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## LISTENING JOURNALS FOR EXTENSIVE LISTENING PRACTICE OF EFL STUDENTS AT ANDALAS UNIVERSITY

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### **Abstract**

*Using audio from CD provided by textbook is a conventional method for learning listening, where teacher played the audio recording providing by the textbook in the language lab. This method is limited in providing the natural language features spoken by a variety of English speakers. Recently, teaching listening has been developed using internet media. There are many English language teaching sources available on the internet which provide audio, videos, and podcast. For learning purpose, the audio is also accomplished by several activities and transcript. In this method, learners practice extensive listening followed by completing listening journals, records of students' listening practice and self-evaluation.*

*This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of listening journal in helping students understand the overall meaning. The study has been conducted to the first year EFL university students during their dictation and reproduction lessons. Every week, students were required to do extra activities as homework. They are assigned to listen to several ELT sources on the internet. The results showed that most of the students found the method helped them to improve their vocabulary and understand the meaning from many different sources. Students relied on their listening ability and identify the weakness which needs improvement. This method appeared to be an effective listening teaching method since the students were exposed to English variety.*

**Keywords:** Extensive Listening, Listening Journal, EFL Students

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Listening is an important skill in ELT, which found as significant challenges by non-English speakers. Former time, conventional teaching method such as audio-lingual faced the limitation of sources. Teaching listening usually conducted in a language laboratory using textbook complemented by CD records. The CD cannot be easily copied because of restriction from the publishers. Thus, students can practice listening only during the classroom lesson. In the class, students listen to several topics spoken by English speakers. Students repeat the speaker speech and practice similar conversation in pairs. However, this activity is less engaging, and the materials are less authentic (Chinnery 3) partly due to the materials published by the International publisher, such as, American or British.

This conventional method of teaching listening is accompanied by an alternative method taking the advantages of the ICT in language teaching. Recently, there are several websites provide authentic sources with listening activities (Chinnery, 15; Goh, 43; Ross,33). The sites provide video, pictures, and activities, such as quiz and they also provide the script. The speeches are in the form of news, report, and presentation. This paper presenting analysis to an alternative method teaching listening called as an extensive listening method. The extensive listening can help the learners to focus on increasing the skill, one of the tools is the listening journal (Schmidt 3; Goh 39).

This study aims to evaluate how useful is listening journal to improve students extensive listening practice. The activity is to train students to apply metacognitive strategies (Goh, 38; Richards, 2008). Students practice self-evaluation to determine each performance after involving in the activities.

This paper also suggest the use of internet sources, such as news from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish> or <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/> to enhance students listening comprehension. EFL students of Andalas University has limited exposure to English. English is spoken only in the classroom and in the educational context. Listening practice using the

internet sources can be relevant activities. After listening, students continue reporting their listening process in the listening journal; they write the activities, the things they have learned and said the part of listening skills need improvement.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

### *Extensive listening*

Extensive listening defined as the types of listening activities that make students can achieve comprehensive (Chang and Millet 38; Yeh 136; Renandya and Farrel 136). The activity is self-directed, and it can be conducted suitable to students time flexibility and get meaningful listening practice (Renandya and Farrell 56). Extensive listening takes the advantage from the sources that are available in the real world (Takaesu 151). It allows students listen to many kinds of authentic material from the internet, such as songs, podcast, news and videos from YouTube (Goh 43; Yeh 136; Takaesu 150). One of the benefits of the extensive listening is to improve the learners' performance and to be autonomous in their listening, as the result of the chance to access the materials at their level and increase the automaticity (Yeh 136, Takaesu 152)

The conventional method in teaching listening is the teacher provides the audio from the textbook, complete the exercises and move to the next one. Every student has to listen to the similar text. In the end, students practice the task recycling, students practice the conversation and discuss with partners (Brown 10). The extensive listening activities using internet sources fit students need since they can practice it anywhere in their gadget and it could be probably enjoyable since it provides many kinds of different information.

### *Internet sources as authentic materials*

The massive use of the internet is beneficial since the website can be an excellent source for learning. The Internet sources are the alternative sources and considered to be integrated into the ELT (Chinnery 2, Goh 47). The use of technology in ELT has been reported to be effective to improve learners' motivation, engage students and promote autonomy (Chinnery 3). The internet access also allows the exposure to English speakers and the chance to use authentic materials.

Referring to the ELT in the 21st century, the citizens must be equipped with technological literacy as one of the key to stimulate students creativity (NEA, 20). Students engaged with the materials available in the internet, practice with the collaboration with their peers (Chinnery 6). The content of the internet are varied, some are authentic. Thomas identifies the authentic material as the material which is in the form of oral and written and is aimed to communicate meaning (15). Authentic material is different to a textbook; it shows the use of language in the community where it is spoken. For example, cooking recipe and restaurant menus. The activities teach the language employed in the real world. The authentic content can increase students motivation to be directed learner and increase motivation. The materials contain the real world language in the form of spoken form, such as the intonation, the pronunciation, stress and English variety (Ross, 33). For example, <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/> publish trending news, and it comes with the script and downloadable audio and video. Listening comprehension lesson must have many variety of activities, relevant materials to the listeners and the possibility to access appropriate level (Ross, 32).

### *Listening Journal*

Keeping individual notes or diary of listening activities have been reported to be one common activity for students studying listening (Goh 38; Schmidt 2). This tool has been useful to help the students reflect their listening. Also, through a listening journal, students can listen more and apply several approaches to help them focus on the selected aspects of listening.

A listening journal is a book or a set of question in a form in which allow students to report their listening activity outside of class. Through filling in the form, students can reflect their activity in listening and think about the aspect of listening that they think needs improvement (Goh 39)

Through the journal, students can reflect and evaluate their listening activity. Students are acquired to listen to certain sources provided by a teacher or chosen material to listen outside the classroom. Through the activity, students are expected to practice listening to the text for several times, compare and contrast their pronunciation, and then reflect their listening process (Schmidt 3).

Schmidt study through the listening journal is a way to prove that listening is not a challenging activity.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The participants of the study were the first year students studying in the English Department students of Andalas University taking Dictation and reproduction subject. The subject is compulsory in their program. The Students age range from 18 to 22 years old. Students meet once a week for 100 minutes study in the language lab with internet access. There isn't any native speaker teacher for the last two years teaching in that department. In the class, students study the pronunciation, word stress, and sentences stress. Students level are in the Pre-intermediate level to intermediate.

This study used the listening journal as an assignment and to train students to be self-directed learners by using available sources accessible on the internet. Listening Journal is a post-listening activity consisted of a set of questions that students have to report weekly. Students wrote their opinion of the materials and self-reflection concerning the material. Students also reported which skill needs improvement.

Every week, students submit the listening journal based on the form developed by Schmidt (11). The Teacher provided the list of the websites. Every week students independently choose a topic for the extensive listening. Listening to the news report, documentary or conversation of ordering meals in the restaurant. The materials come in the form of audio, video or podcast. Students practice the activities in the selected topic, and they are also allowed to read the text or subtitles provided. Students follow one of the activities, do the exercises, in the form of Multiple-Choice questions, True/False and studying unknown words. After listening, students reflect their learning, including the name of the website, the title of the audio, the summary of the text, the vocabularies and the activities conducted. Also, one part is self-assessment, students have to reflect on their difficulties related to the speed, pronunciation, vocabulary. Students also need to assess the skills which need improvement.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

All students accessed the assigned websites and practiced extensive listening. They expressed their experience through provided listening journal. Most of the students (81.7%, N=44) felt comfortable with the audio speed. At the same time, 73.7% of them found the pronunciation were clear. While 71% reported that the vocabularies are understandable and helpful.

From students reflection of their activities, it was reported that first, the Audio Speed are comfortable showing that students can repeat the audio/video several times. In fact, "the listening comprehension problem was the fast rate of speech" (Renandya, Farrell, 2010). Through the activity, students can overcome the problem through the repetition. The chance to repeat the audio or video for more than one time has supported the learning. As it has been proved by Chang and Read (380) that repeated listening has been listed as the most popular strategy in listening, regarding the level of the students. Secondly, the pre-listening vocabulary listed in the beginning of the audio are helpful for students learning.

The result shows that the materials are appropriate for students level and the activity is encouraging. Goh believes that the text, task, listener characteristics are relevant categories of the listening comprehension (8). My students who are at the intermediate level, are engaged with the topic of real world context, as several websites contain the world news, the content of the websites are updated, there are many interesting topics they can choose. Internet sources are the recent sources in language learning. It provides the authentic materials in the form of audio and video (Goh 43). In recent CLT, the teacher has to push the use of authentic material (Richards, 2008). Chang and Millett have reported that choosing interesting materials that fit students level motivate students to continue their listening activity (38) due to students enjoy the listening practice and improve the real world listening skill (Chinnery 6).

Some websites contain the up to date information and provide several learning activities, including the talk show, seminar, news and popular science. For example, VOA News, which also facilitates language learning. The activity is varied, and students can select any interesting exercises. Students can adjust the activity with the purpose of their learning. The audio and video are

supplemented with the script or subtitle, Chang and Millett reported that Extensive listening activity which is conducted with reading and listening prior listening had been proved to help the comprehension (37). Vandergrift and Goh identify prior listening activities, including, reading, brainstorming or seeing pictures to provide students with language and knowledge oriented, which can engage learners in the listening task.

According to the 21st century ELT, creativity is one of the principal components (NEA, 2015). Through the learning process, after experience many kinds of activities, a teacher can train students to think creatively because they can get more perspectives about life. Also, 21st-century listening skill involves the ability to understand visual information, such as pictures and text and to develop critical thinking.

Students have reported their personal skill and weakness that need improvement (Table 1). However, they think that their listening is improving (65.4%,n =44). Students agree that the extensive listening helped their listening ability (83%, n=44). Students reflection show the agreement on the effectiveness of extensive listening. The materials provide the objective of the lesson, it introduced vocabularies, provided the context in the form of pictures and description of the topic. Students can activate their schemata which allow them to understand the meaning. In table 1 below is the result of students reflection on the skills that they think need improvement.

Table 1. students self-reflection in which listening skills that need improvement

<u>I need to improve</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
Listening to main ideas	16
Listening to details	17.40
Listening to numbers	6.60
Listening to connected speech	1.20
Listening for a long time	3.09
Listening to other accents	14.50
My vocabulary	19.60
My pronunciation	16.30

The practices have been useful for students. They agree that there are several listening skills need improvement, for example, vocabulary (19.6 %), listening to details (17.4 %) and pronunciation (16.3%). Several websites introduce the vocabulary; they are very helpful for students. Listening to main ideas (16%) is also the skill that students need to improve the practice. Students do not have any difficulties in listening to connected speech (1.2%) and listening for a long time (3.09%). Self-reflection has led students to evaluate their learning. They think of the activity which has been helpful to improve their listening skills and the parts that need improvement.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study has attempted to show the effectiveness of extensive listening practice. The study involves 44 students of Andalas university who has to practice listening from the internet materials They have to report their learning process in a journal. The findings show that extensive listening helped them to improve their vocabulary and understand the meaning from many different sources. Students have the habits of reflecting their learning helped them improve their listening, especially in the area of improvement in the vocabulary and pronunciation. In addition, the use of authentic material has been engaged and provide the variety of topics that students can choose as consideration in choosing the materials from the websites. The material with the additional activity is more preferable than those with only video or audio since it contains several post-listening activities. Through the activity, hopefully increases the automaticity in listening.

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