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by Journal Veles

Submission date: 30-Oct-2023 02:07AM (UTC+1100)

Submission ID: 2210573052

File name: 21400-157369-4-LE.docx (115.37K)

Word count: 3806

Character count: 23511

Amplifying Proficiency: Unearthing the Impact of Extensive Listening on Student Listening Skills

Abstract

In conventional language education, listening receives less attention compared to the teaching of grammar and other language skills. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that knowledge acquisition and assimilation primarily occur through listening. This study explores the enhancement of students' listening competency through extensive listening practices, utilizing the participatory action research method, specifically the Collaborative Classroom Action Research approach. The research was conducted at Junior High School in Medan, Indonesia, and involved 31 Grade VIII students. The study incorporated pre-test and post-test listening assessments and observation across three cycles: pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II. The results clearly demonstrate the positive impact of extensive listening on students' listening skills. Overall, there was a substantial improvement, with scores increasing from 49.35% in the pre-test to an impressive 85.16% in cycle II. Notably, individual progress also showed substantial growth, rising from 6.45% in the pre-test to a remarkable 77.4% in cycle II. These findings underscore the undeniable effectiveness of extensive listening in language education. They offer valuable insights for English teachers and provide robust support for the adoption of extensive listening as a potent means to nurture and elevate students' listening skills, which are a fundamental aspect of language acquisition.

Keywords: Listening competency, extensive listening, collaborative classroom action research

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INTRODUCTION

Listening competency stands as a foundational requirement for success in language learning and an integral component of language acquisition. However, it is widely acknowledged as one of the most formidable challenges faced by learners (Tran & Duong, 2020). Listening plays a pivotal role in enhancing language learners' comprehension skills, encompassing elements like auditory perception, pronunciation, lexical stress, and vocabulary (Alabsi, 2020; Jaya et al., 2021). Despite its significance, listening takes a back seat compared to the teaching of grammar and other skills in classroom settings (Aryana & Apsari, 2018). However, it is crucial to note that the primary acquisition and assimilation of knowledge predominantly occur through listening in school (Kapanadze, 2019). Inadequate exposure to listening instruction leaves students lacking proficiency in this essential skill (Pamuji, 2021). Consequently, they encounter several challenges, including the rapid pace of speech, difficulties in discerning word boundaries, limited prior knowledge, and subpar quality CD players when they must answer questions while listening (Indahsari, 2020; Nushi & Orouji, 2020).

Expanding upon this, extensive listening has been recognized as an effective method to enhance listening fluency (Barella & Linarsih, 2020; Öztürk & Tekin, 2019). This approach allows students to practice listening to straightforward texts (Waring, 2008) that prioritize authenticity (Angelia & Juliaty, 2021; Barella & Linarsih, 2020), choice (Karlin & Karlin, 2021; Öztürk & Tekin, 2019), and accessibility (Pamuji et al., 2019). Students can leverage digital media or websites tailored to their needs and interests, providing them the flexibility to replay content multiple times to compensate for any missed information. Moreover, online platforms serve as a valuable medium for teachers to engage with students and share their insights in response to the texts they have encountered.

On the other side, extensive listening refers to extended listening activities where learners engage in "meaning-focused listening" for various purposes, one of which is

listening for enjoyment (Waring, 2008). Waring (2008) further emphasizes that students can learn to listen independently, with teachers encouraging them in this process. In this context, students actively participate by utilizing resources available on online platforms. In this study, extensive listening is defined as listening activities that occur outside the classroom, with teachers actively promoting independent learning among students. According to student feedback, they have sufficient time to focus on understanding a topic rather than solely chasing high scores.

Other researchers (Chang, 2019) suggest that extensive listening techniques are particularly beneficial for L2 learners at the initial and intermediate levels. This is because learners at these levels are not required to engage in comprehension activities that assess their understanding. With a plethora of websites offering extensive listening materials, the teacher's role becomes selecting suitable content that aligns with students' proficiency levels and specific needs. According to experts, extensive listening (EL) entails listening activities conducted beyond the classroom, using digital media or websites tailored to students' preferences and interests. In this context, the teacher assumes the role of a facilitator, encouraging students according to a predefined plan.

Prior research consistently highlights the enduring challenges that students encounter in their quest to master listening skills, especially in deciphering the intended message of the speaker (Fachriza et al., 2019; Patahuddin et al., 2017). For learners with lower proficiency levels, hurdles arise in the form of unfamiliar terminology, compounded by the rapid pace of spoken language and a lack of vocabulary stemming from their unique perspectives as listeners. These struggles manifest in their difficulty transitioning smoothly from one question to the next during listening activities, often resulting in panic and impediments in formulating responses.

A noteworthy observation is the relatively low emphasis placed on the value of listening activities in the teaching landscape. Instructors frequently prioritize task completion over the holistic development of listening skills, as evidenced by their focus on tallying correct answers rather than fostering a deeper understanding of listening proficiency. Nevertheless, while the application of English Language (EL) practice is well-documented in previous research, there remains a gap in our understanding of students' learning processes and progress in the context of extensive listening. This gap arises due to a lack of comprehensive insight into the learning journey and development of pupils engaged in English language (EL) practice, particularly within the framework of extensive listening.

Thus, this study introduces a novel approach by conducting a comprehensive analysis of extensive listening, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of the learning process. The primary objective of this research is twofold: (1) to enhance students' listening competence through extensive listening and (2) to improve students' overall listening competency through the incorporation of extensive listening techniques. In summary, this research endeavors to investigate these two key objectives by delving into the entire process of extensive listening, including the planning and implementation stages, in order to bridge this knowledge gap.

METHOD

Research Design

The research utilized participatory action research as its methodology, recognized as a systematic approach to driving change. Action research involves taking actions aimed at fostering self-reflection and enhancing instruction by analyzing one's own practices. This process of action research comprises four fundamental components: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The adoption of this approach is deemed necessary due to the prevalence of changes that are frequently imposed, often appearing arbitrary or lacking thoughtful consideration in our daily lives. As previously mentioned, this approach was applied in response to the challenges encountered by students during listening exercises. Through the evaluation of students' listening competencies, as assessed in the listening examination, it was determined that only two students met the required completion criteria.

Research Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 31 grade VII students from Junior High School X in Medan, North Medan. The selection of junior high school students was based on several considerations. Firstly, researchers such as Chang (2019), Waring (2019), and Saputra (2018) recommend extensive listening techniques for L2 learners at the initial and intermediate levels, as they are not required to engage in comprehension activities that assess their understanding. The eighth grade falls within this intermediate level, characterized by average comprehension and a lack of focus on measuring comprehension. Secondly, extensive listening is believed to enhance listening fluency by enabling students to practice listening to simple texts (Waring, 2008).

Data collection

The research employed various instruments, including listening tests administered at the beginning of the study (pre-test) and at the end of each cycle (post-test). The study was divided into three distinct cycles: the pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2, with extensive listening serving as the primary intervention. The pre-cycle aimed to establish the baseline listening competency of the participants, while the first cycle provided extensive listening tasks to address skill gaps. In pursuit of improved results, Cycle 2 further enhanced and sustained these comprehensive listening interventions. In the initial cycle treatment, the researchers administered pre-test questions to assess the students' listening abilities. Test scores were standardized to determine the level of students' learning completeness using a specific formula.

$$\text{Individual completeness value} = \frac{\text{achieved score}}{\text{ideal score}} \times 100$$

Figure 1. The individual completeness formula

The formula mentioned above serves as a quantitative method for evaluating students' learning achievement by comparing their obtained score to the ideal or perfect score expressed as a percentage. This study spanned two months and included a total of six sessions, each lasting 80 minutes. The instructional objectives of the lessons aligned with the course syllabus, with the aim of improving automaticity and comprehension of oral text, developing listening skills, addressing aspects like pronunciation and intonation, and fostering independent listening abilities.

Data Analysis

Data collected during each session were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to determine the overall outcomes. Qualitative information regarding students' learning outcomes was analyzed descriptively by assessing the average student's learning success before and after the examination. To assess the effectiveness of the strategy in improving students' listening skills, success criteria were employed. The study was deemed effective if two conditions were met. Firstly, the students' scores on the achievement test conducted at the end of the cycle showed a significant improvement, as supported by their scores in the preparatory study. The researcher adopted performance measurement criteria commonly used in classroom settings. The evaluation of the research's effectiveness in enhancing learning was based on the attainment of an individual and class-wide average score that met or exceeded the required standard.

The study employed a systematic four-step process of cycle I to evaluate students' learning outcomes. The planning phase began with initial assessments, revealing that only two students met the minimum completeness criteria, while the majority required improvement. Researchers responded by designing a tailored learning plan, which included the development of eight YouTube videos related to recounting stories. Each session within this phase was carefully structured to last 4 x 40 minutes, with a focus on organizing materials and learning resources.

In the acting phase, researchers elucidated the definition and structure of recount text. Students were subsequently divided into study groups to foster a mutual understanding of the video content. After engaging in auditory experiences and discussions, students were provided with video links to watch at home for a week. For the observation phase, data collection to assess listening improvement was conducted through continuous video play without interruptions. This approach aimed to enhance comprehension and information retention.

The final reflection phase involved a comprehensive review of actions taken, taking into account the data collected in the observation step. Students actively engaged in discussions to identify challenges faced during the learning process. Furthermore, they were encouraged to reflect on their experiences outside the classroom and their emotional journey throughout the pedagogical process. In summary, the systematic four-step process within cycle I, as guided by Gökmen (2021) encompassed planning, acting, observation, and reflection, serving as a comprehensive strategy to enhance students' listening skills while retaining the minimum completeness criteria for evaluation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Pre-test and Post-test results

This study was divided into three distinct cycles: pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2, with the main intervention through extensive listening. The pre-cycle established participants' baseline proficiency in listening abilities, while cycle 1 offered comprehensive listening tasks to fill skill gaps. Cycle 2 enhanced and continued these thorough, extensive listening interventions in order to achieve better results. The results of the students' test scores in those three cycles are presented in Figure 2.

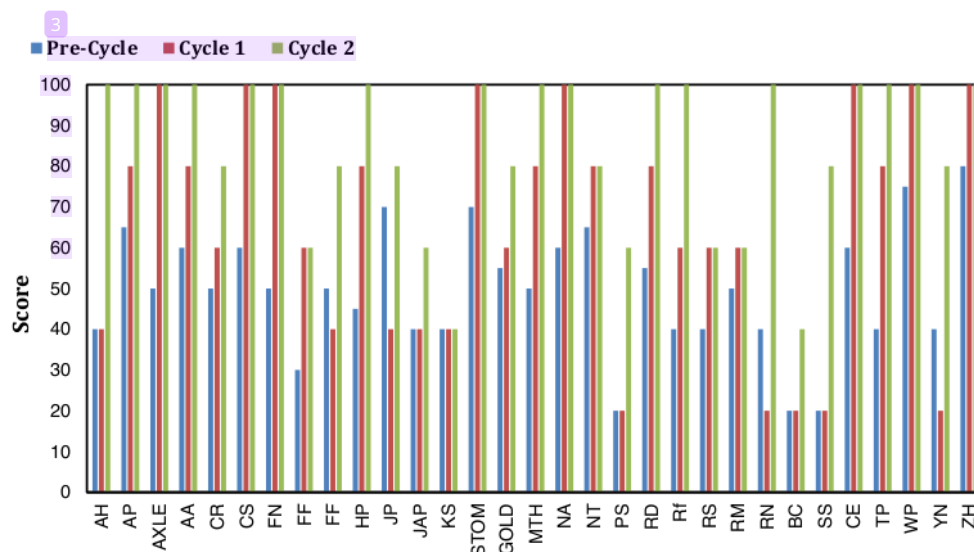


Figure 2. The students' Pre-cycle, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2 scores on listening

Based on the data in Figure 2, the study of the students' pre-test and post-test listening skills scores demonstrates significant improvements throughout three cycles. According to the data in the table, a significant number of students made significant progress in their listening ability. During the pre-cycle assessment, students' performance ranged from 20 to 80. However, as the intervention progressed through Cycles 1 and 2, a definite trend of improvement occurred. Some students made excellent progress in Cycle 2, with scores reaching 100. This demonstrates the success of employing extensive listening. Following the pre-test, the initial treatment phase included extensive listening, requiring 31 eighth-grade students to engage with three videos for a three-week period. As a result, 15 students (48.38%) got scores at or below 50% on cycle 1, requiring the implementation of cycle II to increase the completion percentage beyond 50%. The class average score was 65.16%.

Moreover, based on the outcomes of the post-test conducted during Cycle 1, it became apparent that the desired minimum threshold had not yet been attained. Consequently, the need for the development of new planning strategies to enhance the program's effectiveness was evident. Feedback from students revealed occasional lapses in attentiveness towards the video content. Some students admitted to struggling with completing and translating descriptions into English effectively. Additionally, a portion of respondents found autonomous learning to be incongruent with their individual preferences and learning styles. Addressing these challenges necessitated collaborative efforts involving both student and researcher-driven decisions.

By building on these reflections, the upcoming iteration will involve a consortium comprising three students. Each student's responsibility will include ensuring that all members within their respective groups actively engage in comprehensive listening activities outside the classroom. In cases where individuals encounter difficulties comprehending the subject matter, engaging in group discussions will be encouraged. For

those still seeking resolution, reaching out to the researcher for additional assistance will remain an option. To foster increased enthusiasm among students in participating in the program, the researcher intends to introduce incentives. These incentives will take the form of rewards for the top-performing group and recognition for the five most outstanding journal reports upon the completion of Cycle 2. This strategic approach aims to motivate and maintain students' commitment to the program's objectives.

Following this, significant progress was observed in Cycle II, with 24 students excelling and achieving scores that surpassed the class average. This group constituted 77.4% of the participants, showcasing remarkable advancement. The average score experienced a notable increase of 20%, reaching an impressive 85.16%. These results underscore the effectiveness of the implemented measures. The data provided allows for a comprehensive evaluation of improvement at both the class level and individual level across each cycle. This information facilitates a meaningful examination of progress, encompassing both collective achievements and individual advancements.

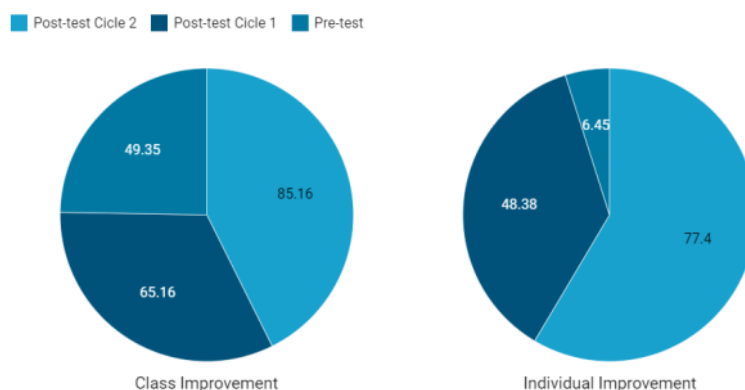


Figure 3. The Class and Individual Improvement Progression Across Cycles

Figure 3 displays the average scores illustrating both class-wide and individual improvements. Concerning class-level progress, there was a notable increase from 49.35% in the pre-test to 65.16% in Cycle I and a significant elevation to 85.16% in Cycle II. Individual progress was also assessed, revealing a substantial growth of 6.45% in the pre-test, followed by a significant improvement to 48.38% in the post-test of Cycle 1. The most remarkable transformation occurred in the post-test of Cycle 2, where individual progress surged to an impressive 77.4%. This finding underscores a positive shift in students' listening abilities from the pre-test to the second post-test, clearly demonstrating the efficacy of extensive listening in enhancing students' listening skills. Furthermore, the results of the post-test indicate that the improvement in listening comprehension exceeded the minimum completion requirement. Consequently, the researcher concluded that Cycle 2 achieved a satisfactory level of enhancement and recommended the continued incorporation of extensive listening activities as a valuable teaching technique across various themes.

From the figure above, it can be seen that the extensive listening activities conducted in this study have shed light on critical areas that demand attention from researchers in addressing the research questions outlined in the introduction. To begin with, extensive

listening has proven to be instrumental in enhancing students' listening competence. Extensive listening enables students to better interact with audio-based educational resources such as learning materials (Kurniawati et al., 2023), multimedia (Setyawan et al., 2022), podcasts (Angelia & Juliaty, 2021; Gökmen, 2021; Gonulal, 2020; Hakobyan, 2023), YouTube (Pamuji & Setyarini, 2021; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018), and other platforms, thereby empowering them to assume responsibility for their own educational progress. Chang et al. (2019) emphasize that frequent, successful, and enjoyable experiences can be a key factor in motivating learners to develop their own listening fluency.

Students might have unlimited space to do Extensive listening (EL) activities as is often done outside the classroom (Le & Pham, 2020; Öztürk & Tekin, 2019; Su et al., 2021). Extensive listening is a way for students to enjoy listening activities, leading them to many oral inputs with more material (Pamuji, 2021). It plays an important role (Harmer, 1998; Rost, 2011) in building confidence and listening pleasure in the target language (Öztürk & Tekin, 2019; Pamuji et al., 2019; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018). It can lead students to learn independently with several online materials that are shared and accessed by teachers according to student needs (Kurniawati et al., 2023; Le & Pham, 2020).

These activities, routinely conducted outside the classroom, have exhibited substantial progress, as demonstrated in the aforementioned findings. Students have embraced the opportunity to express their emotions and share their experiences related to the content they have consumed with their peers. A notable consensus among students is that listening becomes an enjoyable pursuit thanks to the accessible materials and valuable techniques provided. What is more, these activities allow students to hone their listening skills without the pressure of impending assessments, as the primary objective is simply to comprehend the meaning.

As a result of this learning process, students are equipped with enhanced listening comprehension skills, as indicated by studies such as Elmetaher (2021) and Sholihah et al. (2018). These skills empower students to make more insightful inferences and generate more precise predictions when confronted with auditory texts. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that Barella and Linarsih (2020) offer a contrasting viewpoint. They contend that some students may view extensive listening as an arduous, time-consuming, and fatiguing endeavor, largely due to their reliance on teacher-guided activities that they perceive as overly restrictive or akin to babysitting.

Extensive listening also fosters students' independence and teamwork skills within their assigned groups. Instructors play a pivotal role by offering constructive feedback on strategy usage, encouraging students to experiment with various approaches, and helping them grasp the connection between these strategies and their listening task performance. The adoption of extensive listening has proven highly effective in facilitating students' learning journeys. A clear indication of their active involvement in these activities is their consistent submission of weekly reports, a crucial component of their responsibilities. The instructions for these process activities typically involve engaging in repetitive listening. Multiple previous studies have consistently demonstrated the value of incorporating prolonged listening into listening skills instruction. This approach not only provides an enjoyable learning experience but also significantly enhances learners' comprehension abilities, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes (Gavenila et al., 2021; Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Kurniawati et al., 2023; Öztürk & Tekin, 2019; Su et al., 2021).

The application of extensive listening is guided by certain principles, as stated by Waring (2019) Five of the seven principles can be used as a guide for the more successful implementation of EL programs. Successful implementation of an Extensive listening program hinges on several key principles. Firstly, it is essential to establish clear and well-defined objectives for the program, communicated effectively to all stakeholders, including instructors, administrators, library staff, students, and parents. Support from these parties is vital once objectives are set. Secondly, prioritizing active listening is crucial, as it's a fundamental component of language development for L2 students; the more time students spend engaged in active listening within the program, the greater their benefits and grades.

Moreover, providing Extensive listening materials aligned with students' linguistic competence is crucial; materials should ideally match or slightly challenge their current proficiency level, enabling independent content absorption. Fourthly, educators play a pivotal role, offering continuous assistance to all students, particularly those needing extra support, through strategies like encouragement, suitable resource selection, partnerships with proficient peers, and instructing effective vocabulary acquisition techniques. Lastly, sustaining student motivation throughout the program is vital, considering the challenges of listening for L2 students; teachers can employ motivational strategies, including engaging presentations by notable figures, to maintain high student enthusiasm.

There are several benefits of Extensive Listening, and these have been used by several researchers. It was found that extensive listening improved students' vocabulary increase, pronunciation, and grammar (Sholihah et al., 2018; Yudhiantara & Syihabuddin, 2023) and enhanced their understanding of utilizing emphasis, intonation and pronunciation accurately (Setyawan et al., 2022; Chang et al., 2019). Engaging in extensive listening for recreational purposes yields beneficial outcomes in terms of learners' enhancement of listening skills and growth of perceptual abilities (Öztürk & Tekin, 2019). Waring (2019) also agree that Extensive can increase students' capacity to cope with speech speed. It helps children improve their spoken word recognition skills; extensive listening can give them several opportunities to acquire a better and deeper level of language comprehension, and extensive exposure to spoken language can result in higher overall proficiency in the language.

CONCLUSION

The study's results reveal that students demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm when engaging with video content over two cycles, leading to significant improvements in their listening proficiency. Extensive listening proves to be a potent tool for enriching learners across multiple dimensions. This includes sharpening their ability to condense information effectively, express emotions articulately, refine their English language prowess, and critically assess their own listening practices. Furthermore, students undergo training to foster independence and stimulate cognitive processes, all contributing to an elevated proficiency in listening comprehension.

Moreover, this study has significant implications for English teachers, offering compelling evidence in favor of extensive listening as a means of developing students' listening skills, with a primary focus on the learning process itself. Engaging in extensive listening through the submission of weekly reports proves to be a valuable resource for educators seeking deeper insights into their students. Within a diverse class comprising

individuals with varying needs and interests, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the learning process and students' preferences can be challenging without direct communication or the examination of their reflective accounts.

Furthermore, the act of composing a listening learning report serves as a valuable tool for students themselves. It empowers them to actively engage with their learning journey, uncovering any challenges or obstacles that might have otherwise escaped their attention. Through this process, students acquire the ability to develop their own strategies for enhancing their listening skills. When administered effectively, constructive feedback has the potential to reinforce positive behaviors and guide learners toward improved performance. Moreover, this study has a specific focus on enhancing students' listening skills by concentrating on the learning process itself. It is important to note that this research does not cover all possible aspects of extensive listening. In future studies, there is potential for investigations that delve into the challenges teachers encounter when conducting comprehensive research.

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PAGE 5



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Possessive This word may be a plural noun and may not need an apostrophe.



S/V This subject and verb may not agree. Proofread the sentence to make sure the subject agrees with the verb.



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Prep. You may be using the wrong preposition.



Prep. You may be using the wrong preposition.

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Prep. You may be using the wrong preposition.

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P/V You have used the passive voice in this sentence. Depending upon what you wish to emphasize in the sentence, you may want to revise it using the active voice.



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