The Designing Process of L2 Listening Test with Visuals

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion of visuals in the second language (L2) teaching has been used widely, but involving them in L2 assessing, especially in L2 listening comprehension tests is rarely seen. Although some international exams like TOEFL are involved visuals in their listening tests, the listening parts of achievement or proficiency exams applied in preparatory schools do not include visuals related to the verbal message on the tests. One of the reasons why test developers do not include visuals frequently in L2 listening tests is the lack of agreement about what is assessed in the tests: the listening ability itself or the ability to understand both visual and verbal information together. Moreover, the inconclusive results of research- a positive, a negative, or no effect- on the effects of visuals on students' performance on listening tests are another factor that refrains test developers' use of visuals on listening tests. However, some researchers believe that since verbal interaction occurs with visual information in real-life settings, listening tests should also involve visual information. Taking into account the inconclusive results of the current studies examining the effects of visuals on L2 students' listening test performance, the present study was attempted to design two academic listening tests which comprise 10 similar parts (2 audio-only, 2 audio with content visuals, 2 audio with context visuals, 2 video with content visuals, and 2 video with context visuals).

Keywords: Academic listening test; listening comprehension; content visuals; context visuals; video