed that recording is a good substitute to attending the lectures most of them (98 student so around 65%) said that they think so to some extent. And by that we get somehow a better understanding of the actual situation in the Algerian university. Therefore, the recording of lectures should not be seen as a sole or significant cause of falling attendance rates by students at lectures.

It is clear that students who attend classes have better learning experiences and outcomes than students who do not. However, students who show up to class and use lecture recordings as part of effective revision and reflection strategies accomplish better results than students who just attend class and students who do not attend class and access

lecture recordings perform better than ones who neither attend lectures nor access lecture recordings (Williams, et al., 2012)

Furthermore, a previous study conducted at the Sheffield Hallam University ((Nortcliffe & Middleton, 2008)) showed that the students that made the most sustained and beneficial use of audio recording of lectures were those for whom English is a second language and the reasons to why could be that language, culture and learning practices might be barriers to student's learning. This is reinforced by the work of Leadbeater and his colleagues who claim that students from non-English speaking backgrounds gain specific benefits from accessing recorded lecture materials (Leadbeater, et al., 2013);which is the case of our medical students.

8. Samples of The Questionnaire:

Questionnaire

- How often do you record lectures:
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - I don't use recording
- Since when have you started using recordings:
 - Only this year
 - Last year
 - Since I got to university
 - In high School
- Do you ask the teachers for permission before recording:
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Never
- Do you find your recording useful when revising a lesson:
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Not really
- How would you describe the quality of the recording:
 - Great and clear
 - Mediocre but useful still
 - Bad and difficult to understand
- Do you believe that recording lectures is a good substitute to attending the lecture:
 - I highly agree
 - To some extent
 - I disagree
- How often do you miss a class because you knew you would have the recordings anyways:
 - A lot of the time
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
- How many times would you say you play the recording of a lecture:
 - Once
 - Twice
 - Three times
 - More than three times
- When do you access your recording:
 - The day you record it
 - a week after
 - Weeks after
 - Prior to exams
- Do you think using audio recording as a tool to study with, helps you become a better learner:
 - Yes, I totally think so
 - I think to some extent
 - Nope I think it is a waste of time
- Do you engage with lecture recordings to: tick all that applies:
 - Revise for exams
 - Enhance understanding of concepts from class
 - Take notes
 - Review materials if they missed a class
- Do you memorize better when listening to audios than from reading:
 - Yes I do
 - No, I don't

Figure 1 Samples of The Questionnaire

9. Conclusion:

Although this study was conducted only on medical English students, it is believed that the results would be the same for other fields especially ones related to English For Specific Purposes (E.S.P.).

To conclude we can say that the main findings showed that audio recording of lectures influenced student's performance and attendance in numerous ways, mainly positive ones. Since it allowed them to better understand the lecture and know every notion that had been mentioned, help them remember what they had addressed during the class, by allowing them to visualize themselves back at the time of recording.

In view of the fact that our main aim was to shed light on this technology, and why not have it as a part of the pedagogic educational system. This work is but a mere stepping stone for studies to come, we welcome any further work that would help cement the use of audio recording in the Algerian pedagogic educational system.

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