The Role of Extensive Listening in Raising Students' Metacognitive Awareness of Listening Skill

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Abstract

The triad purpose of the study was achieved via descriptive single case study with embedded units by using three data collection tools in phases. Preliminarily, the open-ended questionnaire collected from conveniently sampled 39 participants was administered to reach students' metacognitive awareness of listening skill. The initial analysis induced the researcher to employ podcasts as an extensive listening activity by having 4 voluntary students fill up reflective listening journals for each podcast with the aim of realizing the effect of extensive listening on learners' metacognition. Lastly, the focus group interview was conducted to solicit students' possible changing metacognitive views about listening skill in general and extensive listening in particular. As a result, students instructed on listening through the traditional way did not practice their listening outside the class. The dominant factors affecting listening comprehension respectively comprise scanty listening practice, unknown lexis, and unfamiliar background knowledge. The dominant strategies were identified as listening multiple times, raising concentration, taking notes, and looking up into dictionary. The participants also designated favourable metacognitive awareness towards the study per se, extensive listening, and general listening skill.

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Introduction

Listening skill, which is here typified as unidirectional or non-interactive listening to an audio-visual text, is one of the required abilities to achieve proficiency in a foreign language (FL, hereafter). In all the walks of life as in education, Brown (2007) claims listening to be the most effective medium of learning and schooling from birth through the years of formal education. Listening skill as a critical input would also cast a substantive influence in FL learning/acquisition (Dunkel, 1986; Krashen, 1995; Rost, 1994, 2002), which was corroborated with a positive connection of listening ability with general FL proficiency and oral proficiency skills (Feyten, 1991; Nord, 1977). However, Schmidt (2016) unravels that students have been rarely taught how to listen since teachers hold the assumption that listening can be acquired naturally, which does not happen as such. On the basis of its nature being implicit, variable, having blur word boundaries (Renandya & Farrell, 2010), transient and occurring within restricted working memory (Rost, 1994), requiring linguistic, sociolinguistic, and content knowledge (Call, 1985; Siegel, 2013), it is one of the least understood and probed area in language education and the most onerous skill for FL learners and instructors (Feyten, 1991; Thorn, 2009).

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Many studies and developments have emerged in the areas of cognitive and social/psychological dimensions of listening skill, methods of listening instruction compassing bottom-up or/and top-down processes, listening strategies, metacognitive knowledge and instruction, multimedia contours, academic listening, and listening assessment (Vandergrift, 2007). Out of the above foci of research, this research banks on the metacognitive perceptions of students on listening in light of three causes. Goh (1997) specified these causes as insights of students about problems and solutions in listening comprehension can affect their learning, getting their insights would provide their cognitive complexities, and eventually paucity of knowledge about the process of listening entails more investigations. The other research area is extensive listening (EL, hereafter) based on two theoretical underpinnings as symbolism and connectionism that underscore the frequent exposure of common linguistic items and implementations of linguistic norms on route to language acquisition, specifically listening comprehension (Hulstijn, 2003). Extensive listening can also be endorsed by skill learning theory. This theory has been thoroughly

discussed by DeKeyser (2007) who assert that slow and controlled bottom-up processing skills of linguistic components can be best automatized via recursive practice to engender "fully spontaneous, effortless, fast, and errorless" (p. 3) linguistic output. The value of extensive listening outside classroom has risen due to the growing trend attached to learner autonomy (Field, 2007), which is quite crucial in the global and digitalized, free, mobile, and self-accessed educational technologies to compensate instructional constraints as large classes, short class sittings, and institutional requirements not to mention political and survival issues of humanity as Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, in the aftermath of the exploration of students' metacognitive awareness of listening, an intervention, that is extensive listening of podcasts, was employed to see a possible positive effect of extensive listening on students' metacognitive awareness of listening skill through reflective listening journals.

Review of Relevant Research

A great number of studies can be categorized into two means of orientations; empirical and theoretical or pedagogical studies (Hasan, 2000). The descriptive works are imbued with explanations, theories, approaches, principles, and pedagogical assumptions about listening skill and listening lessons, yet these elucidations need to be examined and tested in the instructional settings. The empirical studies have handled learners' perceptions, comprehension approach, bottom-up activities, extensive listening, metacognitive listening strategies, teacher modelling (Siegel, 2013), factors affecting listening, strategies, background or prior knowledge (Hasan, op. cit.), academic listening, issues of listening pedagogy, phonological and lexical understanding (Field, 2008), and technological aids (Alm, 2013) This review of literature will outline the studies conducted on students' metacognitive awareness of listening including on problems and strategies and on extensive listening as an extra-curricular activity outside the classroom.

Learners' insights regarding their comprehension problems drew much attention in listening inquiries. Graham (2006), through questionnaire and interviews, explored that students' listening comprehension is the least achieved area in their language training due to the reasons of speed of the listening texts, notice of discrete words, and grip of the words. These results were also imputed to the students' low ability in listening and the intricateness of listening texts but not to the inadequate and inadvertent employment of listening strategies. Yagang (1994) associates the obstacles whilst listening to general sources as the message, the speaker, the listener, the physical contour, and process and task added by Rubin (1994). Out

of tens of micro-factors, the commonest specific factors can be aligned as speech rate, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Higgins, 1995). A study conducted in an ESL context via small group interviews and learner diaries reached the problems as vocabulary, prior knowledge, speech rate, type of input, and accent in order of mentioning frequency (Goh, 1999). Elsewhere, Goh (2000) detected 10 listening problems through learner diaries, small group interviews, and immediate retrospective verbalisations. Of these problems, forgetting what is listened, recognition of words, apprehending words but not the intended message, ignoring the remaining text when working on the meaning, and unable to construct mental images of words are the commonest listening problems. Moreover, both high-level and low-level listeners had problems in recognition of words and forgetting what is heard. However, while apprehending words but not the intended message was the third problem encountered by proficient listeners, low-level listeners experienced the problem of ignoring the remaining text when working on the meaning (Goh, ibid.). Likewise, in an EFL context via a questionnaire, Hasan (ibid.) evinced a number of problems at the levels of learner strategies, nature of the listening text, listening tasks, features of the speaker, and listener attitudes. Similarly, Flowerdew and Miller (1992) identified speed of delivery, new terminology and concepts, concentration problems, and physical vicinity as problems and pre- and post-lecture reading, peer or lecturer aid, raising concentration, note-taking, etc. as strategies.

As metacognition simply refers to one's reflectively thinking processes about cognitive processes (Flavell, 1979), metacognitive strategies, which are subsumed under learning strategies (Mendelsohn, 2006), are harnessed to control those cognitive processes (Goh, 2002). These processes involve *planning for listening*, *monitoring one's own comprehension*, *identification of comprehension problems and solving*, and *assessing one's comprehension* (Hinkel, 2006; O'Malley, Chamot, & Küpper, 1989; Vandergrift, & Goh, 2012). In a study conducted via listening journals and curated listening materials, Chen (2019) succeeded in helping students learn how to plan for their listening, monitor their comprehension, find solutions to listening problems, evaluate their approach and outcome. Furthermore, students in general had positive perceptions for listening journals, but some perceived keeping journals to be time-consuming. Goh (2002), in an exploratory study through retrospective verbalisations, brought forth forty-four listening tactics subsumed under cognitive and metacognitive strategies evenly. Elsewhere, Dunkel (1986) confers a number of theoretical principles rooted in comprehension approach and a set of pedagogical assumptions leant upon factors as listeners' prior knowledge and interests that can influence listening perception and consideration of needs in arranging listening activities. The significance of interest and world

knowledge led researchers to work on extensive listening that occurs outside the classroom in accordance with students' autonomous extra-curricular listening behaviours.

Extensive listening is tersely defined as an engagement into a lot of meaningful and comprehensible listening input for pleasure outside the classroom either by teacher directions or self-oriented (Renandya & Farrell, 2010). Extensive listening has been solemnly supported by Alm (2013), Chang & Millett (2014), Chen (2016), Gonulal (2020), Renandya (2012a, 2012b), Renandya & Farrell (2010), Renandya & Jacobs (2016), Ridgway (2000), and Schmidt (2016). To capsulize, Blyth (2012) adduces the views by alleging that EL provides experience to the learners and does not linger the time of improving comprehension; EL would not lead to fossilization of bad listening habits, implicit learning of listening skill would cultivate the autonomous and creative learners; and lastly, there is not any trustworthy data in favour of the instruction of explicit listening strategies. EL is deemed to be crucial in terms of technological developments and the presumption that language learning can only be achieved if it is directed outside the classroom to reach practical goal of any theorized practice of language practitioners as a reflection of practicality parameter in Gokmen (2020). Therefore, exhortation of the extensive listening outside the class via educational technologies deserves much attention, research, and improvement in this digital age and outside-the-classroom learning by keeping listening journals.

Internet embodies a wide range of audio-visual and written sources that help learning a FL in every topic and every level. Out of these MALL (Integrated Mobile Assisted Language Learning) materials, podcasting which is an audio or video RSS feed can be used as an efficient, flexible, portable learning tool that can outfit the language learners with authentic and prepossessing materials on a regular basis (Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009; Schmidt, 2008; Stanley, 2006). Therefore, there emerged a number of studies on the usage and benefits of podcasts in language education (see Yeh, 2017). Of these studies, in a study conducted with 49 ELF students via log assignments, progress and proficiency tests, and questionnaire for a year to examine the potential of podcasting and vodcasting in furthering extensive listening, podcasts preferred more than vodcasting were discovered to be beneficial through extensive listening in promoting listening comprehension and specifically pronunciation skills and recognition of lexical items (Gonulal, ibid.). Inefficient usage of vodcasts in Gonulal (ibid.) led us to use podcasts in the current study. In an another research to entwine metacognition with EL via podcasts, Alm (2013), through personal blogs, a survey, and focus group interview documented on the usage of podcasts, blogs, and listening strategies, came up

with the conclusion that the blogs led students to guide their listening practice by having the freedom to select and order their listening materials in accordance with their listening experiences, interests, and needs which in return had a positive repercussion on their listening strategies. Similarly, Yeh (2017) investigated podcasts integrated into main course of English speaking and listening for extensive listening by means of questionnaire, podcast diaries, and observations of student project presentations. According to the results, students selected podcasts in concert with their interest and proficiency levels. They conceived podcasts to be useful and convenient in promoting language proficiency and world knowledge. Even though, they overall enjoyed the project due to the reasons of freedom of choice, meaningful practice, and integration with the syllabus, authentic input devoid of transcripts and fast delivery of speech were found to be problematic.

Another crucial tool in extensive listening and in metacognitive awareness is listening journals or diaries which are "an ongoing assignment through which students document their participation in out-of-class activities and reflect on how such participation helped them improve their listening abilities" (Gilliland, 2015, p. 13, quoted from Chen, 2019). Listening journals can be wielded as a pedagogical task and a research instrument to raise awareness in linguistic areas including Global Englishes as examined by Galloway and Rose (2014) and suggested by Goh (2000) as a third way of raising students' reflective awareness of learning to listen. In another study, employing journals as a research and pedagogical tool to explore students' material preference and listening problems, Chen (2016) explored that journals can serve as an efficient tool in understanding students' extracurricular listening processes yet can also be completed inadvertently by less autonomous students.

Rationale of the study

The knowledge about the process of FL listening and listening education are not sufficient despite the value granted on listening being one of the core lessons in FL education (Richards, 2005). By virtue of the conclusions drawn out of the studies reviewed above and more by Rubin (1994), further research needs to be conducted to detect and undergird the problems in both top-down and bottom-up processing and to discover newer strategies to promote strategy training, come up with more kinds of negotiations that ease comprehension. Following Graham, Santos, and Vanderplank's (2008) surmise by getting support from Vann and Abraham (1990) that learners' strategies need to be explored in a case study with a holistic lens by striving to answer the question of how and why students use strategies rather

than which ones and how many or often, we endeavoured to examine the usage of strategies by learners in a case study in the process of EL.

Two prime considerations have occupied the researcher. One is to explore the challenges in listening perception through learners' own conceptualizations and the other is to contribute to the students' listening achievement by raising their meta-cognitive awareness by means of extensive listening. Therefore, the objective of this study is to evaluate students' metacognitive awareness of listening skill before, during, and after the extensive listening of podcasts via listening journals.

Methodology

Research design

The theoretical background for the current study reposes on a case study which aims to explore a specific social or educational phenomenon such as an individual, a setting, a social group, an institution, a process, a program or an event (Duff, 2008; Yin, 2009). Considering the sheer focus of the current work leaning on describing extensive listening as a longitudinal process, this case study is descriptive single case with embedded units (Yin, 2009). The current study examining language learners' listening development through extensive listening embodies two-fold purposes which will respond to the following research questions:

1. What is the EFL learners' metacognition about listening skill including their listening challenges and strategies needed to handle in listening comprehension?

2. What are the participants' metacognitive perceptions about the extensive listening and its effect on listening development?

Setting and participants

The setting of the current study is situated in the Translation and Interpreting (English) department in the School of Foreign Languages at a Turkish state university. Prospective participants were aimed to be language learners in this department yet excluding the last graders due to their proficiency level and intense workload in the last grade. In the incipient phase, the first three grades were selected as a population consisting of 172 students. Convenience voluntary sampling was opted for, and thereby 39 learners participated into the preliminary phase of the study. In the second phase, out of 39 participants, 4 intermediate-level second graders disguised by pseudonyms as Mütercim, GD, Witchxwin, and Princess were voluntary to proceed within the last stage. All these stages were conducted in the 2020-2021 academic year in the fall semester between 1st October and 30th December.

Data collection procedures

As a result of review of criteria about the choice of research design and data collection tools (Siegel, 2015), out of many research tools as interviews, participant observation, target discourse analysis, surveys for needs assessment (Richards, 1983), and research journals and pre-/post-tests (Cross &Vandergrift, 2014), three data collection tools as open-ended questionnaire, reflective listening journals, and focus group interview were employed in the light of inextricable aspect of listening skill and the in-class or out-class activities; and to achieve the objectives of the study. Students had the choice of using either English or Turkish in all these data gathering tools. As a repercussion of mobile-assisted language learning, the usage of podcasts, reflective listening journals, and focus group interview via Whatsapp were all availed through either mobile phones or laptops.

Open-ended questionnaire

The study was conducted in three phases. Preliminarily, as metacognitive perceptions cannot be observed directly, the open-ended questionnaires (see Appendix 1) were formed in a way of need analysis (Flowerdew & Miller, ibid.) to scrutinize learners' perspectives according to the factors as assessment of learner needs, isolation of micro-skills diagnostic testing, and formulation of instructional objectives (Richards, 1983). Six structured open-ended questions concocted as a corollary of the perusal of germane literature were inquired from 39 convenient and voluntary language learners so as to raise awareness in their self-assessments of their proficiency, their needs, interests, problems, their existent behaviour in listening, and their opinions for the listening lessons as an inspiration from Cross and Vandergrift (2014).

Podcasts

On the basis of Rubin's (1994) research suggestion that research should be administered in longer periods as an inspiration of process-based listening by utilizing authentic listening sources, podcasts as extra-curricular listening activities were harnessed for 4 voluntary participants to listen extensively for 75 days. The audio texts from BBC channel can be subsumed under the sorts of authentic texts ranging from genuine, simplified, and elaborated texts (Rost, 2006). The podcasts "6-minute English" and "The English we speak" can be depicted as elaborated texts since a written transcript is provided and created for language learning (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007), whereas "Why factor" is a genuine audio text without any transcriptions or purpose of language teaching. The channels and topics were identified by the researcher so as to meet the three crucial criteria for EL: variety, frequency, and repetition

(Vandergrift & Goh, 2012) and Waring's suggestion (2008, quoted from Chen, 2019) that 90% of the content in extensive listening should be comprehensible. Only "Why factor" was between upper-intermediate and advanced above students' level which was aimed to meet i+1 principle.

Reflective listening journals

In our study, during the process of extensive listening, the participants performed writing reflective listening journals (see Appendix 2). As listening journals should be provided with more structured template including questions to guide students in filling the required prompts (Schmidt, 2016; Wilson, 2003), listening journals were organized in agreement with this suggestion. Students were supposed to complete two sections for each podcast; challenges they encounter during listening and the strategies they employ to overcome those problems (Cross & Vandergrift, 2014). Problems and strategies being on the same report is of great significance since specific strategies cannot be deemed as independent of specific problems resulting into the usage of a particular set of strategies (Field, 2008).

Focus group interview

In correspondence with the last data collection tool, out of numerous types of interviews, focus group and structured interview was consulted in a digital instant chatting platform as Whatsapp so as to have an interchange of ideas, questions, and suggestions in the discussions of overall findings, evaluation of the study, and perceptions of the listening skill with a holistic view. Whatsapp chatting program was preferred so as to save time of transcribing in case of audio-recorded interviews. The interview (see Appendix 3) was not administered in one-shot time but in a process subsequent to the analysis of the questionnaire and reflective journals.

Data analysis

To ensure triangulation as it is required in a typical qualitative research (Stoynoff, 2004), three data gathering tools were utilized. The data and its interpretation were justified as such; the codes, in the first place, were determined in the responses as a result of multiple readings and underlining key words, phrases, or statements; and later these codes were matched to the issues in the literature according to their frequency of mentions to reach the adaptive emerging themes (Schreier, 2012). As a final step, two independent coders reanalysed the data and its interpretation and some minor changes were made.

Findings were presented by describing and interpreting both numerical and textual data, say quantitative and qualitatively, retrieved from the extracts from the questionnaire, the

reflective journals, and focus group interview. Frequency of mentioned problems and strategies in each section was aggregated quantitatively and content analysis of the pertinent statements was generated for qualitative data analysis so that we can reach either a convergence or divergence with the extant metacognitive inventories of problems and strategies in the literature.

The existing themes in the literature were later reformed in line with the emerging themes in the retrieved responses (see Appendix 4). The emerged overall metacognitive themes as a consequence of the above analysis encapsulate metacognition with regard to top-down/bottom-up skills and extensive listening as a listening strategy which were produced by following the inductive data analysis procedures proposed by Cross & Vandergrift (2014) and Thomas (2006, cited from Chen, 2019), that is, from raw data to themes through reiterative readings.

Results

Findings elicited from the three data gathering tools were illustrated by describing the data devoid of any interpretation or convergence of codes into themes. The emerging themes in the findings will be conferred in the discussion part by referring to the relevant studies.

Questionnaire

39 language learners attended the incipient part of the study and granted their responses to the open-ended questions. These responses were presented by the statistical and anecdotal outcomes. Tables show the incidences of responses to the questions by the participants.

Table 1. *Which skill (reading, listening, speaking, or writing) do you feel inadequate?*

Response patterns	N	%
Inadequate in speaking and listening	23	58,97
Inadequate only in speaking	6	15,38
Inadequate only in listening	6	15,38
Inadequate in reading and writing	3	7,69
Proficient in all skills	1	2,56
TOTAL	39	100

With respect to the first question about students' self-assessment of their proficiency in language skills as observed in Table 1, 23 students reflected they felt not proficient in speaking and listening skills. 12 students wrote that they were not proficient enough at either speaking or listening skill. 3 students wrote that they were not quite proficient in reading and writing skills. One student did not consider himself as bad in four skills. This designates that most of the students expressed not to be so expert in listening and speaking skills. This outcome justifies the value of the focus of this study on listening ability.

Table 2. *At which level do you think you are in listening skill? Elementary, intermediate, or advanced.*

Response patterns	N	%
Intermediate	29	74,35
Elementary	3	7,69
Advanced	2	5,12
Other intermediary levels	5	12,82
TOTAL	39	100

As indicated in their self-assessments in Table 2., 29 students identified their level in listening comprehension as intermediate, whereas 3 students estimated their level to be at elementary. Only 2 students considered their listening comprehension as advanced. Moreover, 5 students scaled their listening levels apart from the levels of listening ability in the question. The data retrieved from this question reflected that approximately 75% of participants defined their level in listening comprehension to be at the intermediate level, which is entailed to be raised and thus values the worth of the present study to a higher rung.

The third question was "How did your teachers instruct on listening courses?" which was rendered in an anecdotal narration. The responses can be rendered as such that listening lessons progressed in a way that teachers have students listen or watch audio-visual texts and then answer the questions, fill in the blanks, and write about the text. The texts which are conveyed on distinct topics as science, health, leisure time, etc. were provided by language practitioners with an increase in levels. Those courses also proceeded in an integrated way with speaking skill including presentation of students. 6 students evaluated this course not to be adequate due to excessive focus on speaking skill through presentation, and 8 students added that more extensive practice is needed on the part of students' own efforts. On the other hand, 2 students specified the course to be effective to contribute their professional development in listening since the course was dealing with all accents and dialects to recognize the words and the sounds. The all above views were assented by almost half of the students. The upshot above demonstrates that lessons flow in a traditional way and even in an integrated way with speaking skill, i.e., listening to audio texts and doing the comprehension questions, and hence confirms the assumption that listening lessons would not be effective and also justifies the involvement of EL into this study necessitated by one fifth of the participants.

Table 3. *What do you think about the factors behind the success or failure in listening comprehension?*

Response patterns	N
Lack of practice	19
Phonological issues	13
Unfamiliar words and topic	8
Concentration	7
Speech pace	5
Semantic knowledge of words	5
World knowledge	3
Other factors	9
No problems	4

As a caveat, the numbers in the table indicate the frequency of mentions rather than the number of participants. Therefore, percentage values were not displayed. 19 students ascribed the failure in listening only to a lack of listening practice regularly. 13 students more or less remarked that they have problems in recognizing the words precisely in terms of their pronunciation, which decreases their overall level of comprehension. 8 students prioritized both bottom-up and top-down factors in listening proficiency. That is to say, in terms of top-down factors, they denoted that the topic can be so complicated or boring that they can lose attention; and as for the bottom-up factors, discerning the accents, phonological matters, pronunciation, hearing the words, and recognizing the lexical chunks in the audio texts are problematic. 7 participants cannot and even lose concentration during listening activity. One of them even mentioned that "I understand the first three minutes, but later I lose both understanding and concentration". Further, the speed of speech also affects students' listening perception, e. g., 5 students noted that some speakers, specifically native speakers, speak so fast that it makes the text more incomprehensible since they cannot latch on to words all which are heard as conjunct. Only 5 students attributed the proficiency in listening skill to semantic factors as deficiency of lexical competence and recognising the words without amiss. 3 participants allegedly conferred that they did not perceive everything in the listening text especially due to the lack of real-world knowledge. Other 9 students identified some other factors as ability, memory, speaking and other skills, dialectical variety, syntactical complexity, education system, abroad residency, paying attention to topic in the audio text rather the words, and getting bored of listening. 4 participants also came up with outstanding comments, e. g., while one student stated to have no problem in listening, 3 of them did not know the problem in their listening and added that though they strived to improve it, they could not see any progress.

Overall, the data denotes while paucity of listening practice is the most pivotal factor, bottom-up factors as recognizing words in the spoken forms serves as a secondary agent in

achieving success in listening comprehension. Other factors especially a combination of unfamiliar lexis and world knowledge are also crucial and reflect the idiosyncratic factors that might depend on each individual. However, paucity of listening practice should be probed more from the participants and thus two more questions were also asked of them as demonstrated underneath.

Table 4. *What kinds of texts do you listen as an extensive listening?*

Response patterns	N	%
Movies, TV shows, series, programs, music	19	48,71
Various sources	18	46,15
Not listening	2	5,12
TOTAL	39	100

With regard to the fifth question displayed in Table 4, about 19 students avail of movies, TV shows, programs, and series, and music. However, the others with differing weight listen to various sources as documentaries in National Geographic, BBC radio for news, Ted talks, Youtube, etc. 2 students do not have any kind of extensive listening behaviour and even another student surprisingly thinks that watching movies have not contributed into her listening comprehension. The topics that students prefer to listen or watch have a vast range of topics from space to educational texts. To precis, almost all the students listen to materials out of their curiosity and interests both in terms of genres and the topics, which might be guided with an instructional purpose by the language practitioners.

Table 5. *How much time do you spend listening to audio-visual texts per diem?*

Response patterns	N	%
3-4 hours	4	10,25
1-2 hours	6	15,38
40 minutes	7	17,94
20 minutes	7	17,94
10 minutes	7	17,94
Less than 10 minutes	8	20,51
TOTAL	39	100

As demonstrated in Table 5, while 6 students notified that they practice their listening skill between 1-2 hours daily, 4 participants spend between 3-4 hours of their daily time in listening. This data evinces that only 10 students spare more than one hour to listening activities. The other 21 students have less than one hour of listening time. To give details of these numbers, 7 students have approximately ten minutes of listening practice, another 7 learners expend circa 20 minutes of their daily time in listening, and finally, again 7 language learners allot 40 minutes at large to their listening development per day. As a rundown of this data, it can be inferred that approximately 75% of the participants spend less than 40 minutes of their daily time to listening practice. Considering this finding with the other findings in the

previous questions, it underscores the shortage of meaningful listening time outside the listening instruction in the classrooms which possibly cannot contribute into listening development.

Reflective Listening Journals

In reflective listening journals, students' problems and strategies were examined. In the illustration of the findings elicited from the journals, each student's journal was assessed separately by consulting the study by Yeldham and Gruba (2014) because we do not focus on these individuals, rather on the EL as a process that can be researched for a case study (Yin, 2009). Data were interpreted as a whole without rendering any details due to space limits.

Table 6. *Problems and strategies that participants confronted and utilized.*

		Frequency of mentions				
		Mütercim	GD	WitchXwin	Princess	TOTAL
Problems	Unfamiliar spoken forms of words	8	6	3	28	45
	Unfamiliar written forms of words	7	12	9		28
	Unfamiliar topics	10	9	1	3	23
	Speed of delivery	1	5	11	5	22
	Environmental factors			13		13
	Dialectical variants		5	6		11
	Multiple speakers	3				3
	Unknown metaphorical phrases	3				3
	Sentential structures				1	1
Strategies	Iterative listening	26	9	23	31	89
	Raising concentration		21	8		29
	Taking notes	13			4	17
	Looking up into dictionary		9	4		13
	Research topic	5	2	2		9
	Guessing the unknown words	4		5		9
	Raising or lowering the audio			5		5
	Stopping the audio-text while listening	3				3
	Peer aid			1		1
No problems		27	26	19	46	

Participant Mütercim

Overall, Mütercim had both inadequate top-down and bottom-up micro-skills, and commonly employed listening multiple times as strategies. As corroborated by the quotes by Mütercim (27 times of mention), the familiarity of topics and recognition of spoken and written forms have a great influence in the comprehensibility of the texts:

I could not recognize the words. As their spoken forms resemble to the words I know, I could give any meaning.

I did not have any difficulties because the texts embody familiar phrases and concepts.

While listening to audio texts, I had a familiar background knowledge regarding the topic at issue so I more or less guessed the content of the text.

Participant GD

All in all, the participant had adversities with employing both top-down and bottom-up skills and employed strategies as raising concentration, looking up into dictionary, and listening multiple times. Further, the participant did not have any problems in comprehension of 26 podcasts, and hence no exerted strategies. She mentioned 5 times that the text was comprehensible due to the familiar topic to her as can be seen in her statements as follows;

It is a current issue. Therefore, it can be understood when listened carefully.

It is an interesting and always up-to-date topic. It was easy to understand.

This is an interesting topic, that's why I can easily understand it.

There were so many words I didn't know. Therefore, it was a little difficult to understand listening.

Participant WitchXwin

In general, the problems as environmental factors, speech pace, and unfamiliar words were dominant and listening multiple times, raising concentration, and guessing were amongst the strategies employed. In 19 mentions, he remarked not having comprehension problems. The reasons he purported for unproblematic comprehension were familiar topics (2) discussed in the podcasts and being accustomated to podcasts as stated in his quote "*I did not come across any problems probably due to being accustomed to podcasts*".

As a sample quote to the problems encountered, he imparted "*even though the podcast was a well-constructed text and about a familiar topic, I had difficulty in perception due to the words that I could not understand*". As an effect of the employed strategies, he disclosed that "after listening the text twice, I realized that the text was not difficult at all".

Participant Princess

In sum, the participant had complexities in recognizing spoken forms of words and listening multiple times as a strategy. However, she did not detect any problems as stated in 46 mentions due to familiar topic and words. For instance, she noted "*The speed of speech and pronunciation were good, I had no problems*".

Focus group interview

The questions in the interview sought the participants' views about the study, the possible contribution into their listening ability and general language proficiency, problems and strategies during listening acts, the future utilizations of EL and use of podcasts and reflective journals.

All the participants displayed favourable dispositions towards the study. Two of them have concurred that they would join such a study again in case of chance given. All the participants expounded that the study contributed a lot into their listening development and overall language proficiency. For example, WitchXwin reported that he virtually learnt multifarious words in various topics, not to mention the pronunciations of words.

The first and foremost problems and strategies in the listening comprehension were also inquired of the participants. Concerning problems, they mentioned of *speed of delivery*, *unknown written and spoken forms of words, unfamiliar topics, dialects and accents,* and *environmental factors*. With reference to strategies, GD, Princess, and Mütercim assented to use *iterative listening*. WitchXwin invariably preferred to *use dictionaries for unknown words*. As a quite summarizing quote, Princess notified that in case of a great number of unknown words in a text, she sticks to those words and thereby she misses the rest of the text, and as a solution she listened more than once, and again if the text is not clear, she made use of dictionaries as a last resort.

As the main goal of the study was to make students accustomed to EL and improve their comprehension. The question was: What sources would you avail of for daily listening activities if you continue EL? WitchXwin would do his listening daily and exploit IELTS mobile application. Princes would make use of BBC channel. GD cannot do this for some unknown personal reasons. Mütercim watches or listens TEDx talks. When the use of podcasts was inquired, all the participants continue listening to podcasts though not regularly.

Corresponding to their future use of extensive listening, they remarked that they would continue doing likewise in the years coming. For instance, Princess explained that the study was quite helpful, she realized her inadequacies, and she knows what to focus from then on. However, in terms of listening journals, WitchXwin would not prefer due to his workload, whereas GD, Mütercim, and Princess would utilize journals because they find them beneficial in terms of comprehending the texts and self-development.

The question "Which did you find most useful in the development of listening skills: listening lessons or extensive listening and why?" was also sought from the participants. All

the participants concurred on the efficiency of EL as opposed to listening lessons because extensive listening activities are test-free, less anxiety inflicting, more meaning-based, interest-oriented, motivating, without time limits, and beneficial.

Summary of the findings

As a synopsis of all these findings, the predominant skills that students feel inadequate are speaking and listening. In terms of listening skill, the participants identified themselves to be at the intermediate level. The listening lessons, which about half of the participants were not gratified, were also progressed in a way of listening to texts and doing the pertinent follow-up exercises in integration with other skills. Commencing with the first research question, the most widespread problems that were confronted by the participants result from paucity of listening practice preceding inadequate bottom-up skills as unfamiliar spoken and written words and later top-down listening processes as unfamiliar world knowledge or topics. Other problems mentioned derive from concentration, speech pace, environmental factors, dialectical variants, etc. To overcome the challenges above, participants most frequently utilized iterative listening. The other strategies can be concatenated as raising attention, taking notes, usage of dictionary, research, and guessing unknown words.

All these findings as intermediate level listening proficiency, inadequate listening lessons, a broad range of problems in listening perception, and paucity of meaningful listening practice overall justifies the worth and involvement of EL into this study with the objective of improving listening comprehension which takes us to the response to the 2nd research question. EL, which is both lacking in students' listening behaviour and used as a strategy for listening growth, contributed into their listening proficiency along with students' favourable perceptions. Though not so interested in using listening journals, participants would continue listening extensively by means of podcasts. As an outside listening life, the language learners who predominantly made use of movies, music, TV shows, and other audio-visual recreational activities as an extensive listening before the study would continue listening extensively to more meaningful and teaching language-oriented audio-visual texts.

Discussion

As an abstract of the findings, the fact that the participants have bottom-up processing as a primary problem and top-down processing as a subsidiary problem in listening and use of the replaying strategy more than other numerous strategies is the corollary of the traditional way of listening teaching in an intensive way in which listening practitioner invariably lets students listen to the text several times for a neat comprehension. Therefore, in light of the

triangulation of research methods, multiple readings of the findings, and the relevant outcomes in the literature, the data was converged under two metacognitive themes as metacognition about intensive listening embodying top-down/bottom-up skills and strategies and EL.

The first theme: Intensive listening

As for the primary theme, it was discovered in the current study that the overriding skills that students think of themselves as insufficient are speaking and listening, and their listening proficiency was considered at intermediate level as a result of most of the students' self-assessments, which is in concert with the findings of Flowerdew and Miller (ibid.) whose participants self-rated their listening proficiency as 'good'. Even though such self-evaluation can be questioned, this self-assessment can indeed encourage students to delve into evaluation of their progress and bolster autonomous learning (Ross, 2005) not to mention the reliability of self-rating as so ascertained in recent studies (Dupuy, 1999). Leaners' inadequacy in listening results from listening courses in which the participants conveyed that the listening lessons were implemented through the stages of listening to texts and doing the relevant follow-up exercises in integration with other skills. The secondary reason behind leaners' inadequacy derives from the complexity of listening skill which learners conceive listening as a laborious skill (Graham, 2006) since a vast range of knowledge as linguistic and non-linguistic cues is entailed in listening comprehension (Buck, 2001) besides the required listening strategies.

While linguistic cues as sounds, words, clauses, and sentences are analysed in bottom-up processing to reach meaning in an audio text (Rost, 2002), top-down processing is administered by listeners via their knowledge of topic, overall knowledge of the world, generic comprehension of the text to achieve apprehension of the text (Buck, 2001). Our participants' being at the intermediate level and indicating the dominant focus on bottom-up information yet also use top-down sources as a secondary resource is in concert with the axioms of Field (2004), Lund (1991, quoted from Field, 1999), and Renandya (2012a). They assert that it is much believed that low-proficient listeners initially cling to bottom-up processes and cannot make use of top-down skills. However, indeed students frequently utilize top-down information including world knowledge and prior contextual clues for inferencing as a compensatory strategy in a possible breakdown of bottom-up understanding syntactical or lexical signals (Goh, 2002; Hasan, ibid.). Students might utilize top-down processing skills as a first and foremost strategy probably after going beyond threshold level

of proficiency which might be at the intermediate level (Renandya, 2012a) which the current participants hold. The focus on bottom-up skills in the current study can also be substantiated with the traditional focus on top-down processing as schema building in the listening lessons underrating the value of bottom-up processing of words, and sounds (Thorn, 2009). However, as a caveat, pre-set schema formed out of top-down processing should not diverge off the comprehension of the main idea of the text due to lack of recognition of words or phrases. Therefore, bottom-up processing skills are quite crucial in apprehending an audio-text which might serve as an instructional content in the listening lessons, and thereby the specific factors affecting comprehension will be discussed below.

Students' level of listening was predominantly and generally attributed to the paucity of listening practice as such found in Graham (2006) preceding micro-skills as recognizing the words as confirmed by the current finding in this study. Of the countless specific factors found in the germane literature, vocabulary knowledge, familiarity of topics, speed of delivery, loss of attention, environmental factors, dialectical variants of language, and type of input were found to be stated more in frequency in the present study, in Higgins (1995), and Goh (1999). This result can be best explained by listeners' dominant indulgence in the bottom-up, i.e. textual, processing while listening. The outcome of this study that vocabulary knowledge is one of the key factors in listening comprehension also complies with the studies as Chen (2016), Goh (2000), and Goh (1999) who also refers to some other studies as Boyle (1984), Buck (1990), and Kelly (1991). Similarly, Mecartty (2000, cited from Vandergrift, 2007) found that vocabulary appeared to serve as a substantial predictor of 14 % of FL listening skill. More, the benefit of EL can be best observed in pronunciation skills and recognition words as so found in the current study as well as in Gonulal (op. cit.). The possible effect of world or prior knowledge to assist listening perception was also adduced by the current study as well as some other authors as Chiang and Dunkel (1992), Dunkel (1986), Field (2004). Long (1990), and O'Malley et al. (1989). However, as a caveat, prior and world knowledge need to be differentiated since the former one alludes to the background knowledge within the text and the latter connotes to the knowledge of the world around us. Speed of delivery of listening texts were also identified as a problem for some students in this study as well as in Gonulal (op. cit.), Flowerdew and Miller (ibid.), Chen (2016), and Yeh (2017). The other specific factor that was encountered in this study is attention or concentration problem which is not researched adequately yet counted as one of the agents in influencing listening as so asserted by Flowerdew and Miller (op. cit.), Chen (2016), Goh (2000), and O'Malley et al. (1989). For instance, O'Malley et al. (1989) couches an anecdote

that while proficient listeners can reorient their attention when they lose, low-proficient listeners cease listening in case of unfamiliar words or phrases. The problems as poor environmental conditions and dialectical variants found in this study were additionally faced in studies conducted by Graham (2006) and Hasan (op. cit.).

Hereafter, strategies to overcome problems will be discussed. The four participants' utilizations of mentioned strategies as iterative listening, raising concentration, taking notes, using dictionaries, etc. were appointed as tactics under metacognitive strategies as selective attention, directed attention, comprehension monitoring, real-time assessment of input, and comprehension evaluation excluding pre-listening preparation (Goh, 2002). However, iterative listening might not help in recognizing words as found by Chen (2019). Chen (2019) and Yeh (2017) also contend that participants used dictionaries to look up unknown words after multiple times of listening, which corroborates the current findings.

The second theme: Extensive listening

On the whole, it can be extrapolated that the confronted problems and wielded strategies are by large incongruent with the findings in the literature. Nevertheless, these all above strategies are not without critiques (Field, 1998). As cited in Chamot (1995) and Rubin (1994), a kind of strategy training of listening skill has not been corroborated by favourable evidence in the studies heretofore. In addition to this, these strategies need to be clarified whether they focus on communicative meaning or learning new structures in English. The influence of learner individual differences on the usage of these strategies also question the role of strategies in listening skill, which brings forth the value of EL, the second theme. This second theme was also formed since the problem was found to be scanty listening behaviour and more listening as a strategy to overcome the problems in listening. Therefore, listening skill which entails a breadth and depth of exposure might be provided to students extensively.

The paramount role of practice or extensive listening found in this study corroborated Alm (2013), Blyth (2012), Chang and Millett (2014), Gonulal (op. cit.), Renandya (2012a, 2012b), Renandya and Farrell (2010), and Ridgway (2000). Speaking theoretically in favour of EL, the problems as lack of practice and unfamiliar lexical patterns specified in this study and in Gonulal (ibid.) and the common strategy to use iterative listening substantiate the conceptual importance of frequent exposure to linguistic items and rules as an inspiration of connectionist view of language learning to achieve fluent listening (Hulstijn, 2003). Therefore, extensive listening can compensate the problems of recognizing words and lack of background knowledge which were detected as core problems in listening comprehension in

this study. As for recognizing words, Brown (2007, p. 15) alleges that EL can increase "automaticity of recognition of words in their spoken form, in turn leading to improved aural fluency and thus improvement in overall comprehension". Elsewhere, Elcin and Sahinkarakas (2021) concluded in a study that extensive vocabulary activities also contributed a lot to learners' vocabulary acquisition process in which class-free activities conducted by learners themselves helped greatly to overcome some negative feelings like boredom and stress which were the main components of metacognitive control in the study. In terms of background knowledge, Wang (2016, p. 84) who quoted one of the participants' statement who apprised that "I need to enlarge my background knowledge by extensive listening, as well as listening. This is important.". Further, in practice, as can be noticed from the journals, participants listened to podcasts in the same way as supposed by Hulstijn (2003) who uncovered the stages of students' typical listening as listening, reflecting, replaying, checking confirmation, and replaying. The frequency of iterative or replaying listening was found to be utilized by other students in other studies as stated in Renandya (2012a) and Yeh (2017), which add to listening fluency. Similarly, Dupuy (1999) investigated Narrow Listening, meaning iterative listening of an audio text, by means of a survey with beginning and intermediate college students of French language. Results evinced that students overall found Narrow Listening interesting and useful in enhancing their listening comprehension proficiency, fluency, vocabulary, and raised confidence or low anxiety due to paucity of testing processes and time limits. Overall, students' positive attitudes towards podcasts integrated into extensive listening was found in this study which is consonant with the findings in Yeh (2017).

Elsewhere, Chen (2016, 2019), who aimed at seeing the effect of listening journals and curated listening materials on metacognitive awareness in EL, succeeded in helping students learn how to plan for their listening, monitor their comprehension, find solutions to the listening problems, evaluate their approach and outcome. More, students in general felt positive perceptions for listening journals, but some perceived keeping journals to be time-consuming. This study and Chen's (2016) study reached a consensus in students' espousing journals for future utilizations. The sources for extensive listening that students exploited before and after the intervention are quite various, which is not consistent with the findings in Chen (2016) and Yeh (2017) who found TED talks to be dominantly listened.

In the discussion of EL or listening strategies, Renandya and Farrell (2010, p. 56) support EL by conferring that "Practice is the most important thing. The more listening the better, and the subskills will take care of themselves as they become automatized". Therefore,

EL is one of the salient solutions. Chang and Millett (2014) suggest that EL should be employed by practising consistently with ample exposition to audio texts so as to achieve success. As the idea and research on EL is new, more work needs to be done on its theoretical background and more approvable data in favour of its positive effect on listening development (Chang & Millett, 2014). In this sense, the positive influence of EL on listening comprehension was attained in this study and Gonulal (op. cit.) and on enriching background knowledge and listening perception in Yeh (2017).

Conclusion

Educational implications

It can be abridged that listening courses can incorporate both EL and intensive listening with their vantages to train leaners about the processes of listening and to put this instruction into more practice (Siegel, 2011). Not to get preoccupied with such a dichotomy as top-down (focus on meaning) or bottom-up (focus on form) processing of listening comprehension and ongoing discussion in the literature (Rubin, 1994), application of both forms of processing in a listening activity might be more rational in an amalgamation of top-down and bottom-up processing in listening. Accordingly, an improvement in bottom-up listening can lead to better top-down listening (Wilson, 2003). Even, Field (2000) compromises between strategy-based intensive instruction and EL by asserting that EL is a natural cultivation of strategy training rather than an alternative to it in the case of listening skill. Similarly, Richards (2005) suggests language instructors to keep a proportionate balance in the lessons between the views as listening for comprehension and listening as a tool for linguistic proficiency. Tersely, listening lessons should be supported with listening outside the classroom.

Further research

For further research, the effect of intensive and extensive listening onto listening development can be investigated in a comparative study. The impact of extensive listening onto the lexical and grammatical development can be inquired. Metacognitive instruction can be incorporated into the listening lessons and its influence can be researched. Other areas of listening research can also be added as variables into a study. The choice of listening materials can be left to participants who can make us of other channels, vodcasts, and topics of interest. As analysed holistically in the current study, the problems and strategies can be analysed to the last detail in the follow-up studies. More quantitatively experimental studies can also be conducted to explore an effect of any intervention. Other research tools as think-aloud, stimulated recall, close-ended questionnaires, listening tests, and personal interviews

can be harnessed. Journals can be elaborated with more prompts to attain more information as proposed by Schmidt (2016).

Epilogue

An agreement based on research data has been reached amongst academics and instructors about the substantive role of audio input in language learning which contributes to students' word recognition competence, vocabulary repertoire, development in speaking and reading, and generic proficiency in FL. Therefore, aural input deserves more attention in language education as undergirded by Harmer (2003, p. 29) in his statement as; "Students need to be exposed to the English language if they want to learn it, and one of the best ways of doing this is through listening (p. 29)." This listening skill needs to be taught in class but practiced outside the class extensively via technological possibilities with the guidance of practitioners under the framework of CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) in this digital, information, and mobile epoch in which education and in particular language education necessitates listening for understanding and saving the world suffering from anomic pandemics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Open-ended Questionnaire

1. Which skill (reading, listening, speaking, or writing) do you feel inadequate?
2. At which level do you think you are in listening skill? Elementary, intermediate, or advanced.
3. How did your teachers instruct on listening courses?
4. What do you think about the factors behind the success or failure in listening comprehension?
5. What kinds of texts do you listen as an extensive listening, meaning listening at your will or outside the class?
6. How much time do you spend listening to audio-visual texts per diem?

Appendix 2. Organizing Queries in Reflective Journals

1. The name and theme of the listening text:
2. Write the problems that you might have encountered while trying to comprehend the listening text.
3. Write the strategies you employed to overcome such obstacles above.

Appendix 3. Questions in focus group interview

1. What do you think about the value and the possible contribution of this study into your listening development?
2. What are the key problems and strategies to overcome in your listening?
3. Which sources do you avail of for extensive listening in the future?
4. What do you think about the possible usage of podcasts and reflective journals in the imminent future?
5. Which did you find most useful in the development of listening skills: listening lessons or extensive listening and why?

Appendix 4. Emerged codes, themes, and example statements.

Codes	Themes	Example Statements
Inadequate listening lessons, Intermediate level listening, Traditional way of listening instruction including comprehension exercises. Recognizing words in listening, Background knowledge, The effect of problems on overall understanding	Intensive listening Sub-categories: Listening lessons Two main listening processing as top-down and bottom-up	My problem is speed. My listening skill is intermediate. I think listening lessons are inadequate for us. Not knowing enough words. I can't understand pronunciation words. I can't catch the words.
Lack of listening act as a problem More listening practice as a strategy, Exploiting other sources on the net, Listening to English songs	Extensive listening Sub-categories: Listening Journals Podcasts	I don't listen something every day. It is the biggest problem. It should be practised so often. I would join such a study again Extensive listening contributed a lot