



## Extensive Listening in the Eyes of Pre-Service English Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

The interest in using extensive listening (EL) in ELT pedagogy is emerging. This study scrutinized the views of pre-service English teachers on the concepts of EL and their views on the implementation of EL in the ELT classroom. Using the qualitative descriptive design, this study collected the data from two pre-service English teachers who attended the Extensive Listening course for four months with a total of 14 meetings. They participated in learning the concepts of EL, doing EL inside the class, and practicing EL conveniently outside the class. The data were collected using open-ended questionnaires at the end of the semester. The data collected were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings of this study revealed that the pre-service English teachers routinely practiced EL by listening to English materials on various topics. EL was reported to help them enhance their L2 aural vocabulary knowledge and hone their other language skills. Having an adequate understanding of the EL concepts, both the pre-service English teachers agreed on the inclusion of EL in the ELT curriculum at the school level. They also provided explanations of the possible challenges of using EL in class and how to overcome it. This study can be a source of inspiration for English teachers who are interested in implementing EL in the ELT classroom.

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### INTRODUCTION

The most frequently asked question regarding the practice of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia is “Why are Indonesian students not able to speak English after a long time of learning English at school?”. Sometimes, many ELT scholars and English teachers still think that speaking

practice is the only solution to that lingering problem. Many proposed various kinds of activities to promote the development of the students' speaking skills, such as role-playing, storytelling, debates, and so forth. It is correct that those activities are beneficial. However, one crucial issue has been forgotten so far: students cannot speak if they do not have sufficient aural vocabulary knowledge. That is the one that needs to be addressed immediately. Extensive listening – pleasurable listening to easy and understandable materials (Waring, 2008) – can be a perfect alternative for providing students with L2 aural vocabulary knowledge. Once students are familiar with spoken English words, it is easier for them to use it appropriately in oral communication. Extensive listening is shown to be beneficial for the development of the students' L2 aural vocabulary knowledge (Pamuji, 2021a).

In SLA, there are two ways of acquiring a second language. The first is through interaction. We can learn a second language through interacting with others in a supportive environment. Regarding this, Norton (1995) has emphasized the importance of 'investment' in second language learning. If we want to learn a second language through interaction, we must speak to others and engage in everyday social interaction. Learning can happen if our social environment is comfortable and supportive for us to speak and interact. The second is through input. We can learn a second language by receiving comprehensible input from pleasurable reading and listening activities. It can be done individually and silently at the students' convenience. Extensive listening is the learning from the input. We can develop our overall second language proficiency through receiving a huge exposure to comprehensible L2 learning materials, frequently and contextually.

A study by Pamuji et al. (2019) has shown the primacy of extensive listening in helping learners develop their L2 proficiency. The study narrated the stories of two English teachers who developed L2 proficiency via extensive listening. The study reported how a native English speaker successfully developed his L2 Japanese proficiency after engaging with EL and how an Indonesian native speaker developed her L2 English proficiency after doing EL for a long time. The first languages of the two participants are different, and their second languages (the target languages) are also not the same; however, both of them successfully used EL to hone their L2 proficiency. The experiences of the two successful L2 learners can inspire those wanting to develop their L2 proficiency using extensive listening.

Our study tries to scrutinize the views of pre-service English teachers on the extensive listening practice in the ELT classroom. This study aims to bring inspiration from natural learning via EL to classroom practice. The experiences of the pre-service English teachers in practicing EL are described. Then, their views on how EL should be implemented in ELT classrooms are presented.

## **REVIEWS OF RECENT STUDIES ON EXTENSIVE LISTENING**

Extensive listening is currently a widely discussed concept in ELT. It commonly follows the ten principles of extensive reading (ER) by Day & Bamford (2002). Those principles of ER can be completely adopted in EL (see Pamuji, 2019, 2021b). We can also modify it if necessary. However, there is a fundamental principle that we need to follow: students have to listen to lots of easily understandable listening materials suitable to their language level (Waring, 2008; Newton & Nation, 2021). If the students listen to difficult materials, they will give up learning. In 2021, Pamuji et al. (2021b) scrutinized the views of Asian EYL teachers on extensive listening. There are the top four principles of EL according to the teachers: 1) students listen to highly varied listening materials; 2) students listen to easy and understandable listening materials; and 3) students listen to very interesting and enjoyable listening materials; 4) students do the extensive listening routinely. Through scrutiny of several important references on EL (Day & Bamford, 2002; Waring, 2008; Newton & Nation, 2021), we can learn that there

are four key words to say that the listening is 'extensive': 'highly varied', 'lots of input', 'enjoyable', and 'easy'. The other principles are not rigid and teachers can modify them based on their creativity. In practicing EL, students can listen to the materials with the support of subtitles, visuals, captions, and so forth. There might be another term such as 'extensive viewing', but it is actually the similar concept. Listening to a YouTube video while reading the subtitle can still be considered extensive listening. In this regard, Newton & Nation (2021) encourage the use of visual support and written support for the students' EL practice.

Recently, studies on extensive listening are emerging. A current study by Thao (2024) examined the use of EL to foster the students' learning autonomy. Using a qualitative case study, the study involved a total of 10 non-majored English students. The study found that EL could arouse the students' learning motivation and hone their listening skills. A study by Tsuda et al. (2023) proposed the implementation of extensive reading while listening (ERWL) program with cooperative learning. The combination of extensive reading (ER), extensive listening (EL), and cooperative learning (CL) was expected to be beneficial for the students' learning of four language skills. A study by Su (2024) looked into the perceived benefits of extensive listening instructional goals. In this descriptive qualitative research, a total of 15 university students participated. The study found that extensive listening could enhance the students' learning motivation. A study by Masrai (2019) examined the implementation of extensive viewing to support the students' learning of L2 aural vocabulary and to hone the students' listening comprehension. The study involved 78 tertiary-level EFL students. In five weeks, they practised extensive viewing of L2 TV programs with L1 Arabic subtitles. The findings of the study confirmed that extensive viewing could enhance the students L2 aural vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension. A study by Rukmana (2023) looked into the implementation of extensive listening at a junior high school level. A total of 31 eighth-grade students participated. The study found that extensive listening could help them hone their listening skills. A study by Larotta (2022) investigated the practice of EL using asynchronous messaging. The focus of this study was the use of EL to hone the English oral skills of adult learners. Eighteen professionals were engaged in the EL project; they listened to the recording of the voice messages and gave a response to the messages. The study showed that EL could be used to facilitate learning oral language skills, as it could be combined with speaking activities through responding to the messages. EL was reported to increase the learning motivation of the participants.

The above recent studies have shown that extensive listening has a potential to help the students' English learning. In a survey conducted by Pamuji et al. (2021b), 132 Asian EYL teachers agreed that listening to English materials was important. They gave positive responses towards the principles of extensive listening. The EYL teachers considered extensive listening preferable for teaching English to young EFL learners. Extensive listening has many benefits. The question now is how to bring it into the ELT classroom. And are all English teachers aware of the primacy of extensive listening? If yes, can they make use of extensive listening in the ELT classroom optimally? In this study, the Extensive Listening course introduced the students to the basic concepts of extensive listening. It allowed them to experience extensive listening practice inside and outside the classroom. Our study looked into the pre-service English teachers' experiences of doing EL and their views of how EL should be ideally used in the ELT classroom.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Using a qualitative descriptive design, this study gathered data from two pre-service English teachers who practiced EL for one semester. They attended an Extensive Listening course that consisted of 14

meetings. In the course, they listened to videos on different topics such as social environment, healthy life, living abroad, and so forth. The participants were also encouraged to listen to English videos outside the class. In this study, the data were collected via open-ended questionnaires. At the end of the semester, the two participants were given eight open-ended questions about their experiences of practicing EL and their views of the EL implementation in the ELT classroom. They wrote all the answers and explanations in a Microsoft Word document and then sent it to the researcher via email. The data collected were then analyzed using thematic analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

#### **Experiences of Practicing EL**

##### PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 1

According to PST 1, listening is part of her hobbies. She practiced extensive listening in her daily activities. She enjoyed listening activities because it was beneficial for her English learning, *"I really enjoy listening activities because they are an important part of mastering English."* She routinely listened to English materials on various topics, *"I usually listen to themes related to self-reflection, scientific studies of Islam, traveling, studying abroad, and scholarship. All of which are in English. I usually listen for 30-60 minutes in a day in my spare time in the afternoon."* She often practiced EL using *"... several social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and online book applications such as Blinkist."* In addition, she also enjoyed doing long-duration listening activities such as watching movies. She preferred to do EL in a comfortable learning atmosphere, *"Usually, I use earphones and I am in a quiet and cool place when listening while studying."*

##### PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 2

PST 2 said that her several months of EL practice gave her *"an extraordinary positive impact, including how to sharpen my English skills, especially in listening or "listening" comprehension, ..."*. PST 2 also did the EL using audio only, *"where we hear without seeing the written text and image presentation. And indirectly we have to understand what is in that context without seeing text and images"*. She also recalled her experiences of doing EL in the class with the guidance of the lecturer, *"We often practice this skill where my lecturer, ... will give approximately 5 to 10 minutes to listen to something from a video with a predetermined title. For example, we are given a topic about social, sports, and so on, then we choose and then listen and ..."*. At the end of the session after doing the EL practice, she was required to share of what she has listened to, *"... at the end of the session we are responsible for explaining what has been heard in as much detail as possible."* In addition to practicing EL in the class, she also continued her EL outside the class independently, *"... continuing the activities after the lectures in class, I also often listen to songs, short sermons every week, or podcasts about a film, ..."* She selected the materials based on her own preference and enjoyed the EL while doing other activities, *"... where I choose what I want to listen to and don't forget to enjoy it, either listening through a headset or without a headset while doing other things such as doing assignments."*

#### **Improvement in English Proficiency after Practicing EL**

##### PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 1

PST 1 mentioned that after doing extensive listening repeatedly, she could better understand the content of the listening materials, *"I felt that my ability to understand the content delivered increased significantly."* She said extensive listening allowed her to choose the topics she liked. Extensive listening

did not make her feel burdened, *“Extensive listening does not burden us who have a hobby of listening. ... . Of course, we can feel the impact of this activity after doing it repeatedly”*. Extensive listening was beneficial in helping her learn vocabulary, *“In addition, the ability to get new vocabulary is an advantage for those of us who often listen, the vocabulary is related to the topics we listen to. For example, English vocabulary related to religious studies, and I always write it down. In addition, EL has also familiarized her with different English accents, “Another ability is the accent or intonation of different speakers that makes us interested in imitating and practicing speaking with that accent. Like, the English accent of Korean, Japanese, British, and American people.”* She added that *“there are many other improvements in [English] ability that I feel.”*

PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 2

PST 2 said that through practicing EL, she could improve her several language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing, *“The aspects that improved after I did extensive listening activities were of course “listening comprehension”, “speaking” and “writing” because by applying this extensive listening method it provides a place for me personally to choose what I want to listen to ... .”* In addition, EL also helped her learn new vocabulary, *“... and it trains me in adding new vocabulary in speaking and writing too.”* What is interesting is that she could subconsciously use the spoken words (that she got from the EL activities) in her writing assignment, *“Moreover, when there is an assignment related to writing, of course without realizing it I have written with new words that I have obtained through extensive listening.”* She explained that in practicing EL, *“... we must really understand what is being talked about or discussed in that context.”*

### **Understanding of the EL Concepts**

PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 1

PST 1 defined extensive listening as *“a listening activity that is done extensively. ... with easy topics that we like, accompanied by virtual images that add to our imagination”*. According to PST 1, extensive listening allowed the students to select their own listening materials, *“Extensive listening gives us the freedom to choose the topics we want to listen to but still has a big impact on improving high-level English skills.”* She highlighted the most important principles in EL: doing EL regularly without much thinking about the comprehension questions, *“among the most the most important principles in extensive listening are how we can focus and be consistent in doing it regularly; no burden, and no dependence on the questions the teacher gives.”* She said that EL allowed the students *“to feel a different listening experience.”* There are several strengths of EL according to PST 1: using easy and varied topics, providing a broad insight to the students, and enhancing the students' vocabulary knowledge. However, regarding the weaknesses of EL, she mentioned that EL *“lacks of focus on details and will be too complicated for beginners.”*

PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 2

PST 2 defined extensive listening as *“listening to something carefully but in a pleasant atmosphere. Because in principle, ... students are given space to choose what they like and then do the activity without any more interference from a teacher.”* According to PST 2, teachers are responsible for assisting the students; but students are given choice to decide their EL learning, *“The teacher only directs what to do but the rest is giving full rights to students to apply the extensive listening.”* Students' willingness to learn is necessary according to PST 2, *“There must be more encouragement and intention from a student to learn.”* She suggested the integration of four skills in English learning, *“Because in learning English there are indeed 4 things that must be understood, namely listening, speaking, writing and reading and these four things cannot be separated from one another.”* She mentioned that EL could help students' four skills, *“... when we do the extensive listening method in learning English, it has given a clear sign in sharpening the four skills.”* According to PST 2, the benefits of EL practice is that it allows students to be *“more proficient in understanding a foreign language and to develop their skills, in understanding the meaning of a word, sentence, ... .”* However, there

are several issues that need to be overcome such as *“not all schools can provide the materials needed such as books, computers, and so on, and there are many teachers who are less creative in applying the extensive listening in their learning.”*

### **Implementation of EL in the ELT classroom**

#### **PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 1**

According to PST 1, extensive listening is relevant to be used in the ELT classroom. The reason is, *“Because extensive listening has different principles from listening in general. Extensive listening provides a pleasant and easy experience in learning.* She argued that the learning activities will not be monotonous if students are free to choose the topics they like, so that they will be *“interactively discussing the content they like, and they will enjoy listening.* PST 1 added that although the students are given the choice to select their listening materials, the teacher's assistance is still necessary, *“although it provides space for students to choose easy topics they like, it should be under the supervision of the teacher and the expected competencies.”* PST 1 agreed that extensive listening can be used optimally in the ELT classroom if teachers follow the EL principles. She recalled her knowledge of the principles of EL, which states that, in the implementation of EL, students should listen to easy materials on a variety of topics. In addition, according to PST 1, students should do the EL daily to enjoy the experience of listening, not for answering comprehension questions. PST 1 mentioned the importance of teacher motivation, *“The teacher must provide motivation first ..., so that students can be encouraged to actively participate.”*

PST 1 explained that there are several challenges to EL implementation in the ELT classroom. She also provided the solution to overcome those challenges. 1) Teachers are not eager to make breakthroughs, so they still use the traditional methods of teaching listening. Her solution: Schools or the Ministry of Education can conduct research on extensive listening and include it in the school curriculum. 2) Teachers are not very innovative in selecting topics suitable for students. Her solution: Teachers can gather as many references as possible from various sources. 3) Teachers have difficulties in packaging interesting EL materials. Her solution: teachers can create interesting materials by attending training or learning through social media/influencers. 4) The learning environment is less conducive. Her solution: teachers can gather the students' attention by providing games or ice breaking or interesting stories before starting learning.

#### **PST (Pre-Service Teacher) 2**

PST 2 agreed on the implementation of EL in the ELT classroom, *“I personally feel that it is very important to have extensive listening in the teaching curriculum from kindergarten to college.”* The reason is *“... because this method of learning English will no longer create a fear or burden so that students can enjoy English lessons.”* She said that the EL can have a positive impact for L2 students, *“... if the extensive listening is included in the English teaching curriculum, it will have a positive impact on the development of the students' skills in understanding and comprehending a foreign language, namely English.”* PST 2 said that in implementing EL, teachers need to adjust the listening materials to the students' language level, *“We must adjust to the child's level of understanding when applying this extensive listening. ... . For this reason, as a teacher, you must really look at each child's ability in English so that the extensive listening can also be adjusted to the level of the students.”* According to PST 2, the challenge of practicing EL *“is that not all students want to read, listen to audio.”* Her solution: providing learning materials that can arouse the students' learning interests by *“creating an inspiring class atmosphere so that students enjoy learning, then don't forget to appreciate their efforts with a simple gift.”* She recalled her experiences when she was at the junior and high school level, *“... since I was in middle school and high school my English teacher would lend me and my classmates to read one book a week, then when we had finished the book, we could choose prizes that had been provided by the teacher*

*such as colored pencils, small notebooks, and many more.” By creating a supportive learning atmosphere, “Children will have the intention and enthusiasm to read[listen] and complete whatever tasks or responsibilities the teacher entrusts to them.”*

### **Discussion**

Extensive listening brings new experiences of learning English for the two pre-service English teachers. During the four months, they routinely practiced EL inside the class once a week in the Extensive Listening course with the lecturer and outside the class according to their own convenience. By routinely practicing EL using varied topics, they have satisfied the essential requirement of EL: lots of listening (Newton & Nation, 2021; Waring, 2008). It is because the listening is not ‘extensive’ if they do it only occasionally. EL can also promote independent learning outside the class in which we can choose the listening materials we like and do it in a comfortable learning atmosphere (see Day & Bamford, 2002).

In this study, extensive listening was reported to help the pre-service English teachers learn English vocabulary. This is in line with the previous studies by Pamuji (2019, 2021a), which showed that EL could help learners enhance their L2 vocabulary knowledge. PST 1 mentioned that from EL, she also learned various English accents. In a study by Pamuji (2019, p. 263), in the preliminary survey, it was reported that some English teachers were keen on practicing EL because they wanted to “picking up some English accents.” PST 2 felt that, through EL, she could develop several language skills including listening comprehension, speaking, and writing. A recent study by Su et al. (2024) found that one of the perceived benefits of EL is the improvement of students’ listening skills. In a study by Chang & Millett (2016), EL was reported to enhance the students’ L2 listening fluency. In a study by Larotta (2022), EL was shown to be beneficial in helping learners to develop the students’ speaking skills. One interesting finding is that, according to PST 2, she could use the spoken words that she got from EL when doing writing assignments. In this regard, available studies that comprehensively discussed the transfer from the knowledge of L2 spoken words to the writing skills are still limited. Future research can be conducted to address this important aspect. Both pre-service teachers understood the concepts of EL very well. They mentioned the keywords that closely related to the principles of EL (see Day & Bamford, 2002; Pamuji, 2019, 2021b) such as ‘easy topics’, ‘freedom to choose’, ‘consistent’, ‘no burden’, ‘no dependence on comprehension questions’, ‘pleasant atmosphere’, and ‘choose what they like’. The keywords mentioned show that enjoyable learning (e.g. Asmawati & Asmara, 2023; Putri & Nurfuadi, 2023) can be provided by EL. The core of EL has been well understood by the pre-service English teachers.

Regarding the implementation of EL, they agreed that EL is relevant and needs to be included in the ELT curriculum. Both of them also focused their attention on the learning materials. PST 1 suggested that teachers need to gather a variety of listening materials from various sources. PST 2 focused on the importance of providing students with the EL materials that align with the students’ language level. It is in line with the suggestion by Waring (2008) that in the EL practice, students need to listen to the right materials that match their level so that they will not be tired of doing the activities. In terms of managing the class, PST 1 suggested that teachers provide games, ice-breaking, or stories. Meanwhile, PST 2 argued that teacher can provide a simple gift to appreciate the students. It shows that when using EL, English teachers can freely manage the class according to their creativity.

### **CONCLUSION**

The pre-service English teachers have understood the concepts of EL principles. They have also experienced it inside and outside the class for their English learning. The enjoyable learning via EL has

helped the two pre-service English teachers develop their L2 vocabulary. The pre-service teachers have felt the linguistic gains from the EL. Their direct experiences of enjoying the benefits of EL are beneficial because they can share it with their students in the future. EL has been positively accepted by the two pre-English teachers. They agreed on the implementation of EL in the ELT classroom as it can provide various advantages to the students' English language learning. Introducing EL to pre-service English teachers is important since they are the actors who will bring the future of English learning. As a follow-up to this study, further research is necessary on how the pre-service English teachers design their EL learning in the ELT classroom.

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#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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