Investigating EFL Undergraduate Learners' Preferred Input and Tasks for Extensive Listening in Digital Learning

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Abstract

This study investigates university students' preferences regarding listening inputs and tasks in Extensive Listening (EL) activities within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, emphasizing the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on language acquisition. The main objective was to identify engaging and effective English Language inputs and tasks that facilitate language comprehension. Data were collected from 217 EFL students in the English Language and Literature Department at a state university in West Sumatera using an online questionnaire consisting of 63 closed-ended items, which were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The findings indicate a preference among students for well-organized materials, a moderate speech rate, and exposure to various accents. Students found familiar topics and concrete information easier to comprehend; however, they valued the intellectual engagement provided by abstract or novel themes. Learners appreciated visual aids and acknowledged the cognitive advantages of audio-only exercises, highlighting the importance of a balanced approach in educational design. These insights indicate that educators ought to integrate explicit instruction with opportunities for independent learning by providing a range of listening materials suited to various comprehension levels. To improve engagement and learning outcomes, English Language activities must incorporate both familiar and innovative content, along with diverse linguistic elements that challenge and support the development of students' listening skills. This approach may cultivate a more dynamic, ICT-enhanced learning environment that effectively enhances EFL listening proficiency.

Keywords: *Extensive listening, listening materials, listening input, listening task, digital learning*

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has transformed English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction by offering extensive access to digital learning resources and promoting self-directed learning in non-English primary language contexts (Hanifa & Yusra, 2024; Tai, 2022). ICT facilitates the development of language skills, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Feng & Webb,

2020; Siregar & Manurung, 2020). Its applications extend from vocabulary acquisition to advanced comprehension (Feng & Webb, 2020). The accessibility of digital resources improves learning opportunities; however, it requires learners to critically engage with the content, which can pose challenges, particularly in areas with limited access to natural English-speaking environments (Hanifa et al., 2024).

EFL students in Indonesia often participate in Extensive Listening (EL) activities, utilizing online resources to enhance their overall listening comprehension. EL highlights the importance of exposure to diverse spoken inputs, which has been demonstrated to enhance learners' abilities to discern sounds, adjust to various accents, and cultivate listening strategies (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016; Yusra & Hanifa, 2023). Findings on the effectiveness of Extensive Listening (EL) are mixed: some studies suggest that EL improves listening skills more effectively than less frequent, intensive listening (Barella & Linarsih, 2020; Öztürk & Tekin, 2020), while other research indicates that Intensive Listening (IL) may result in higher comprehension scores (Karlin & Karlin, 2019). The differing results indicate a necessity for additional research into the specific interactions students have with EL activities and the impact of these interactions on learning outcomes.

A fundamental aspect of extensive listening (EL) is learner autonomy, wherein students choose their listening materials, pace, and context, typically with limited educator involvement (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). While autonomy in English learning enables learners to engage with content that reflects their interests, studies show that numerous students, especially beginners, encounter difficulties with self-directed tasks, frequently struggling to locate quality resources and cope with anxiety associated with digital learning contexts (Sriwichai, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). In the absence of structured guidance, early-stage learners may exhibit diminished motivation and effectiveness in English language activities (Dörnyei, 2020). The findings indicate the necessity of balancing autonomy with support, enabling students to explore while ensuring access to resources that improve comprehension.

Although there is increasing interest in Extensive Listening (EL), research on students' specific preferences for listening inputs and the types of EL tasks they consider engaging remains limited. Previous studies highlight the significance of EL in improving vocabulary, listening comprehension, and overall language proficiency (Chang et al., 2019; Liando et al., 2021; Öztürk & Tekin, 2020; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016; Rukmana et al., 2023; Yusra & Hanifa, 2023). However, there is a lack of investigation into the types of inputs and task formats that are advantageous from the learners' perspective. Analyzing students' preferences can enhance the design of customized and engaging English Language activities that accommodate various learning requirements.

This study addresses the gap by investigating the preferences of undergraduate EFL students regarding listening inputs and English language tasks. The research aims to address the following question: What types of listening inputs and tasks are preferred by Indonesian EFL students in Extensive Listening activities? This study seeks to identify favored English language input and tasks to inform curriculum development and teaching strategies, ultimately enhancing listening comprehension skills and learners' engagement. Insights obtained may assist educators and curriculum designers in developing Extensive Listening (EL) activities that harmonize autonomy with structured support, thereby enhancing a more effective, individualized strategy for listening skill development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting.

Literature Review

Extensive Listening in Language Learning

The ability to listen extensively is a crucial element of language acquisition, playing a significant role in the development of communication skills and comprehension. Listening plays a crucial role in language learning, as it supports learners in understanding pronunciation, stress, intonation, and grammatical structures, which are essential for effective spoken interaction (Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2020). Rost (2013) emphasizes that listening is an active process, crucial for language acquisition and effective communication, rather than a mere passive reception. Goh and Vandergrift (2021) asserts that listening enables learners to interpret tonal and emotional cues, including pitch and accent, which are essential for thorough comprehension. Anderson and Lynch (2003) state that effective communication is inherently multi-modal, necessitating both auditory and verbal skills. Developing robust listening skills enables learners to effectively process spoken language, a competency equally essential as speaking in language acquisition.

Listening practice involves supplying students with accessible materials structured as exercises to enhance diverse listening skills. Listening skills can be enhanced through participation in extensive listening activities and by recording one's listening experiences. Extensive listening, especially in autonomous learning environments, has been demonstrated to improve listening fluency by providing exposure to a variety of audio inputs, free from the limitations commonly associated with classroom listening activities (Hanifa & Yusra, 2024; Yusra & Hanifa, 2023). EL enables learners to investigate materials that correspond with their interests, fostering a self-directed approach that enhances intrinsic motivation and engagement (Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Öztürk & Tekin, 2020). This method promotes linguistic autonomy, enabling learners to cultivate various listening skills, including sound recognition and contextual inference, through natural language engagement (Binarkaheni et al., 2022). Barella and Linarsih (2020) as well as Renandya and Farrell (2011) emphasize that extensive listening offers opportunities for advanced listening tasks, such as gap-filling and transcription, which provide students with practical experience in real-world listening challenges. Incorporating EL into language curricula enhances the learning environment, which is essential for developing auditory proficiency and communication skills.

The benefits of EL are well-documented; however, its implementation in diverse learning environments reveals differing outcomes. Studies indicate that extensive practice in extensive listening enhances comprehension and fluency, thereby developing skills necessary for independent language use (Chang et al., 2019; Ivone & Renandya, 2019). Other research indicate inconsistencies; some learners excel in autonomous English language activities, while others, especially novice learners, face difficulties due to insufficient guided support (Sriwichai, 2020). The mixed results suggest a necessity for additional research on optimizing EL to suit various learner profiles, especially for those who could gain from structured guidance.

Extensive Listening Input and Task Characteristics

Research on English language input highlights that the characteristics of audio materials are crucial for enhancing listening proficiency in EFL learners. Buck (2001) and Renandya and Jacobs (2016) examine the importance of authentic input, which offers learners exposure to naturally occurring language, thereby improving their capacity to handle real-world listening situations. Extensive listening input is structured to reflect real-world contexts, providing learners with exposure to authentic speech

patterns, accents, and vocabulary (Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Liando et al., 2021). The diversity contributes to the development of cultural awareness and adaptability in language use, which are critical elements of language competence (Le & Pham, 2020; Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2020).

The primary characteristics of English language inputs and tasks in extensive listening learning encompass:

a) Authentic materials: Extensive listening instruction often include real-life audio content, such as podcasts, radio programs, and natural conversations. These resources assist learners in becoming acquainted with diverse accents and informal language usage (Siregar & Manurung, 2020). Authentic materials provide students with exposure to the subtleties of spoken language, thereby improving their comprehension and rendering language learning more relevant (Hanifa & Yusra, 2024).

b) Diverse topics and genres: Extensive listening materials cater to individual learner interests and sustain motivation. Exposure to diverse contexts improves learners' adaptability, enabling them to comprehend language across various formats and situational contexts (Binarkaheni et al., 2022).

c) Extended Listening Passages: Extensive listening frequently incorporates lengthy listening segments, including comprehensive lectures or dialogues, which assist learners in developing sustained attention and enhancing their ability to understand prolonged discourse (Öztürk & Tekin, 2020).

d) Lack of Detailed Comprehension Questions: In contrast to intensive listening tasks, extensive listening generally refrains from employing specific comprehension questions, promoting a focus on holistic understanding and the interpretation of the overall message rather than on particular details (Karlin & Karlin, 2019).

e) Repeated Exposure: The significance of repeated listening in extensive listening instruction is highlighted as it facilitates the internalization of language patterns and enhances comprehension over time (Newton & Nation, 2020). This method enhances familiarity with linguistic structures, aiding students in developing listening strategies by revisiting audio content.

f) Autonomous Learning: Extensive listening fosters autonomy by allowing students to select materials and establish their own pace, thereby facilitating flexible and personalized language learning (Barella & Linarsih, 2020). This independence enhances engagement, especially in self-access learning contexts.

g) Development of Listening Strategies: Extensive listening enhances skills including prediction, contextual inference, and summarization, which are crucial for effectively engaging in authentic listening contexts (Le & Pham, 2020).

Extensive listening offers a systematic and adaptable method for language acquisition, enhancing listening proficiency through exposure to diverse and repeated linguistic inputs. The integration of authentic, engaging materials with learner autonomy enables students to explore language in a natural manner, thereby developing essential skills for fluency and comprehension. The variability in learner outcomes necessitates a more nuanced understanding of how extensive listening instruction can be tailored to effectively address diverse learning needs. This review emphasizes the necessity of examining optimal extensive listening input characteristics and learner

preferences to develop a balanced approach that addresses the challenges and opportunities in autonomous language learning environments.

METHODS
Research Design

This research adopted a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach to systematically capture and analyze student preferences for Extensive Listening (EL) inputs and tasks. The quantitative design was suitable as it enabled the numerical assessment of student preferences, thereby facilitating the identification of trends and patterns. This study employed a descriptive approach, offering a comprehensive summary of students' responses without attempting to infer causal relationships. The design facilitated an objective and thorough evaluation of EL components that students perceive as beneficial and engaging.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of 523 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language Education and English Literature programs at a state university in West Sumatra from 2021 to 2023. These students were selected based on their enrollment in a structured sequence of Listening courses, ranging from basic to advanced levels, making them suitable participants for analyzing engagement with Extensive Listening (EL) inputs and tasks. Given the focus of this study, this population was considered appropriate for assessing students' experiences and preferences in EL practices within their academic curriculum. The inclusion of students across multiple academic cohorts provided a broader perspective on EL exposure and engagement, ensuring that findings would reflect varied learning experiences across different stages of undergraduate study.

A sample of 217 students was drawn from this population using voluntary response sampling, whereby participation was open to all 523 students, but only those who willingly engaged and completed the questionnaire were included in the final sample. This method ensured that responses were obtained from individuals genuinely interested in contributing to the research, aligning with ethical standards that emphasize informed and voluntary participation. To ensure relevant insights, participants had to meet specific inclusion criteria, namely: (1) completion of at least one Listening course to establish sufficient exposure to EL tasks, (2) active participation in EL activities to provide informed perspectives, and (3) willingness to participate in the study. The demographic composition of the sample included 80 students from the 2021 cohort (ages 22–23), 67 students from the 2022 cohort (ages 20–22), and 70 students from the 2023 cohort (ages 18–20), ensuring a balanced representation of students at different academic levels.

The sample size of 217 participants was deemed adequate for this research, aligning with established quantitative research standards in educational studies. While voluntary response sampling inherently carries the risk of self-selection bias, this limitation was mitigated by the diverse distribution of students across multiple cohorts, ensuring variability in experiences and perspectives. To uphold ethical research standards, informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were fully briefed on the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time without consequences, and the measures taken to protect their anonymity and confidentiality. Consent was obtained through an online questionnaire platform, requiring participants to explicitly confirm their understanding and agreement before proceeding. This approach ensured compliance with ethical guidelines, fostering a

transparent and ethically responsible research process while generating valuable insights into students' engagement with EL inputs and tasks.

Instrument

Data were gathered via an online questionnaire aimed at exploring students' preferences for different extensive listening inputs and tasks. The questionnaire comprised 63 closed-ended questions (see Table 1), rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree), deliberately omitting a neutral option to encourage participants to make definitive choices. This structure sought to minimize response ambiguity, thereby generating more interpretable data.

The questionnaire comprised five primary categories: Language, Explicitness, Organization, Content, and Context, grounded in established theories and frameworks within listening pedagogy (Buck, 2001; Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2020; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). These frameworks were combined to sufficiently captures the multi-dimensional nature of extensive listening in digital environments. Buck (2001) offers a perspective on how linguistic features and listener variables shape processing; Lynch and Mendelsohn (2020) foreground pedagogical and task-design principles for effective listening instruction; and Renandya and Jacobs (2016) emphasize affective factors, learner engagement, and the characteristics of optimal extensive listening materials. Integrating these complementary perspectives allowed researchers to design categories that reflect linguistic, cognitive, pedagogical, and affective dimensions of extensive listening simultaneously. Each category sought to capture various aspects of EL that may influence students' engagement and understanding, and the items were designed to elucidate nuances in students' preferences, offering insights into particular elements of EL inputs and tasks that they consider advantageous. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was validated through expert judgment: two experts in language teaching reviewed all items for clarity, relevance, and coverage of the constructs, thereby supporting the content validity of the instrument.

Table 1. Indicators of questionnaire

Category	Aspect/Indicator	Statement number
	Language	
	Speech Rate	1, 2, 3
	Accent	4, 5, 6
	Number of Speaker	7, 8, 9
	Voices	10, 11, 12
	Vocabulary	13, 14, 15
	Grammatical Complexity	16, 17, 18
	Pronounce Reference	19, 20, 21
	Explicitness	
	Ideas	22, 23, 24
Listening Inputs	Redundancy	25, 26, 27
	Organization	
	Events Narrated	28, 29, 30
	Examples Illustrated	31, 32, 33
	Content	
	Topics	34, 35, 36
	Things and People Referred To	37, 38, 39
	Context	
	Abstract Content	40, 41, 42
	Visual or Other Support	43, 44, 45
	Processing of Details	46, 47, 48
Listening Tasks	Integration of Information from Different	49, 50, 51

Recall of Gist	52, 53, 54
Separation of Fact from Opinion	55, 56, 57
Recall of Non-Central or Irrelevant Details	58, 59, 60
Response: A Delayed or Immediate One	61, 62, 63

Techniques in Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection was conducted via an online platform, providing an efficient and accessible means for participants to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The online format facilitated automated data collection, reducing the probability of data entry errors and promoting consistency. Before commencing the questionnaire completion, participants were provided with comprehensive instructions on completing the questionnaire, prompting them to draw upon their personal experiences with EL activities in their responses.

The data collection procedure incorporated multiple quality control measures to maintain data integrity. Participants were advised of the necessity to complete all items accurately, as any incomplete responses would be omitted from the analysis. The online platform monitored response completion rates and provided real-time notifications for incomplete submissions, facilitating timely follow-up when required. This systematic method ensured high-quality responses, yielding comprehensive data from each participant.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistical methods, generating a systematic overview of students' preferences for extensive listening inputs and tasks. The sequence of analytic steps was guided by established procedures for questionnaire-based research in education and applied linguistics (e.g., Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009), beginning with data cleaning, followed by descriptive statistics and interpretation of response patterns. The analysis comprised several steps:

1. Data Cleaning: All responses were thoroughly reviewed to ensure completeness and consistency. Responses that were incomplete or exhibited inconsistencies, such as contradictory answers among related items, were excluded from the dataset, thereby ensuring that only accurate and valid responses were incorporated into the analysis.

2. Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the frequency and percentage distributions of responses across five categories: Language, Explicitness, Organization, Content, and Context. The measures were computed for each item, offering insights into the central tendency and variability of responses across categories.

3. Frequency Distribution Analysis: Responses were analyzed through the creation of frequency tables for each item, demonstrating the number of participants selecting each point on the Likert scale. This facilitated a clear visualization of students' preferences across various dimensions of extensive listening, emphasizing the most and least favored characteristics of EL inputs and tasks.

4. Interpretation and Thematic Summary: Finally, the data were synthesized into a thematic summary, extracting insights from each category. For example, if a high percentage of favorable ratings for "Context" elements among students, it would indicate that contextual relevance is essential for effective extensive listening. This thematic analysis provided a detailed understanding of students'

preferences, highlighting specific characteristics that could improve EL activities.

This quantitative approach allowed for a thorough and systematic investigation of extensive listening input and tasks preferences among students, offering practical insights for educators seeking to integrating more effective extensive listening practices. The findings enhanced the understanding of optimizing extensive listening for varied learning needs, aiding in the creation of EL resources that correspond to students' preferences and enhance their overall learning experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

The goal of the Results section is to present the main findings of the research. The analysis revealed several key insights into students' preferences for extensive listening inputs and tasks, categorized into four nuanced aspects: Language, Explicitness and Organization, Content and Context, and Task Characteristics. Each dimension offers a deeper understanding of the specific EL components that either facilitate or challenge students' comprehension and engagement.

Learners' Preferred Extensive Listening Inputs
Languages

The data gathered from learners' responses about their preferred extensive listening inputs in relation to language present valuable insights into the factors that enhance their listening experience, including speech rate, accent, number of speakers, voices, vocabulary, grammatical complexity, and pronoun references (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Analysis of preferred extensive listening inputs in terms of language*

Aspect	Statement	SD (N, %)	D (N, %)	A (N, %)	SA (N, %)
Speech Rate	I like a slow speech rate when listening to content.	8 (3.695)	33 (15.21%)	134 (61.75%)	42 (19.35%)
	I find it easier to understand content when the speech rate is moderate.	6 (2.76%)	9 (4.15%)	126 (58.06%)	76 (35.02%)
	A fast speech rate makes listening activities more interesting for me.	12 (5.53%)	112 (51.61%)	76 (35.02%)	17 (7.83%)
Accent	I like listening to speakers with unfamiliar accents.	21 (9.68%)	86 (39.63%)	88 (40.55%)	22 (10.14%)
	An unfamiliar accent makes listening activities more interesting for me.	12 (5.53%)	83 (38.25%)	100 (46.08%)	22 (10.14%)
	I find it engaging to listen to content with a variety of accents.	1 (0.46%)	25 (11.52%)	125 (57.60%)	66 (30.41%)
Number of Speakers	I prefer listening activities featuring a single speaker.	14 (6.45%)	83 (38.25%)	94 (43.32%)	26 (11.98%)
	Listening to multiple speakers in one listening activity is more engaging for me.	3 (1.38%)	36 (16.59%)	126 (58.06%)	52 (23.96%)
	I find it challenging to follow the talk when there are many speakers.	16 (7.37%)	86 (39.63%)	87 (40.09%)	28 (12.90%)
Voices	I prefer listening to content where the speakers have distinct voices.	2 (0.92%)	24 (11.06%)	133 (61.29%)	58 (26.73%)
	I can easily follow content even if the speakers' voices are similar.	17 (7.83%)	104 (47.93%)	89 (41.01%)	7 (3.23%)
	I find it engaging to listen to content with a variety of distinct voices.	2 (0.92%)	17 (7.83%)	142 (65.44%)	56 (25.81%)

Vocabulary	I prefer listening to content that uses common, everyday vocabulary.	3 (1.38%)	20 (9.22%)	100 (46.08%)	94 (43.32%)
	Less frequent or advanced vocabulary in listening activities is a challenge I enjoy.	4 (1.84%)	40 (18.43%)	135 (62.21%)	38 (17.51%)
	Listening to content with less frequent vocabulary helps me improve my language skills.	3 (1.38%)	8 (3.69%)	131 (60.37%)	75 (34.56%)
Grammatical Complexity	I enjoy listening to content with simple grammatical structures.	2 (0.92%)	15 (6.91%)	135 (62.21%)	65 (29.95%)
	Complex grammatical structures in listening content do not hinder my understanding.	7 (3.23%)	70 (32.26%)	122 (56.22%)	18 (8.29%)
	Listening to content with varied grammatical structures keeps me engaged.	1 (0.46%)	30 (13.82%)	150 (69.12%)	36 (16.59%)
Pronounce Reference	I prefer listening to content with clear and simple pronoun references.	2 (0.92%)	10 (4.61%)	120 (55.30%)	85 (39.17%)
	Complex pronoun references in listening content are interesting and engaging.	5 (2.30%)	55 (25.35%)	128 (58.99%)	29 (13.36%)
	I find it exciting to understand content with complex pronoun references.	19 (8.76%)	93 (42.86%)	92 (42.40%)	13 (5.99%)

The analysis of preferred extensive listening inputs reveals notable patterns across various linguistic dimensions, including speech tempo, accents, and the number of speakers. A significant majority of respondents (61.75%) demonstrated a clear preference for a slower speech rate, while only 19.35% showed strong agreement. Notably, 58.06% found a moderate speech rate to be more comprehensible, whereas a smaller yet significant proportion (35.02%) viewed quicker speech rates as more engaging, despite 51.61% expressing disagreement. The findings indicate a clear preference for slower or moderate speech rates to improve comprehension, whereas faster rates are frequently perceived as less engaging by the majority of individuals. In relation to accents, learners demonstrated diverse reactions. While 40.55% of participants expressed appreciation for speakers with unusual accents, a similar proportion (39.63%) remained neutral or disagreed. However, 57.60% found content with various accents to be engaging, suggesting that accent diversity plays a more significant role in enhancing listener engagement than simply the presence of unusual accents.

When analyzing preferences regarding the number of speakers, the data reveal a balance between engagement and cognitive load. 58.06% of respondents found listening to multiple speakers more entertaining, whereas 40.09% reported that following several speakers in one activity can be challenging. This highlights the complexity of content creation, where increasing the number of speakers can enhance engagement but may also introduce challenges in understanding. Additionally, 61.29% of participants supported the use of separate voices to improve comprehension, while a small minority (3.23%) expressed opposition to this preference. The preference for varied voices was significantly higher for engagement, with 65.44% recognizing diverse vocal traits as stimulating. Nonetheless, the importance of vocal diversity for enhancing learning experiences was underscored by the finding that 47.93% of participants encountered challenges in following the content when the speaker voices were similar.

The complexity of vocabulary and grammatical structures significantly influenced learners' preferences in listening practices. A notable proportion (62.21%) of participants valued the challenge presented by advanced vocabulary, whereas 60.37% agreed that infrequent vocabulary contributed to their language proficiency. Similarly, a significant 62.21% of learners preferred simple grammatical structures,

whereas 69.12% found varied grammar more engaging. Notably, 56.22% of respondents asserted that complex grammatical structures did not hinder comprehension, while 32.26% of learners expressed disagreement. Finally, 55.30% of respondents favored clear and straightforward pronoun references, while 58.99% considered complicated pronouns to be stimulating. Nonetheless, 42.86% regarded complicated pronouns as somewhat challenging, indicating that while linguistic complexity can be interesting, it may require greater cognitive effort for proper understanding.

Explicitness and Organization

The data acquired on learners' preferences for explicitness and organization in extensive listening inputs offers critical insights into their engagement with the explicit or implicit nature of ideas, the function of redundancy in listening practices, and the manner in which events are narrated and examples are presented during these activities (See Table 3).

Table 3. *Analysis of preferred extensive listening inputs in terms of explicitness and organization*

Aspect		Statement	SD (N, %)	D (N, %)	A (N, %)	SA (N, %)
Explicitness	Ideas	I like listening to content where the ideas are clearly stated.	1 (0.46%)	10 (4.61%)	109 (50.23%)	97 (44.70%)
		Listening activities with implicit ideas are engaging for me.	4 (1.84%)	57 (26.27%)	132 (60.83%)	24 (11.06%)
		I find it stimulating to understand content with many implicit ideas.	4 (1.84%)	52 (23.96%)	113 (52.07%)	48 (22.12%)
	Redundancy	I prefer listening activities that are concise and do not repeat information.	5 (2.30%)	44 (20.28%)	116 (53.46%)	52 (23.96%)
		I find it easier to understand listening content that has some repeated points.	7 (3.23%)	38 (17.51%)	118 (54.38%)	54 (24.88%)
		Listening activities without redundancy are more challenging but beneficial to enhance comprehension.	6 (2.76%)	34 (15.67%)	108 (49.77%)	69 (31.80%)
Organization	Events Narrated	I prefer listening to content where events are narrated in chronological order.	1 (0.46%)	6 (2.76%)	131 (60.37%)	79 (36.41%)
		I find it interesting when events are narrated out of natural time order.	30 (13.82%)	144 (66.36%)	25 (11.52%)	18 (8.29%)
		I enjoy the complexity added by out-of-order events in listening content.	23 (10.60%)	124 (57.14%)	59 (27.19%)	11 (5.07%)
	Examples Illustrated	prefer listening to content where examples follow the point speakers illustrate.	1 (0.46%)	6 (2.76%)	147 (67.74%)	63 29.03
		Listening activities where examples precede the point are more engaging for me.	3 (1.38%)	59 (27.19%)	122 (56.22%)	33 (15.21%)
		I find it challenging when examples come before the main point in listening content.	6 (2.76%)	44 (20.28%)	134 (61.75%)	33 (15.21%)

Table 3 makes it obvious that learners have distinct preferences for clarity and structure in listening content. In terms of explicitness, a substantial majority of respondents (94.93%) preferred listening to content that clearly stated ideas, with 50.23% agreeing and 44.70% strongly agreeing. Nevertheless, in spite of the inherent cognitive challenges, a significant proportion (60.83%) found implicit ideas to be engaging, and 52.07% found it stimulating to engage with content that contained many implicit ideas. In terms of redundancy, over half of the respondents (53.46%) favored concise listening activities that lacked repetitive information. However, 54.38% found content with repeated points to be more comprehensible. It is intriguing that 49.77% of respondents concurred that listening activities without redundancy presented a greater challenge, while 31.80% found such content to be advantageous for improving comprehension.

Furthermore, the data display the majority of learners (60.37%) preferred content organized in chronological sequence, with 36.41% expressing strong agreement. Nevertheless, when events were presented non-sequentially, 66.36% of participants viewed this method less attractive, showing a preference for organized event advancement. Nonetheless, 57.14% of learners valued the intricacy introduced by non-linear story, indicating that although chronological sequencing is favored, certain learners relish the challenge posed by more sophisticated narrative frameworks. Concerning the utilization of examples, 67.74% of participants favored examples that followed the primary argument, but 56.22% found it compelling when examples preceded the argument. Nonetheless, 61.75% concurred that listening to content with examples preceding the main idea was more arduous, suggesting that although learners value unusual content arrangements, they perceive typical sequencing as more comprehensible.

Content and Context

The analysis of learners' preferences for content and context includes four aspects: the presence of visual support during listening activities, familiarity with topics, the quantity of references to objects and individuals, and the balance between abstract and concrete content as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. *Analysis of preferred extensive listening inputs in terms of content and context*

Aspect		Statement	SD (N, %)	D (N, %)	A (N, %)	SA (N, %)
Content	Topics	I find it easier to follow listening content that covers topics I am familiar with.	4 (1.84%)	9 (4.15%)	112 (51.61%)	92 (42.40%)
		Listening to content on unfamiliar topics is engaging for me.	3 (1.38%)	39 (17.97%)	134 (61.75%)	41 (18.89%)
		Unfamiliar topics make it challenging for me to understand listening content.	4 (1.84%)	60 (27.65%)	113 (52.07%)	40 (18.43%)
	Things and People Referred to	I like listening to content that refers to a few things and people.	3 (1.38%)	55 (25.35%)	132 (60.83%)	27 (12.44%)
		Listening to content that refers to many things and people is interesting for me.	3 (1.38%)	49 (22.58%)	127 (58.53%)	38 (17.51%)
		I find it challenging to follow listening content that refers to many things and people.	10 (4.61%)	94 (43.32%)	98 (45.16%)	15 (6.91%)

	Abstract content	I love listening to speakers talking about concrete content.	1 (0.46%)	6 (2.76%)	104 (47.93%)	106 (48.85%)
		Listening to abstract content is engaging and thought-provoking for me.	3 (1.38%)	81 (37.33%)	100 (46.08%)	33 (15.21%)
		I prefer when abstract concepts are explained with concrete examples.	2 (0.92%)	33 (15.21%)	108 (49.77%)	74 (34.10%)
Context	visual or other support	I prefer listening activities that include visual aids to support the content.	0 (0.00%)	9 (4.15%)	96 (44.24%)	112 (51.61%)
		Listening to content without visual support is more challenging, but exciting for me.	9 (4.15%)	63 (29.03%)	118 (54.38%)	27 (12.44%)
		I enjoy the challenge of listening to content without any visual support	14 (6.45%)	76 (35.02%)	105 (48.39%)	22 (10.14%)

Table 4 indicates that a substantial majority (51.61%) of respondents agreed that engaging with content on familiar subjects enhances comprehension, while 42.40% strongly agreed with this statement. 61.75% of learners found unfamiliar topics intriguing, indicating that while familiarity improves understanding, novelty can stimulate interest. Nonetheless, 52.07% recognized that unfamiliar subjects present challenges to understanding, suggesting a relationship between engagement and cognitive effort. Moreover, learners indicated a preference for information that includes fewer entities, with 60.83% in agreement; however, 58.53% still found content with numerous references to be engaging. The study reveals that while many references may be engaging, they pose challenges, with 45.16% of respondents finding the information difficult to understand.

Regarding abstract and concrete content, learners exhibited a notable preference for concrete material, with 48.85% strongly indicating their enjoyment of materials centered on tangible subjects. Despite this, 46.08% of respondents appreciated abstract information, viewing it as thought-provoking. This suggests that while tangible materials are easier to understand, abstract content provides greater intellectual engagement. Approximately 49.77% of learners preferred the explanation of abstract concepts via concrete examples, underscoring the importance of balancing abstract and concrete elements in listening activities. In this context, 51.61% of respondents recognized the use of visual aids to improve listening tasks, whereas only 4.15% indicated disapproval. Despite this, 54.38% found content without visual aids to be both challenging and engaging, while 48.39% appreciated this difficulty. This indicates that, although visual elements are beneficial, a significant number of learners value the cognitive engagement required by solely auditory materials.

Learners' Preferred Extensive Listening Tasks

The data regarding learners' preferences for extensive listening tasks provide insights into their engagement with various task types, including detail processing, information integration, gist recall, fact-opinion differentiation, non-central detail recall, and response type (delayed or immediate), as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. *Analysis of preferred extensive listening tasks*

Aspect	Statement	SD (N, %)	D (N, %)	A (N, %)	SA (N, %)
Processing of details	I enjoy listening activities that require processing a lot of detailed information.	3 (1.38%)	40 18.43	125 57.60	49 22.58
	Processing detailed information in listening tasks helps me remember the content better.	1 (0.46%)	15 (6.91%)	148 (68.20%)	53 (24.42%)
	I find it challenging to process listening tasks that include numerous details.	9 (4.15%)	75 34.56	106 48.85	27 12.44
Integration of information from different parts of the text	I prefer listening activities that require integrating information from various parts of the listening content.	1 (0.46%)	46 (21.20%)	143 (65.90%)	27 (12.44%)
	Combining information from different sections of a listening text is a useful skill.	1 (0.46%)	7 (3.23%)	142 (65.44%)	67 (30.88%)
	I find it difficult to integrate information from different parts of a listening text.	8 (3.69%)	86 (39.63%)	105 (48.39%)	18 (8.29%)
Recall of gist	I like listening activities that focus on recalling the main ideas.	1 (0.46%)	13 (5.99%)	128 (58.99%)	75 (34.56%)
	Summarizing the gist of a listening text helps me understand content better.	1 (0.46%)	5 (2.30%)	126 (58.06%)	85 (39.17%)
	I find it beneficial to recall the overall message of a listening text.	3 (1.38%)	23 (10.60%)	124 (57.14%)	67 (30.88%)
Separation of fact from opinion	I love listening activities that require distinguishing between facts and opinions.	2 (0.92%)	27 (12.44%)	131 (60.37%)	57 26.27
	Identifying facts and opinions in a listening text is an important skill for me.	0 (0.00%)	11 (5.07%)	142 (65.44%)	64 (29.49%)
	I find it challenging to separate facts from opinions in listening tasks.	20 (9.22%)	100 (46.08%)	74 (34.10%)	23 (10.60%)
Recall of non-central or irrelevant details	I enjoy listening tasks that focus on recalling all types of details, including irrelevant ones.	15 (6.91%)	84 (38.71%)	94 (43.32%)	24 (11.06%)
	Remembering minor details in a listening text helps improve my memory skills.	2 (0.92%)	13 (5.99%)	140 (64.52%)	62 (28.57%)
	Recalling irrelevant details in listening tasks is less important to me than remembering the main points.	8 (3.69%)	72 (33.18%)	106 (48.85%)	31 (14.29%)
Response: A delayed or immediate one	I find it easier to respond immediately after listening to the content.	2 (0.92%)	33 (15.21%)	137 (63.13%)	45 (20.74%)
	I like having a delay before responding to allow time to process the information.	2 (0.92%)	25 (11.52%)	122 (56.22%)	68 (31.34%)
	I feel more confident when I have time to think before responding to listening activities.	3 (1.38%)	15 (6.91%)	94 (43.32%)	105 (48.39%)

The analytical results of preferred extensive listening tasks highlight learners' inclination towards tasks that require the processing of comprehensive information. A significant proportion (57.60%) of respondents' value activities that necessitate specific information, whereas 68.20% contend that interaction with such details enhances material retention. However, 48.85% acknowledged that these activities could present challenges, suggesting a balance between enjoyment and difficulties. The integration of information from different segments of listening content was notably valued, with 65.90% supporting activities that require this skill. Nonetheless, 48.39% of learners faced difficulties with this integration, indicating the cognitive demands linked to this task type. 65.44 of respondents recognized the importance of incorporating information from multiple parts.

The majority of learners found that recalling the essence of a listening text was advantageous, with 58.99% valuing tasks focused on primary ideas and 57.14% considering it important to retain the overall message. Summarizing content is considered an effective strategy for improving comprehension, with 58.06% agreeing that it aids understanding. Students demonstrated a notable preference for tasks requiring the differentiation between truth and opinion, with 60.37% indicating enjoyment for these activities and 65.44% acknowledging the importance of this distinction. Despite its high regard, 46.08% of participants indicated difficulty in differentiating between the two, implying that this skill requires significant cognitive effort.

Finally, the recollection of non-central or extraneous elements was deemed less significant, with only 43.32% indicating enjoyment in tasks that required recalling all categories of details, including irrelevant ones. Nonetheless, 64.52% of participants indicated that the retention of minor details improves memory capabilities, while 48.85% highlighted the significance of memorizing major themes over irrelevant details. The majority of learners (63.13%) preferred immediate responses to listening tasks, while 56.22% appreciated a delay for information processing. The increase in confidence among learners was notable when they were given time to reflect, with 48.39% indicating improved confidence after a delay, highlighting the importance of processing time for quality responses.

Discussion

This study identifies students' specific preferences for extensive listening inputs and tasks, emphasizing their need for materials that provide a balance between clarity and cognitive challenge. The findings support and enhance existing literatures by highlighting the necessity for auditory resources that facilitate both immediate understanding and prolonged cognitive involvement. Consistent with previous studies, students exhibited a preference for materials characterized by moderate speech rates, clear pronunciation, and simplified grammatical structures, which enhance comprehension (Hanifa & Yusra, 2024; Wang & Macintyre, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). These elements diminish cognitive load, allowing learners to process content more effectively, as supported by Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 2022). At the same time, the strong emphasis on clarity in the data nuances strands of extensive listening scholarship that prioritize early and sustained exposure to highly authentic, less scaffolded input for the sake of fluency development (Kettongma, 2025; Takaesu, 2014). While such work underscores the value of naturalistic speech, the findings suggest that unmediated complexity can be perceived as overwhelming rather than motivating. Students recognized the importance of challenging elements, including diverse accents, advanced vocabulary, and complex grammatical structures, which they

consider crucial for language development. This tension between their need for comprehensibility and their desire for challenge refines research that advocates for a balanced curriculum incorporating both clarity and complexity, indicating that the "balance point" may need to be calibrated more cautiously for autonomous extensive listening in digital environments (Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2020).

The preference for explicit content underscores the significance of clarity in facilitating language comprehension. Students preferred content that communicated ideas directly while also valuing the engagement elicited by implicit information, indicating that both explicit and implicit content are relevant in extensive listening learning. Explicit information enhances comprehension, whereas implicit content necessitates inference, thereby promoting critical thinking and inferential skills (Djabborova, 2020; Siegel & Wang, 2024). Students demonstrated a preference for succinct materials and acknowledged the importance of repetition in enhancing understanding. Non-redundant content is crucial for the development of advanced listening skills, as it necessitates that learners synthesize and retain information without dependence on repetitive cues (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Newton & Nation, 2020). However, this preference for limited redundancy complicates pedagogical recommendations that emphasize frequent repetition and dense recycling of language as uniformly beneficial for comprehension and acquisition. While previous work highlights that repeated exposure supports accuracy and fluency, the present data indicate that overly repetitive input can be experienced as tedious and insufficiently stimulating, particularly by more proficient undergraduates. A balanced instructional approach that integrates clarity with judicious redundancy may therefore be more appropriate than extensive repetition, improving comprehension and cognitive resilience in extensive listening activities, offering support for less experienced learners and presenting meaningful challenges for more advanced students.

Organization and structure are further vital components that influence learners' engagement and understanding. The preference for systematic, chronological organization indicates learners' need for a logical information flow, which enhances comprehension by minimizing extraneous cognitive load (Tai, 2022). Chronological sequencing is consistent with the principles of Cognitive Load Theory, highlighting the advantages of organized presentation for enhancing memory retention and comprehension (Sweller, 2022). While certain learners expressed interest in non-linear narrative structures, the majority perceived these formats as more cognitively demanding and less engaging. This finding stands in partial contrast to pedagogical positions that foreground the value of exposure to more complex, less predictable discourse structures as a way to approximate real-world listening. In digital extensive listening, at least for learners at this proficiency level, the study results suggest that such complexity should be introduced more selectively and with greater scaffolding than some authenticity-driven approaches might imply. Thus, extensive listening materials should prioritize logical sequencing to improve clarity and accessibility, particularly for learners in the initial phases of language acquisition (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021), while incorporating occasional non-linear narratives to provide cognitive challenge for learners desiring complexity and to enhance flexible thinking and interpretative skills.

In terms of content, students preferred familiar topics, which enhanced comprehension by minimizing cognitive load. This finding aligns with the perspective of Renandya and Farrell (2011) that familiarity with subject matter facilitates efficient processing and increases engagement. Learners indicated a willingness to engage with unfamiliar topics, contingent upon the provision of sufficient support and concrete

examples, highlighting a need for intellectual stimulation. Abstract concepts, though intriguing for certain individuals, require precise explanations and tangible references to enhance comprehension, corroborating Dörnyei's (2020) claim that abstract material demands meticulous contextualization. However, the strong preference for familiar content challenges assumptions in some content-based and content language-integrated learning (CLIL)-oriented approaches that university-level learners should routinely engage with highly specialized or abstract topics in L2 (Hallasi-Ancori, 2025). The present findings suggest that, in extensive listening on digital platforms, familiar or personally relevant themes may function as an important affective and cognitive anchor, and that more demanding or abstract content is better positioned as an occasional extension supported by concrete examples and clear contextualization (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

Visual aids are recognized as effective tools for improving comprehension and engagement, consistent with research on multimodal input in language learning, indicating that visual supports facilitate the accessibility of complex content (Djabborova, 2020; Mayer, 2024). Students acknowledged the significance of audio-only tasks, even though they present heightened cognitive demands. Audio-only materials, while challenging, enhance the development of deeper listening skills by necessitating that learners concentrate exclusively on auditory cues. This aligns with the findings of Newton and Nation (2020), which indicate that audio-only tasks enhance aural proficiency by increasing learners' focus on linguistic details without visual aids. Importantly, students' dual appreciation for visually-supported and audio-only formats challenges any simplistic interpretation of multimodality research that might assume "more visuals" are always preferable. Instead, their preferences point to a complementary relationship: visual support is valued when content is dense or unfamiliar, whereas audio-only tasks are perceived as essential for building independence and real-world listening resilience. Thus, an effective instructional strategy must incorporate both visually-supported and audio-only tasks to enhance comprehensive listening skills. Visual aids enhance comprehension, whereas audio-only materials foster independent auditory processing, equipping students for real-world listening situations that may not provide visual context.

Finally, preferences for specific task types highlight learners' inclination towards activities that necessitate content integration, recall, and thorough processing. Tasks that require the differentiation between facts and opinions, while challenging, are regarded as essential for enhancing critical thinking, reflecting findings in language education research regarding the significance of these skills in overall language proficiency (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Karlin & Karlin, 2019). Immediate feedback was preferred for reinforcing comprehension; however, time for reflection also demonstrated benefits, enhancing learners' confidence and accuracy. This is consistent with research indicating that a blend of immediate and delayed feedback facilitates both quick processing and thorough reflection, which are crucial for the consolidation of language skills (Fu & Li, 2022; Milliner & Dimoski, 2021; Saeedakhtar et al., 2021). Yet the salience of immediate feedback in learners' preferences sits somewhat at odds with positions that foreground delayed feedback as inherently more conducive to deeper processing and autonomy. The data suggest that, in extensive listening tasks on digital platforms, learners still value timely confirmation of understanding and may perceive exclusively delayed feedback as frustrating or demotivating. The implementation of flexible feedback mechanisms therefore offers learners timely corrections and facilitates introspective learning, addressing various cognitive

processing requirements while also challenging one-size-fits-all prescriptions about optimal feedback timing.

CONCLUSION

The present study emphasizes the crucial importance of customized auditory materials and organized listening activities in enhancing English listening skills in Extensive Listening (EL) practices. The findings indicate that students favor auditory content that maintains a balance between clarity and cognitive challenge, suggesting a requirement for materials that incorporate both comprehensible speech patterns and intricate language components. This integration of clear and engaging inputs facilitates prompt comprehension and promotes the development of advanced listening abilities and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, learners' preference for logically sequenced information, familiar topics, and clear examples highlights the importance of structured and accessible content in effectively managing cognitive load. The insights highlight the significance of a balanced instructional approach that combines clarity and complexity, thereby improving listening comprehension and fostering analytical skills.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it focuses on students' stated preferences for extensive listening inputs and tasks rather than examining the actual or long-term effects of these preferences on listening competence. Second, although the findings highlight the importance of multimodal input, the study does not systematically compare audio-only and visually supported formats in terms of their differential impact on comprehension and cognitive engagement. Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal and comparative designs to investigate how preferred and non-preferred materials, as well as different input formats, influence learners' listening development over time.

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