STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN NARROW LISTENING: A CASE OF AN EXTENSIVE LISTENING COURSE

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Abstract

This article explores the implementation of Narrow Listening (NL) in an Extensive Listening (EL) course at a private English Education Department in Indonesia, addressing a gap in research regarding student engagement. Guided by Krashen's theory of input and repetitive listening practices, the study examines how NL can aid learners in achieving fluency and automaticity. Employing a case study approach, data were collected through observations of 42 multilingual students aged 18 to 19 during their first semester in the 2023/2024 academic year. Analysis revealed themes of both positive and negative behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement among students. While many demonstrated increased motivation and comprehension, some expressed anxiety and discomfort with certain learning tasks. The findings suggest that NL can significantly improve listening skills, boost student motivation, and facilitate a conducive learning environment, ultimately leading to better language acquisition outcomes. This study contributes valuable insights for educators aiming to enhance best practices in tertiary English education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Narrow Listening; Extensive Listening; Students' Engagement

INTRODUCTION

In extensive listening (EL), students are given large quantities of aural target language input that interests them and is within their linguistic competence (Renandya & Farrel, 2011, p. 5; Yeh, 2013, p. 88). They should do a process in which the results of an action are fed back to achieve greater results more quickly and with less effort relying on comprehensible and enoyable listening input. By this in mind, the success of comprehending spoken text in listening depending on the inputs not only from classroom atmosphere but outside the classroom for pleasure listening. For that reason, they are exposed to large amount of texts that are reasonably and smoothly relevant to their language proficiency level (Vo, 2013, p. 30). More importantly, they do listening because they need it to access information (listen to learn) accoding to their own pace and fluency.

Narrow listening (NL) is one of EL inputs which emphasizes that learners can comprehend spoken texts if they are accustomed to listening one specific genre or topic Krashen (1996, p. 97). It has also emphasized the importance of repetitive activities to support learners' comprehension through authentic materials. More importantly, this input is also relevant to all learners' listening proficiency levels because they will be familiar with the vocabulary and structures of some related or serial spoken texts (Chang, 2016, p. 120). Therefore, learners can measure their own listening ability so that they are responsible for their listening achievement improvement because the learning situation is set in a free anxious atmosphere by relying on their learning autonomy.

Krashen (1996, p. 97) emphasized that learners can comprehend spoken texts if they are accustomed to listening one specific genre or topic in NL. This approach has emphasized the importance of repetitive activities to support learners' comprehension through authentic

materials. More importantly, this approach is relevant to all learners' listening proficiency levels because they will be familiar with the vocabulary and structures of some related or serial spoken texts (Chang, 2016, p. 120). With this in mind, learners can measure their own listening ability so that they are responsible for their listening fluency improvement because the learning situation is set in a free anxious atmosphere by relying on their learning autonomy.

Furthermore, after listening to the text several times in NL, some parts of the text will become automatic (Anderson, 1990, p. 74). Thus, the listeners may begin to pay attention to and attempt to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words. This may promote them to engage in inferencing (cognitive strategy) with better understanding of the text after listening several times (Krashen, 1996). The participants are more likely to succeed in their attempts of inferencing as well. Finally, listening to a text repeatedly may also promote the use of affective listening strategies. After implementing NL, participants can achieve better comprehension (Dupuy, 1999, p. 353). Therefore, they may begin to think about the listening text and have a personal response to the listening text (affective strategy).

While topic familiarity and repeating listening inputs in NL helps learners develop learners listening comprehension, however, it has not been widely researched in extensive listening (EL) course in English Education Department in Indonesia. Specifically, up to present, no investigation has been paid attention on the implementation of NL for teaching easy, comprehensible and enjoyable extensive spoken texts for generating students' engagament in making meaning in EL. Therefore, inserting NL for comprehensible and extensive spoken inputs is important to engage students learning.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004, p. 84) have proposed that students' engagement has multiple dimensions: behavioral, emotional and cognitive. Behavioral engagement draws on the idea of participation and includes involvement in academic, social, or extracurricular activities; it is considered crucial for achieving academic outcomes. Then, emotional engagement focuses on the extent of positive (and negative) reactions to teachers, classmates, academics and school. Finally, cognitive engagement is defined as the students' level of investment in learning; it includes being thoughtful and purposeful in the approach to school task and being willing to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas or master difficult skills.

This article reported the implementation of NL in an EL course in a private English Education Department Study Program. Hopefully, the insightful experiences can contribute to the betterment of best practice in tertier education in Indonesia.

METHOD

The method of the study was conducted by using a case study approach. The study was conducted in September 2023 in the first semester of Academic Year 2023/2024. The participants of the study consisted of 42 English language students in a private teacher training and education in the western part of Jawa Timur province. They were multilingual with competencies in Javanese and Indonesian. The age range of the students in this study was between 18 to 19 years old. The data of the study was collected by using observation technique. The author of this article played a crucial role as an observer while helping the author conducted the research to make notes some findings during observation using field notes. The observation critera was made based on what Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004, p. 84) which proposes that students' engagement has multiple dimensions: behavioral, emotional and cognitive. All the concurrences during the course were also video-taped recorded. The collected data were then analyzed by using coding analysis (Mackey & Gass, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

NL Teaching Procedures:

Procedures as to how students should complete a NL activity include the following:

1. select topics that are interesting or familiar to the students.
2. listen to one speaker at a time and listen to whole segments. Do not stop the CD until the speaker finishes talking (at least during the first two listenings). Try to get the gist of the speakers' accounts.
3. Replay a particular segment several times before proceeding. If a topic is interesting to the students, listen to the other speakers who talk about the same topic. If it is not interesting, find another topic and follow the same procedure.
4. Move on to another speaker or topic if the students understand almost everything, if they get to a point when they do not understand anything new, or if they are getting bored or tired.
5. The process of understanding is gradual. Research shows that students usually increase their understanding of a listening passage by 10% each time they repeat it. At first, they will be able to recognize some words. Listen to the words surrounding those they recognize in order to discover new words and to understand sentences.
6. As they become more familiar with the activity and their auditory senses become accustomed to English, they will understand more.

The summary of of the research result can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Themes and Codes of Students Learning Activities by the Implementation of NL

Themes	Codes
1. Students' positive behavior engagement during learning activities	A. Most students engaged in a-three phases of listening instruction and followed the principles and procedures of NL B. Students got together in group activities.
2. Students' negative behavior engagement during learning activities	A. Students participated passively in learning activities
3. Students' positive emotional engagement during learning activities	A. Students showed their respect to their peers in group B. Most of students felt enjoyable in the activities
4. Students' negative emotional engagement during learning activities	A. Some students felt uncomfortable to learn bottom-up word processing in NL B. Most of students felt anxious to involve in NL learning activities because their limited knowledge of topical knowledge of the news stories C. Few students were less enthusiastic about reading than listening in NL
5. Students' positive cognitive engagement during learning activities	A. Most of students admitted that NL help them improve listening comprehension, listening, vocabulary development and the content of the news stories

The themes and codes obtained from the qualitative data in observation as listed in Table 1 were then described in order to find out how the students engaged in the implemention of NL in an EL course. The descriptions are as follows:

1. Students' positive behavior engagement during learning activities

   After the data were analyzed from observation sheets, it is concluded that students had positive behavior engagement during learning activities using NL. The students frequently stayed on task given by the lecturer. The students' focus on the activities given during the implementation of EL using NL input rose their awareness of form-meaning relationships and improved word recognition skills. Specifically, NL helped low language proficiency students to cope with their problems with text segmentation and letter-sound correspondences. Additionally, the students in NL looked discussing and clarifiying the content of the similar topics each other beside they had their own repetitive activities. The students' interaction happened when they helped resolving the arising problems each other. Sometimes, the lecturer also checked each group discussion and gave constructive feedback. This lecturer-students interaction was intened to ensure that the activities were running smoothly. This finding is particularly obtained when they had similar diifficulties in selecting the appropriate news stories texts as their NL materials. The discussion of the students happened because they needed to resolve some arising problems during the implementation of NL. Most importantly, when they could not resolve some technical problems by themselves such as how to select news stories using EL surveys and repeating the selected news stories in different speech levels using NL journal.

2. Students' negative behavior engagement during learning activities

   Based on the results of the analysis of the data gained from the observation, it was found that few of students had negative behavior engagement during learning activities by the implementation of NL. They participated passively in learning activities and they poorly managed the discussion in their group. They were still influenced by teacher-based listening instruction in intensive listening in the beginning of the course. In addition, they thought that the listening materials in NL were too much and time-consuming. Although they seemed demotivated, they remained did the tasks assigned by the lecturer. Few of them engaged in the discussion but with the limited contribution in the grouping tasks. When the lecturer were approaching them and suggested to share their opinions, few students immediately spoke up with the limited linguistic proficiencies. They tended to use Indonesian language in their activities and they preferred to wait the other group members opinions and actions rather than their initiation.

3. Students Positive Emotional Engagement during Learning Activities

   Based on the results of the analysis of the data gained from observation, it was found that both most of students had positive emotional engagement on the learning tasks. They had positive affection or attitude toward learning activities. It was indicated by their respect to their fellow peers in group and they felt enjoyable sharing their ideas in the groups discussion and assigned tasks. They did not just listen for comprehension in the end of the activity but they did interactional activities in which they process the spoken texts in a two-way communication among the students. The activities improved not only their listening competence but also their learning interaction and enjoyment for meaning-making. They did not only learn listening for comprehension but they interacted with their friends to communicate their ideas toward the topics. Students who had similar interest of NL topics got together to engage in collaborative activities in three listening stages using the principles of EL and NL. Furthermore, they shared and discussed their respective groups discussion to the other groups. The activities showed that they did listening for interactional activities with the aim at processing the spoken input for accessing the information of the news story contents and respond them to communicative purposes.

4. Students' Negative Emotional Engagement during Learning Activities

Based on the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the observation, it was found that few students had negative emotional engagement on some aspects of learning activities in NL. In other words, they had negative affection or attitude toward some aspects of learning activities because they considered that the NL materials were uninteresting. Particularly, they had affective state or behavior which affected their involvement with learning activities. First, they felt uncomfortable to learn bottom-up word processing in NL. Second, they felt anxious to involve in NL learning activities because their limited knowledge of NL topics and materials. There were some indicators of uninteresting NL materials in this study such as the topics were difficult, too serious, fast speech, unfamiliar topics, too much, connected speech, etc. In this case, the lecturer's selected materials were considered unauthentic because they were below the students' language proficiency.

5. Students' Positive Cognitive Engagement during Learning Activities

   Cognitive engagement is defined as the students' level of investment in learning; it includes being thoughtful and purposeful in the approach to school task and being willing to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas or master difficult skills. Based on the results of the analysis of the data gained from observation it was found that some students had positive cognitive engagement during learning activities. Most of students admitted that NL help them improve listening comprehension, listening fluency, vocabulary development and the content of the news stories. Cognitively, they processed the authentic listening materials through learning to read using bottom-up language approach in which they learnt the features of the language. In a later listening comprehension development, they listened to learn the news stories for accessing the information in a top-down approach.

Discussion

Based on the students' observation, it was discovered that students had positive affection or attitude toward learning activities. Particularly, they were enjoyable following the course. The lecturer was able to create conducive and participatory learning environment along with her students in two groups. Students' interaction in a classroom is considered as an essential factor in promoting learners' language achievement (Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006, p. 5). Therefore, they felt that the NL increased their positive learning emotional engagement. The conducive learning environment will support students' motivation which leads to the success of learning English (Nugroho, Zamzami, & Ukhrowiyah, 2020, p. 47).

However, few students showed negative behavior engagement during learning activities. Although they also paid attention to the lecturer's explanation, they were mostly not too active involved in the classroom. This is because students attempt to follow the course and respect the lecturer although their academic achievement was not too good (Hutapea, Adnan & Marlina, 2020, p. 521). In pre-listening stage, for instance, students were reluctant to get involved in sharing their knowledge on the topics. They just sat and listened to the classroom discussion. Dewaele (2015, p. 14) has argued that students NL materials are sometimes too often emotionally uninteresting or emotion-free, which leads to routine, boredom and lack of engagement.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that NL has many advantages such as: (1) it improves comprehension in spoken texts, (2) it can boost students motivation and engagement in learning second/foreign language learning, (3) when students comprehend the aural input easily, they can be self-confidence in learning, (4) it can reduce level of students' anxiety, (5) students can distinguish sound sequences more efficiently, and (6) it can provide students with higher cognitive level and develop target language skills in meaningful context.

Besides, NL has also some diadvantages such as: (1) the use of authentic materials in the beginning as it is recommended in the implementation of learning may result in far more difficult input so that students may feel anxious and frustated because of lack understanding, (2) NL is ideal for students who have already acquired basic listening skills but who find casual, uncontrolled conversation too difficult to follow. At this point, the students are certainly not yet ready to undertake listening of real world material by themselves without experiencing frustration and anxiety, and (3) the degree of difficulty of a particular passage is variable, as it largely depends not only upon the task being carried out but also upon students' proficiency level in the target language as well as upon the topic, students' background knowledge, and the speaker's speaking style.

Although the presence of NL in EL is novel in Indonesian English education department, its benefits are promising to develop students' language proficiency. In the context of EFL listening, using various supports is important to enhance students' English education department spoken text comprehension. There are some constructive suggestions for developing the students' LF in Indonesian higher education. First, NL can be taught by firstly introducing the principles of EL and comprehensible materials. As students are heterogenous in EFL context, the listening inputs enable students to develop their comprehension using structured and mediated listening instruction from bottom-up to top-down listening activities. Second, although the students NL in EL, they should ensure that the listening materials are below their proficiency levels. The lecturers' can help them identify their learning needs by distributing EL survey in the beginning of the course.

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