

Perceptions of EFL Teachers, EFL Students, and Parents About Extensive Listening Materials for Online Learning

Khotim Maslikah^{1,*}, Utami Widiati², Anik Nunuk Wulyani³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Negeri Malang

*Corresponding author. Email: Khotimmaslikah80@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Promoting Extensive Listening (EL) activities among EFL learners has been crucial nowadays, especially during the era of online learning. This study outlines EFL teachers' perceptions, EFL learners, and parents about using EL materials using digital platforms by fostering autonomous learning. This study involved 50 EFL teachers, 143 EFL learners, and 86 parents in Indonesia. Data were taken from online questionnaires and analyzed based on three elements: needs, lacks, and wants/hopes. The result shows all three groups of subjects approved that EL needs to be enhanced either at school or at home. They also confessed that school hours are limited to enrich more implicit knowledge by listening. At last, they wanted to be facilitated to access digital platforms in learning English, especially EL. Further studies on developing EL digital platforms will be worth conducting.

Keywords: *EFL, extensive listening, online learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that people cannot speak without listening and proven that people listen more than speak, read, and write in a communication. [1] confirms that listening skill is used more at school, home, and work. Lake [2] also reports that people communicate around 80%. Interestingly, listening activities take 55% of the communication time. The facts obviously show how essential listening to learn and support other English skills.

However, learning listening is sometimes quite challenging due to insufficient exposure to comprehensible input, language that is a little beyond our current level of competence (i+1). Comprehensible input can be supported by the context or extra-linguistic information. In other words, meaning should be acquired first, then structure will be unconsciously acquired later [3]. In EFL context, like in Indonesia, it is challenging to be exposed to natural listening activities from English native speakers due to limited classroom hour. This contrasts with Krashen's input hypothesis theory saying that to acquire a language, learners should be exposed to comprehensible input [4]. Due to the lack of comprehensible input, EFL learners potentially produce less comprehensible output. For example, when students

have often been taught explicit grammar rules such as noun phrase, relative clauses, and gerund, they are able to explain it and give the reason why the sentence is grammatical or not, but they may not be able to use the same grammatical sentence for meaningful and authentic communication [5].

In fact, some difficulties appear from the listening input hampering students in understanding the meaning such as uncontrolled native speaker's speed in the audio/video, more time for repetition due to confusing reduced sounds, insufficient knowledge about informal and colloquial English expressions, modified meaning of stress and intonation potentially resulting misunderstanding, interfering volume, clarity, and background noise [6] and unfamiliar accents.

In addition, there is another difficulty to capture the speaker's attitude while listening to an audio. This kind of condition results in EFL students' missing in identifying the utterances as well as failing to guess the non-verbal cues' meaning. Furthermore, Hamouda [7] confirms that complexities in pronunciation, speed, less vocabulary, speakers accent, less concentration, anxiety, and unqualified recording encountered by EFL learners in listening have produced challenges for EFL teachers to help their students coping with such kinds of problems.

On the other hand, Krashen, Lee, and Lao [8] said that fostering language learning can be done by exposing to a large amount of highly comprehensible and compelling input. When students repeatedly focus on the meaning of many interesting messages, they incidentally and gradually acquire the language. That is the way the learning happens unconsciously (p. 129).

One excellent way to provide students with abundant, comprehensible, and interesting language input is through Extensive Reading (ER) and Extensive Listening (EL) programmes. There are some characteristics of EL adopted from the principles of ER stated by Day Bamford, Renandya, Jacobs, and Yu [9]. They involve: listening outside listening activities, listening time and place coming from students' preference; more oral or visual acquisition for learners; individual's own determination of input level and content; students' own suitable material; multi genre material; matching with students' level of oral mastery; easier better material; capturable material more than 70%; students' own target of the listening; no assignment submission; and individual's own pace in listening outside classroom.

Ivone and Renandya [10], furthermore, also mentioned that there are five listening activities performing EL: *listening only*, *shadowing/overlapping while listening (active listening)*, *reading while listening*, *listening and viewing*, and *combined listening, viewing and reading* activities. Recommended implementation of EL are as follows; first, EL can be implemented as a stand-alone course, second, with the wider availability of audio books, EL can be easily integrated into an existing ER programme, and third, EL is infused into other existing courses. They have believed that the combination of ER and EL impact more substantially than the individual effect of ER or EL alone.

Investigating EFL teachers', learners', and parents' perceptions of EL material using digital platforms during online learning era is a continuing concern in providing more comprehensible input. Online learning refers to using digital or technological tools for teaching and learning as mentioned by Arkoful and Abaidoo [11]. The tools are used to study anywhere and anytime. Online learning also involves training, delivers knowledge, and motivates students to interact with their friends. However, online learning in the present study is a little bit different [12]. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, schools and universities in Indonesia have changed the learning activities from face-to-face instructions into full online interactions so that students can join the class anywhere. The variation on students and teachers' readiness in facing online learning has varies due to the diverse practices of online learning and heterogeneous learning environment in Indonesia.

It is known that the use of technology in language learning goes in line with the development of technology itself [13]. The recent technology can be used to help

student acquire adequate exposure of input in the target language [14]. In today's internet era where the abundant listening materials are available, students do not have to be worried in a search of compelling and comprehensible EL material. However, finding out the perceptions of the three groups of subjects is quite significant to see what digital platforms they prefer to use in implementing EL material in this online learning era.

As figured out previously that listening in EFL context has great challenges, while learners should be provided by more compelling comprehensible input, a survey needs to be conducted to investigate the Indonesian Junior High School EFL teachers', learners', and parents' needs, lacks/gaps, and wants/hopes using EL material employing digital platforms fostering autonomous learning by distributing similar online questionnaires. The data taken will be used as a basis to recommend further studies to develop and a digital EL material based on their interests. The research question to be addressed in this study is "how do EFL teachers, learner, and parents of Indonesian Junior High School perceive the use of EL material using digital platforms for online learning?"

2. METHOD

A quantitative design was applied to conduct this study using online questionnaires distributed to EFL teachers, learners, and parents of Junior High School (JHS) in Indonesia. A random purposive sampling technique was applied to this study involving of 50 EFL teachers, 143 EFL learners, and 86 parents in Islamic JHS, *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs). Closed-ended questions were employed to obtain the data about their needs, lacks, and hopes in using digital EL material.

The first procedure done was developing three similar questionnaires for EFL teachers, learners, and parents by adapting ten considerations in designing a needs analysis by Dudley, et.al. [15] and simplifying them into three main elements: needs/necessity, lacks/gaps, and wants/hopes using a Likert scale checklist ranging from 1 to 4 showing agreement to disagreements. The subjects were then asked to participate by choosing the scale 1 for agreement to 4 for disagreement on how they perceive a listening significance, a listening exposure, a time allocation sufficiency, EL material existence, EL material development, and a technology integration. At last, their responses were then analysed to see the mean score to conclude their perceptions about EL material.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the total respondents given the similar questionnaires, most of them perceived that listening is very significant. They need to acquire and be exposed to more listening resources. It was shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Result of the Survey

Elements	EFL Teachers	EFL Learners	Parents
A. Needs/Necessity			
Listening Significance	98%	94.9%	95.3%
Listening Exposure	98%	83.5%	90.7%
B. Lacks/Gaps			
Time Allocation Sufficiency	16%	46.4%	64%
EL Material Existence	30%	78.6%	79.1%
C. Wants/Hopes			
EL Material Development	100%	96.4%	98.8%
Technology Integration	95.9%	92.8%	97.6%

However, they lack sufficient time allocation to have listening activities in the classroom hours. Besides, the existing EL material was limited around them. Therefore, they want to be facilitated with EL material which is compelling in the form of digital platforms like a website and mobile application.

These findings are in line with Krashen's input hypothesis regarding language acquisition [4]. Hopefully, it can stimulate EFL teachers to provide students with EL activities either at school or at home by choosing one of the alternatives proposed by Ivone and Renandya [10] and develop EL material considering the top ten characters of ER/EL materials mentioned by Day dan Bamford [9] integrating technology development to acquire adequate input exposure of the target language as mentioned by [14].

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study found that most respondents agreed that EL needs to be enhanced due to the lack of time allocation and learning material at school. It is essential to facilitate the EFL learners with engaging EL materials to allow them acquire more comprehensible input. Therefore, it is considered worth conducting for further studies to develop EL materials using digital platforms such as websites, blogs, applications, and the like, so that EFL learners will be more engaged to improve their listening competence.

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