

PORTRAYING HIGH FOREIGN LANGUAGE LISTENING ANXIETY STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NARROW LISTENING

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Abstract

The article aims at portraying the learning engagement of high foreign language listening anxiety students in the implementation of narrow listening. The participants of the study consist of 42 English language education students with high foreign language listening anxiety of a private teacher training and education college in Jawa Timur province. This study used a case study method to observe the phenomenon of a listening activity. The data were collected through observation technique by using field notes. The collected data were then analyzed by using coding analysis. The results show that students have positive and negative behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement dimensions.

Keywords: Extensive Listening; Narrow Listening; Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

INTRODUCTION

The impetus of this article came from the researchers concern in observing the listening practices in mostly education levels in Indonesia and teacher education is no exception in which listening is always framed for comprehension. In this form-focused listening instruction, English teachers have traditionally perceived listening as a receptive skill in which learners are mostly situated as the object of learning by sitting quietly and listening to the recordings (Vandergrift, 2012, p. 5). Field (2008, p. 88) characterizes listening comprehension (LC) as the behavioristic teaching model in which teachers mostly use textbooks for teaching listening.

Additionally, during their preliminary study, they found that the comprehension-based listening instruction did not support their students' self-confidence and motivation. Some students were anxious during the listening instruction happened. As listening lecturers, they also then investigated some variables influencing their listening anxiety (LA). The data were obtained by distributing the students' foreign language listening anxiety scale (FLLAS) developed by Kim (2000). It was found that 42 students having high FLLA and 23 students having low foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) in English Education Study Program (EESP). It indicates that specifically students experienced anxiety in listening instruction were too high. From 33 questions in the scale, the opportunity to have repeated listening, the main ideas missing, disability to catch the keywords, the speech rates, and little time to process the aural input are the main variables of their FLLA.

In other hand, Chang (2010, p. 359) also found out that the characteristics of language input were found to be another major source of LA e.g., fast speech, difficulty of speech, and lack of clarity, visual support, or repetition. Meanwhile, other variables such as teachers' instructional methods and students and teachers' beliefs contribute less (LA) (Vogely, 1998, p.68). Kim (2000) point out that foreign LA negatively correlated with LC and the higher learners anxiety level, the least their comprehension will be and vice versa. Similarly, Chang (2010, p. 358) hypothesized that whether second language (L2) or English as Foreign Language (EFL)

learners' LA could be reduced when listening skills improve. This hypothesis has effectively proved in Lee (2007, p.155) that the abundant input in reading has fostered students acquiring English as a L2 rather than formal instruction with less input. If reading abundantly is efficient to enhance foreign language learners reading skills, it can be assumed that extensive listening (EL) with the aim of developing students' listening fluency and reducing students FLLA could have the same effect on EFL listening skills (Chang, 2010, p. 356).

In 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 enjoyable 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) according 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.

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, p. 99). 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. Therefore, they may begin to think about the listening text and have a personal response to the listening text (affective strategy).

Although the implementation of NL has been researched both qualitatively and quantitatively in second and foreign language context. However, up to present, further investigation of NL implementation on students' foreign language listening in Indonesian language education context has no attention. Especially, portraying the students' high foreign language listening engagement in the implementation of narrow listening in an EL course has not been researched yet. Therefore, this article would be important to contribute to the betterment of listening instruction in Indonesian higher education level.

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 with high FLLA 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 co-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 criteria 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, p. 203 & Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The summary of the results can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Themes and Codes of High FLLA Students’ Engagement in the Implementation of Narrow Listening

Themes	Codes
1. Students’ positive behavior engagement during learning activities	A. Most high FLLA students engaged in a-three phases of listening instruction and followed the principles and procedures of NL and EL. B. High FLLA students got together in group activities.
2. Students’ negative behavior engagement during learning activities	A. Most of high FLLA students were still influenced by comprehension-based listening instruction in intensive listening in the beginning of the course. B. Some high FLLA students got bored.
3. Students had positive emotional engagement during learning activities	A. Most students having high FLLA felt that their lecturer’s feedback was useful. B. All students learn listening for meaning and made enjoyment.
4. Students’ negative emotional engagement during learning activities	A. High FLLA students were not confident in comprehending longer and faster spoken texts
5. Students’ positive cognitive engagement during learning activities	A. High FLLA students spent more time engaging in productive language learning activities.

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 implementation of NL in an EL course. The descriptions are as follows:

a. Students’ Positive Behavior Engagement during Learning Activities

After the data were analyzed from observation sheets, it is concluded that high FLLA students in NL groups had positive behavior engagement in during learning activities. Most of students engaged in a-three phases of listening instruction and followed the principles and procedures of NL and EL, got together in group activities and looked for some related NL materials in various online resources. Also, they shared their similar NL materials with the other groups.

b. Students’ Negative Behavior Engagement during Learning Activities

After analyzing the data from observation, it was found that most of the students having high FLLA had negative behaviour engagement during learning activities. Most of high FLLA students were still influenced by teacher-based listening instruction in intensive listening in

the beginning of the course. In addition, some high FLLA students thought that the listening materials in NL were too much and time-consuming.

c. Most High FLLA Students Felt that Their Lecturer's Feedback was Useful

It was found that high FLLA students had positive emotional engagement by the implementation of NL input. In other words, they had positive attitude and beliefs toward learning activities. Firstly, most students having high FLLA felt that their lecturer's feedback was useful. Secondly, all students learn listening for meaning and made enjoyment.

d. Students' Negative Emotional Engagement during Learning Activities

It was found that high FLLA students have negative emotional engagement during learning activities by the implementation of NL. In other words, they had negative attitude toward learning activities. There were some factors influencing their negative emotional engagement during learning activities. Firstly, high FLLA students were not confident in comprehending longer and faster spoken texts. Secondly, they felt anxious in listening because of two learning output which should be gained altogether i.e. listening comprehension and fluency. Lastly, high FLLA students were burdened in following the course because they should seek as many as relevant news stories in the beginning of materials selection and the procedures of NL.

e. Students' Positive Cognitive Engagement during Learning Activities

It was found that high and low FLLA level students spent more time engaging in productive language learning activities. This may result in more productive listening activities that encouraged students' active learning. High FLLA students looked the roles of listening repetition is important to help them comprehend the information in NL. Repeated listening seems to contribute more directly to fluency in word recognition, which in turn enables EFL listeners to focus more on the higher-level cognitive processes of comprehension and inferencing. On the other hand, the findings obtained from the observation indicated that high FLLA students received more collaborative activities during the implementation of NL in the classroom.

Discussion

There are encouraging indications that foreign language learners who are engaged in EL can enjoy numerous languages learning benefits, including improved ability to perceive and parse foreign language text (Wang & Renandya, 2012, p. 79), increased listening fluency (Chang & Millet, 2014, p. 34), and enhanced overall listening comprehension skills (Onoda, 2014, p. 44). More importantly, students who are engaged in EL have reported improvements not only in their listening comprehension, but also in their vocabulary, speaking, reading skills as well as higher confidence in the language (Zhang, 2005). Besides, the principles of NL and EL indicate the zone of proximal development, autonomy, variety, personalization, quality and quantity, meaning making, scaffolding or support, and sustained engagement with spoken texts.

Unfortunately, it was found that high FLLA students had negative cognitive engagement during learning activities as well. Particularly, most of students having high FLLA students with low language proficiency were deficient in top-down processing skills compared to their low FLLA peers with high language proficiency. In this case, high FLLA students were not able to understand background information of the spoken message meaning in the news stories. This finding is relevant to Chang and Read (2006) who also found that providing more advanced students with background knowledge enhanced learners' comprehension, but its effect was less marked for lower level students (p. 376). They were not able to use their prior knowledge, situation or the context when listening to news stories and try to comprehend them. They perceived that they were not familiar with news story topics, uninteresting and beyond their

previous knowledge and language proficiency. In other words, activating background knowledge of the news stories topics influence the students' comprehension and their positive learning aptitude (Budiharso, 2014, p. 194).

Additionally, Firdaus & Fatimah (2021, p. 556) found that students' emotional engagement in learning English can occur depending on how the teachers can handle the class. In case of the study findings, students were interested in the course because the lecturer was able to connect the topics of the course and their background knowledge beside making interaction between their classmates and the lecturers in discussions. Furthermore, in pre-listening session, most of the students looked enjoyable and interested in vocabulary introduction session. It encouraged them to pay too much attention to the meaning of the targeted lexical items at the expense of a more general understanding of the input text. Rahman & Suryati (2018, p. 572) found that students would be enjoyable in learning when the topics are interesting and understandable beyond their language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

Based on students' engagement analysis, it can be concluded that the EL supports in term of NL is important to improve high FLLA students learning achievement in an EL course. They engaged in a three phase listening activities and implemented the principles of EL and NL. They had good language proficiency and positive attitudes which helped them perform the learning activities. They were also actively involved in the lecturer's instruction by helping their high FLLA peers solved the learning problems during the process of decoding the spoken texts features and comprehending the content of the news stories. Although for most high FLLA students listening the similar news stories repeatedly were boring in the beginning of the learning, they got interested in meaning making activities. Whereas, high FLLA students were unable to think fast the news stories in faster speech rates which may discourage them from doing more extended listening practice. Meanwhile, learning authentic news stories is enjoyable and motivating for high FLLA students. They got used to learn top-down language processing and experienced the nature of the real-life spoken language.

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