



Why Extensive Listening Matters? A Glimpse into the Perceived Benefits of the Extensive Listening Instructional Goals Designed for East Indonesian Students

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Introduction

Mastering listening skills to an acceptable extent is a laborious task for learners and teachers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Due to its complexity, listening is often considered the most challenging skill to acquire among other language skills. According to Brown (2007), the complexity of listening skills deals with the involvement of several data resources, such as linguistic, pragmatic, discourse, and prior knowledge, throughout different comprehension stages. Besides, Spear (2016) also remarked that the capacity of an individual's mental and cognitive process has also been assumed to contribute to its complexity. Over recent years, studies in EFL listening have demonstrated an increasing interest in adopting Extensive Listening (EL) as practical instruction to overcome students' listening difficulties (Chang, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang & Millet, 2016; Renandya & Farrell, 2011). These studies have emphasized the importance of implementing EL to improve listening fluency and other language skills, such as reading skills.

EFL students in Flores, East Nusa Tenggara of Indonesia, have struggled to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) within their contexts for years. Studies of EFL practices in East Indonesian settings revealed that learning to listen has been considered the most challenging part of their English language learning. Students' inability to handle speed rate, unfamiliar accents, tricky pronunciation, and lack of vocabulary mastery have been the primary sources contributing to their failure to learn to listen in the target language (Jemadi et al., 2022). On the other hand, Su et.al, (2020) remarked that their lack of background knowledge about the variety of topics, situations, or specific contents associated with the provided spoken texts has enormously contributed to their failure to construct the meaning of the given texts. This study also



confirmed that students' low engagement in self-regulated listening practices was another challenge experienced by both teachers and students in EFL listening practices (Su et al., 2020). In response, teachers in this setting attempted to transform their listening instruction into Extensive Listening (EL), assuming that more listening practices beyond the classroom would help students overcome their listening difficulties.

However, Ivone and Renandya (2019) and Blyth (2012) noted that EL takes work to organize. As students are free to personalize their EL practices, a lack of teacher control and unstructured time allocation might result in difficulty controlling and assessing their learning outcomes (Siegel, 2014). In this setting, EL is adapted as a course with structured and systematic instruction, and more importantly, it has been designed with specific instructional goals to achieve. Therefore, the current study was primarily conducted to examine the students' viewpoints toward the perceived benefits of the instructional goals designed for this course as reflections on the implications of this course design on the student's learning outcomes.

Literature Review

EFL Listening Instructions

Renandya and Farrell (2011) argued that beyond the mental and cognitive factors, instruction in EFL listening classrooms has also been identified as another source of listening problems, such as the comprehension-based instruction used in many intensive listening classes. Furthermore, they remarked that the comprehension-based instruction in listening courses contributes to the failure of teaching listening in EFL contexts, where most students are categorized as low-proficiency learners. According to Renandya and Farrell (2011), teachers could not expect low-proficient learners to be fluent in listening since they usually have limited prior knowledge about the topics, vocabulary, or the context area in which the language is used. In light of this, Stephens (2011) also affirmed that many EFL students suffer from listening difficulties since they persist in using comprehension-based instruction in teaching listening skills. The author stated that this instruction is unsuitable for teaching listening in an EFL setting since it is more about teaching language forms than meaning.

In line with this, according to Siegel (2014), comprehension-based listening instruction is assumed to contribute to listening difficulties among learners since it mainly requires students' ability to comprehend the suprasegmental aspects of the spoken text, such as rhythm, intonation, or stress in understanding the speakers' intention. Blyth (2012) and Siegel (2011) also suggested that comprehension-based instruction requires students' understanding of a variety of topics and spoken expressions used in different contexts and environments that might only work with students with high proficiency levels. Similarly, Swan and Walter (2017) criticized that comprehension-based listening activities, such as predicting, reading or listening for gist, identifying the main point(s) in a text, reading or listening for details, scanning for specific information, guessing or deducing the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions are more like placing students into a listening test with little diagnostic value rather than an instructional procedure. They claimed that the listening instructions in many EFL settings focus more on higher-level skills and strategies that are not typically appropriate for lower level EFL students.

Stephen (2011) agreed that listening activities, such as predicting and inferencing, understanding the structure of the text, or activating background knowledge, only sometimes effectively work for EFL students. She asserted that students' lack of prior knowledge about content areas and the given subject matter of the texts is assumed to be the source of their inability to deal with comprehension-based listening practices. Therefore, Wang and Renandya (2012) suggested that listening instruction should provide more opportunities for students to practice listening. As claimed by Goh & Vandergrift (2012), through the number of listening practices, other subskills of listening, such as vocabulary (Astika & Kurniawan, 2017; Chang & Millet, 2014), grammar (Lee & Cha, 2017), word recognition or speech rate control (Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016) will be automatically developed (Alm, 2013; Astika & Kurniawan, 2019; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang, et.al., 2019). Thus, teachers must expose the students to

various listening materials to broaden their background knowledge of the topics, functions, contexts, and meanings of English-speaking texts. Extensive listening (EL) can be adapted as another approach to designing the EFL listening instructions.

Extensive Listening

Extensive listening (EL) is a relatively new idea, and it has received little attention in teaching and learning second languages (Blyth, 2012; Chang, 2018). Extensive listening grew from the concept of extended reading (ER), or perhaps it simply arose from L1 listening. Since it is innovative, what it is and how it operates have yet to be fully understood by L2 instructors (Chang, 2011; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). In framing the principles of EL, Chang (2011) asserts that although ELT practitioners may need to become more familiar with this idea, extensive listening has always been integral to the first-language acquisition process.

EL is developed based on the principles of Extensive Reading (ER) previously prevalent in ELT. Following this, Renandya and Ivonne (2019) stated that the success of Extensive Reading (ER) should be followed by the emergence of EL in the ELT setting and should be more effective than the comprehension-based instructions applied in many intensive listening classrooms. There is a substantial distinction between intensive and extensive listening. The notion of “intensive listening” reinforces grammar and vocabulary acquisition. On the other hand, EL offers joyfully and pleasantly more comprehensible input from authentic circumstances (Milliner & Dimoski, 2019; Widodo & Rozak, 2016). Extensive listening can also be perceived as encouraging students to listen to various comprehension-appropriate listening resources that predominantly refer to self-selected listening practices.

Waring (2008) proposed the basic principles of EL comprising students’ level of English proficiency, listening materials, types of materials, and types of listening activities. He claimed that EL allows students to learn from the self-selection of listening materials based on their interests. They must be guided to listen to materials that expose them to various types of discourse (e.g., dialogic speech, accents, and cultures). In line with this, Vandergrift and Goh (2012) and Kemp (2010) also remarked that in EL settings, the listening level should correspond to their needs and level of comprehension, whether at or below it. According to Mayora (2017) and Nowrouzi (2015), in EL, the learner-centred approach is strongly suggested, in which students have autonomy in determining what, when, or how they should listen without the intervention of external parties, such as teachers. Unlike Intensive Listening, EL focuses more on the meaning than the target language’s form. This study also suggested that the values of accountability should be reflected in EL practices.

Renandya and Farrell (2010) highlighted that EL significantly promotes the development of learners’ affective domain. In line with this, Alm (2013) and Milliner and Dimoski (2019) confirmed that EL helps learners reduce their learning anxiety, particularly in tackling listening instructions for listening test preparation (Pamuji et al., 2021). Besides improving listening fluency and other aspects of foreign language proficiency, EL promotes self-esteem and motivation, reduces listening anxiety, and improves self-regulated learning and another positive attitude toward learning a foreign language (Chang, 2019; Chang & Millet, 2016). These studies argue that ELs allow learners to plan, manage, and evaluate their progress in listening, which might be outside of intensive listening classrooms.

Method

This study was descriptive qualitative research involving 15 students from a private university in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia as the participants. In collecting the data, the researchers organized the spoken and written feedback sessions through in-depth interviews and written reflection. The document analysis was also managed to see the gaps between the plan and its implementation. The data were qualitative in nature and were analysed using the qualitative data analysis application of NVIVO. This application

provided several stages, including filing, nodding, and coding, that can help researchers to do further analysis based on the sentiment or categorization presented from the data. To avoid the biases of the researcher's viewpoints toward the issues, the researchers applied the triangulation strategies comprising the triangulation of the theories and the data triangulation to increase the conclusion's validity and dependability.

Findings and Discussion

The document analysis highlighted that exposing students to a wide variety of listening courses is the primary goal of the EL course. In light of this, the instructional goals of this course did not explicitly confirm its objectives to improve students' language proficiency. The researchers assumed that the existing instruction is needed to perform what linguistic elements should be taught precisely, what the learner wants to do with the language, and what activities should be planned to stimulate or promote language acquisition through their EL practices. However, although it was not explicitly described, through the analysis of the detailed syllabus and the lesson plan, it was revealed that the applied instruction covered three primary goals comprising: a) improving students' listening skills, b) improving students' self-regulation in practising listening, and c) improving students' motivation in learning to listen to the target language as explained in the following sections. The following are the descriptions of their implications toward the students' learning outcomes.

The Perceived Benefits of the Instructional Goals

The result of the data analysis remarked that only 20% of the responses indicated the students' views that the applied instruction benefits them in improving their listening comprehension skills, and 19% of the respondents represented students' improvement in self-regulation. Nonetheless, 60% of the respondents reflected on the instructional impacts on their listening motivation.

TABLE 1

Students' Responses toward the Implications of EL Instructional Goals

Students Responds	Percentages	Sample of Arguments
Improving Listening Motivation	61%	<p>"I find a great difference between the intensive listening classroom and the extensive one, especially regarding freedom in selecting the materials."</p> <p>"I felt so excited when my teacher asked me to browse and choose the materials that meet my needs."</p> <p>"I feel excited about doing the listening practices on online listening websites such as YouTube, mmm... BBC Learning English, or podcasts."</p> <p>"I think, mmm...I really enjoy listening to the variety of topics in listening."</p>
Improving Listening Skills	20%	<p>"I think EL does extend my vocabulary, mmm...it also improves my pronunciation."</p> <p>"Listening to the variety of listening materials mmm....it helps me to umm...enrich my background knowledge about English."</p> <p>"Well, I think my vocabulary and pronunciation are improved through EL."</p>
Improving Self-Regulated Listening	19%	<p>"I feel excited because I can choose activities based on my proficiency levels. It also helps me to examine my level of comprehension."</p> <p>"Well, mmm... EL is challenging because it requires us to learn independently outside the classrooms."</p> <p>"I like practising EL because I can determine the materials by myself and organize my listening practices based on my interest."</p>

Improving Listening Skills

Current research in EFL listening provides empirical data on how EL helped students improve listening fluency (Chang, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang et al., 2019), extending vocabulary (Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Mayora, 2019), improving skills in handling speech rate, distraction, and nervousness in listening (Renandya & Farrell, 2011), and improving metacognitive awareness (Zeng & Goh, 2018). However, this finding reported that the EL designed in this course had minimal impact on the students' language improvement. The responses reflected the students' need for teachers' assistance in determining their listening goals and evaluating their listening progress. The following are samples of the student's reflections on this issue:

"I love watching Western movies. I can practice listening to the target language by watching English movies. However, I usually do not write notes while listening. So, I follow the talks. I cannot measure how far my English is improved through watching English movies."

"Listening to English songs is my favourite activity in practising EL. I think it is the best way to learn to listen in English. I can enjoy the music while doing other activities. Honestly, I do not pay attention to the lyrics of the songs. I enjoy it."

"I do EL through watching the English Podcasts available on YouTube. Nevertheless, I don't understand what should I do with the videos so that it can improve my listening skills."

The researchers argue that since it provides students with a wide variety of English spoken forms, EL is supposed to benefit students in improving their language proficiency and should be considered a crucial issue in determining the instructional goals of EL courses. In light of this, determining the specific linguistic elements and what the students are supposed to do with the language is critically needed in designing EL instruction. The variety of listening activities is also supposed to extend the language learning opportunities for students, such as their vocabulary, grammar, word recognition, and ability to handle speed rates and distractions.

Improving Listening Motivation

The data presented in Table 1 reflected that the most substantial implication of the applied EL instruction is enhancing the students' motivation in listening. 60% of responses identified through the data analysis stage indicated that EL has successfully improved their motivation in learning to listen to the target language. In this case, most students claimed that the current EL instruction could stimulate their learning interests by allowing them to determine and organize their listening practices based on personal needs. Considering this finding, the researches assumed that EL has been adapted as motivational strategy for promoting the love of listening among the students in this setting.

It can be highlighted that students view EL as an exciting course since it provides opportunities to manage listening practice outside the classroom. They remarked that by exploring the self-selected material, EL confirms its partiality over individual needs and interests that might be varied among them. Besides, considering the students' level of proficiency as another benefit, EL also promotes a more humanist and motivational learning process. The findings confirmed that providing students with more listening practices with various comprehensible and exciting materials through an enjoyable listening environment will significantly improve their learning motivation.

Improving Self-Regulation

The findings showed that only 19% of the students' responses indicated improved self-regulation. The findings revealed that the learning activities, strategies, and approaches applied did not significantly impact the improvement of self-regulation in listening. It was found that most students still needed help in planning and goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, as presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Students Engagement in Self-Regulated Listening

SRL indicators	Percentages	Sample of arguments
Planning and Goal Setting	63%	"I don't set any particular goals in EL practices. I usually listen and write the report as assigned by the teacher." "I found so many English platforms on the internet, but I do not know which platform is best. Sometimes the materials available on the internet need to meet our context. It makes me more confused, you know."
Self-Monitoring	54%	"In extensive listening, I feel like I am struggling with my difficulties because lecturers are not always available to ask." "I have no idea how I can monitor my listening activities. I just do it based on the teachers' instructions."
Self-Evaluation	58%	"...the lecturers ask the students to listen and write a particular report on what they have listened to; however, mmm... I cannot measure if my listening skills are improved." "...the problem is that I do not exactly know how these activities can help me improve my listening skills. Therefore, I just listened and watched without knowing how to learn English from these activities."

Note. The indicators of self-regulated learning strategies are adopted from Zimmerman (2002).

This finding indicates students' lack of metacognitive awareness. In this case, students still strongly depend on the teachers' support and were concerned about what they could not do rather than what they could do to overcome their listening difficulties. They found it easier to have feedback from their teachers in intensive classrooms. The feedback helped them examine their learning improvement, which also helped them endeavour their best to get a better result. Nonetheless, they stated that everything seemed absurd in EL practice. This finding confirmed that other external factors, such as teachers, classroom instructions, and the environment around the learners, influence successful self-regulated EL practice. Teachers cannot directly ask the students to be self-regulated because self-regulation is the manifestation of personal, environmental, and behavioural intervention in learning. As remarked by Zimmerman (2002) and Ozcelik et al. (2020), an individual's self-efficacy is not the only factor contributing to his success in learning. External cues, such as teachers' support and learning strategy, should also be considered crucial aspects impacting learning outcomes.

Finally, the researchers suggested that EL instruction should assist the students' self-regulation in practicing listening beyond the classrooms. In light of this, self-regulated learning strategies can be promoted as the primary strategy in designing the EL course. This strategy would guide the students to more accountable outside-classroom listening practices, requiring them to be responsible for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning outcomes, including overcoming their listening difficulties. Therefore, the "just listen more" instruction could be avoided.

Conclusions

The findings of this research showed that instead of improving language proficiency and self-regulation, the immediate impact of the EL course designed in this setting is in improving the students' motivation to learn to listen to the target language. The researchers argued that as EL is designed as a specific course, it

should not just be designed as “just listen more” instruction. However, it has to benefit students in improving their language skills and self-regulation in organizing their EL practices. Therefore, EL instruction must explicitly provide a strategy for improving students’ language proficiency and promoting self-regulated learning values in their EL activities. In light of this, there is a need for more structured guidelines regarding teachers’ and students’ involvement and responsibility inside and outside the classrooms for effective EL practices. Both teachers’ and students’ patterns of involvement, particularly in terms of methodological and procedural frameworks inside and outside classroom interaction, also need to be reconsidered. Finally, the EL practices under this circumstance need to be restructured.

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