

Extensive Listening-while-reading: A Case Study applying the Minimalist Approach

Divya John*

Sri Sivasubramaniya Nadar College of Engineering, Chennai

(Received 28/01/2020; final version received 30/06/2020)

ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the concept of extensive listening-while-reading. It is an attempt to assist ‘vernacular-medium learners’ of English (i.e., learners whose medium of instruction is their mother tongue) to develop their listening skills in English by concentrating simultaneously on listening and reading. The study tries to prove the effect of the minimalist approach on the listening skills of the learners. The minimalist approach consists in indulging in at least a minimum listening input to reap maximum advantage. The experiment pattern comprises listening to an episode of the 6-minute English podcasts provided by the BBC Learning English website daily; reading aloud the same transcript along with the BBC presenter; recording the reading of one of the podcasts every week, and emailing it to the teacher. The study involves five vernacular-medium students though only one case is particularized herein. Our conclusion is that the students’ listening comprehension skills improved gradually.

Keywords: extensive listening, listening-while-reading, minimalist approach

RESUMEN

Este artículo trabaja con el concepto de escucha y lectura simultáneas. Busca asistir a “estudiantes de inglés educados en lengua vernácula” (es decir a estudiantes cuya escolarización se dio en su lengua materna) en el desarrollo de la habilidad de escucha en inglés. Intenta lograr esto haciendo que los estudiantes se concentren en escuchar y leer de manera simultánea. El estudio trata de comprobar el efecto del enfoque minimalista sobre la habilidad de escucha de los estudiantes. El enfoque minimalista consiste en dedicarse en al menos un mínimo a la escucha de audios en inglés para lograr un máximo beneficio. El diseño del experimento incluye la escucha diaria de un episodio del podcast “6-minute English” provisto por el sitio web de BBC Learning English; la lectura en voz alta de la transcripción junto con el presentador de la BBC; la grabación de la lectura de un podcast cada semana, y el envío por mail al docente. El estudio incluyó a cinco estudiantes educados en su lengua materna, aunque se enfocó en uno de ellos. Nuestra conclusión es que la comprensión auditiva de los estudiantes mejoró gradualmente.

Palabras clave: escucha extensiva, escucha y lectura simultáneas, enfoque minimalista

* Corresponding author; email: johndivya@yahoo.com

Introduction

Listening to English successfully is a difficult skill for students who are not used to listening to programmes in English. Students who have been educated in schools where the medium of instruction is their regional language or mother tongue (termed ‘vernacular-medium learners’ in this paper) find listening an even more difficult skill, as they have not had adequate exposure to English at school. In India, the medium of instruction is English in most higher education institutions. So, for vernacular-medium learners who leave school to enter professional institutions, there is a need for competence in English LSRW skills. It is difficult for them to grasp ideas explained in English for they have had only a negligible listening and reading input. Moreover, they have to compete with English-medium learners who can handle the language with varying ease. Even learners educated in English-medium schools do not receive enough training in listening skills. However, some of them do listen to English programmes out of their individual interest or congenial home-background. On the other hand, the vernacular-medium learners have had no exposure to listening in English, as the result of which they show no interest when provided with listening input.

The inspiration behind this study is the teacher-researcher’s realization that vernacular-medium learners do not comprehend the materials dealt with in regular English classes or in their engineering classes, and that consequently they needed practice in listening and reading. The purpose of this paper is to show the effect of the minimalist approach on the learners’ listening skills through an extensive listening-while-reading task. The study is based on the following research questions:

1. How does extensive listening-while-reading tasks improve the listening comprehension of vernacular-medium learners?
2. Why does the minimalist approach work with vernacular-medium learners?

Background of the study

In the educational scenario of India, schools provide varying languages as the medium of instruction – the vernacular in most cases, the national language in many cases, and English in a few cases. So, there are two types of learners of English: (1) ‘English-medium learners’ – students whose language of instruction at school is English and who learn all subjects in English; (2) ‘Vernacular-medium learners’ – students for whom the medium of instruction is their mother tongue or the regional language, and so learn their subjects in their mother tongue or the regional language; these students are exposed to English only in the English language classes.

For the first group of learners, English instruction varies according to the schools they come from and their individual ability to grasp the skill. When the vernacular-medium learners enter professional institutions, they struggle to cope with their studies and find no time to devote themselves to improving on their English due to their tight schedule.

Therefore, they get comfortably stuck in an interlanguage, hoping to manage with the bare minimum English they have already acquired.

The present study was conducted at SSN College of Engineering, Chennai, India, with first year vernacular-medium engineering students during 2015 and 2016 and repeated during the next three semesters. In the academic year 2008-2009 the College of Engineering started an annual policy of educating 20 government school ‘toppers’ who are vernacular-medium students of a rural, low economic background. These students, who have undergone 10 + 2 years of school education in their mother tongue, have been exposed to English as a subject only from Standard 5 (Grade 5) onwards. Other than that, they have not had any experience listening to English. At the time of admission to college, they are offered a bridge course of 20 days for English acquisition just before the regular engineering classes begin, because the medium of instruction for the four-year engineering course is English. The management provides these students with free education, free hostel accommodation, a free laptop and free access to Wi-Fi connectivity.

The subjects of the present study are five such engineering students. They attended the teacher-researcher’s two courses and agreed to cooperate with her in developing their English listening skills. These students took an entry-level “Cambridge English Placement Test” (CEPT), in which one was placed at A1 level and the other four were at A2 level. It is to be noted that English-medium students in these courses generally score from B1 to C2.

Literature review

Awareness of the importance of the listening skill has been instilled in students in countries outside India over the years; yet in India it continues to be ignored, especially in the ESL classroom setting, where there is little possibility of working with a digital sound system. Nunan (1997) considered listening as ‘the Cinderella skill’ in second language learning because it had been overshadowed by its elder sister, speaking. Listening and reading, according to him, were secondary skills, or means to other ends, rather than ends in themselves (Nunan, 1997). Nowadays it is an accepted fact that listening deserves special attention for proper English acquisition.

Hulstijn (2003) points out that computers can be successfully used in acquiring listening skills, and that the Internet provides opportunities for a considerable amount of L2 listening input. He explains the cognitive model of language processing and shows how the brain processes sounds automatically and efficiently to recognize words in speech. He adds that this knowledge can be used in Computer Assisted Language Learning to enhance proficiency in listening skills. L2 learners must make themselves familiar with the phonology of the language, learn plenty of words and automatize their ability to recognise words. The more efficiently learners become at processing the text without effort at lower levels of word recognition and sentence parsing, the better they will process information at higher levels of meaning and content (Hulstijn, 2003). If the teacher’s goal is to develop

vernacular-medium learners' listening skill, students will need more practice than the one provided during the few classroom periods allotted to the English language. Therefore, extensive listening input outside the classroom will be required. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005), the advent of technology has made it possible to listen extensively to the radio, TV programs and movies outside the classroom. Renandya and Farrell (2011) define extensive listening as

all types of listening activities that allow learners to receive a lot of comprehensible and enjoyable listening input. These activities can be teacher-directed dictations or read-alouds or self-directed listening for pleasure that can be done inside and outside the classroom. The key consideration here is that learners get to do a lot of meaningful listening practice.

Renandya (2011) says extensive listening provides a cognitive map, that is, a network of linguistic information from which learners can "build up the necessary knowledge for using the language" (Nation & Newton, 2009). Renandya (2011) also discusses a number of other language learning benefits associated with extensive listening: it enhances learners' ability to cope with speech rate; it improves their word recognition skills and listening vocabulary; it helps them become more fluent listeners; it gives them opportunities to experience a high level of language comprehension; and it develops their general proficiency in the language.

The main advantage of extensive listening is that if the learners indulge in it, they obtain listening input which transforms itself into meaningful listening drills and helps them develop their skill, because "listening is best learnt through listening" (Renandya & Farrell, 2011). Researchers in reading also have confirmed the importance of extensive reading to acquire reading skills as "reading is best learnt through reading" (Renandya & Farrell, 2011). According to Brown (2016), extensive listening focuses on students listening to a varied and relatively large amount of input, often outside the class. Wilson (2008) and Field (2008) advocate the idea of extensive listening along with the idea of autonomous listening, where students can work at their own pace to develop listening skills outside the classroom. Harmer (2015) confirms the beneficial impact of extensive listening on the general language ability of the students. The word "extensive" is used in this paper to mean that the listening task is not part of the syllabus and that it is completed by the learners outside the classroom.

In 1996, Krashen advocated "Narrow Listening" as a low-tech, inexpensive, and pleasant way to obtain comprehensible input outside the classroom. He says that the 'acquirers' collect several brief tape-recordings of proficient speakers discussing a topic and listen to the tape as many times as they like at leisure. Thus, repeated listening to topics of interest and familiar contexts help to make the input comprehensible. Topics are gradually changed so as to expand the learners' competence comfortably (Krashen, 1996). The term 'narrow listening' (or focused and repeated listening) referred to by Krashen implies the completion of one simple type of task to start to make language learning possible. This is

also extensive listening, in the context I have used it, because it is done outside the classroom.

Field (2007) too makes a strong case for extensive listening and reading to ensure that the acquisition of L2 is possible beyond courses and outside the classroom. He adds that learners' empowerment consists of gaining freedom to learn outside the teaching context and the ability to continue learning after the instruction has finished. He also emphasises the need to design programmes to enable learners to achieve lifelong learning (Field, 2007). As per Burns and Siegel (2018), listening classes should involve both pedagogic and authentic tasks in order to develop listening fluency.

There is always a need to instil in the learners a metacognitive awareness, especially when they are new to language learning. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) argue that "when listeners exercise metacognition awareness and knowledge about L2 listening, they are able to orchestrate the cognitive process more efficiently and effectively." They have shown how "the metacognition processes of planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluation can be incorporated into a pedagogical sequence that encourages learners to activate the processes involved in real life listening." Further studies also confirm that metacognitive awareness of listening comprehension strategies developed learners' listening abilities (Bozorgian, 2014; Chou, 2017).

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) suggest that extensive listening activities should be planned based on the following principles:

1. Variety: listening to as many different types of authentic listening texts as possible, on a variety of themes and topics;
2. Frequency: planning a daily or weekly routine for a defined period of time), and
3. Repetition: providing the learners with the advantage of repetition to become familiar with the content, vocabulary and the structure of the spoken text.

I would like to add a fourth principle to the existing three principles mentioned above:

4. Rate of speech, that is, providing beginners with materials containing slower pace speech.

McBride (2011) investigated the effect of rate of speech on L2 learners' development of listening comprehension and found evidence to suggest that exposing L2 learners to slow and clear spoken input can encourage second language acquisition. She also adds that learners need to have an exposure to a wide range of speaking styles, but when dealing with beginners, a slower, clearer style of speech that allows them to notice the details about the input, is appropriate.

It is not common to find teachers training students in listening, but it is common to find them testing students in listening. If testing a skill without teaching it is not acceptable for reading, writing, and speaking, it should not be acceptable for listening (Schmidt, 2016). Goh (1997) introduced the use of "listening diaries" as a learning tool to increase the learners' metacognitive awareness of their listening skill. Schmidt (2016) affirms that the

students' use of "listening journals" helped teachers focus on the improvement of their overall listening skill. Chen (2017) attempted to guide students to learn to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening activities by utilizing listening journals and curated materials which raised their metacognition awareness and students recognised the benefits of keeping listening journals. They were able to plan for their listening, monitor their comprehension, solve comprehension problems, and evaluate their approach and outcome.

To develop listening, Woodall (2010) too alludes to concentrating simultaneously on listening and reading extensively: "Listening while reading would lead to more reading and more effective reading, with possible future gains in fluency for listening and reading skills" (Woodall, 2010). The study by Brown, Waring, and Donkaewbua (2008) reveals that students prefer the reading-while-listening mode compared to read only or listen only mode. It is interesting to note that further studies have proved that 'listening-while-reading' groups showed better listening fluency and vocabulary gain than 'read only' and 'listen only' groups (Chang, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang & Millet, 2016). Gobel and Kano (2014) report on a year-long 'listening-while-reading' program run for university first year students. The results of the evaluation show that though there was not much improvement in their general English proficiency, listening-while-reading had a significant effect on reading rate and vocabulary recognition. Similar studies were conducted in 2018, reporting better vocabulary acquisition and superior skills in the reading-while-listening mode (Nakashima, Stephens, & Kamata, 2018; Teng, 2018). Mestres, Baró, and Garriga (2019) report on the positive linguistic (vocabulary gain) and non-linguistic outcomes (preference for the mode) of reading-while-listening program in young learners. Renandya and Jacobs (2016) state that "the best way to improve language proficiency is to engage L2 students in extensive reading and listening." Chang, Millett and Renandya (2019) maintain that L2 learners could benefit from the provision of additional support when doing extensive listening and reading and experience a higher level of comprehension. While tracking the eye movements in reading only and reading-while-listening mode, Conklin et al. (2020) found that L2 learners showed similar eye movements to L1 learners in the reading-while-listening mode. Duy and Peters (2020) recommend that the mode of input should depend on the preference of the learners.

Although linguists and ELT experts have supported extensive listening, narrow listening, repeated listening and listening-while-reading, extensive listening is not yet a properly researched area, maybe because it is completed outside the classroom. The documentation of extensive listening is difficult, since the teacher-researcher cannot control the conditions of the experiment as it does not happen in the classroom. This study considers these views and advocates an extensive listening-while-reading task using the minimalist approach.

Methodology. The minimalist approach to language learning

Rost (2013) provides numerous resources for teaching, researching and exploring listening for practitioners and researchers. Likewise, teachers introduce students to an innumerable number of language learning websites. Students are perplexed with the plethora of possibilities, and the sum total is that they decide not to do anything at all. This teacher-researcher advocates a minimalist approach to language learning, that is, indulging in at least a minimum listening-input to achieve maximum gain. ‘Minimalist’, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, New 9th edition, is “an artist, a musician, etc. who uses very simple ideas or a very small number of simple elements in their work.” Based on this definition, the “minimalist approach” to language learning encourages learners to listen to at least a minimum input along the day. Hence, this study suggests introducing students to just one website or one exercise so that not much time is spent on the task. If the teacher insists on the minimum input, it is possible for the students to abide by her instructions. On the other hand, if the teacher suggests too tedious an assignment, the students may discard the idea altogether. The minimalist approach in this study is used to enhance the listening skills of the learners through a minimum amount of listening input per day. Here the teacher-researcher proposes listening to just one episode of “6-minute English”, the podcasts provided by the BBC Learning English website daily.

Results and insight into methodology: the experiment in progress and data collection

As already stated, the current experiment involved five vernacular-medium students who agreed to cooperate in the study. In keeping with this teacher-researcher’s minimalist approach to language learning, the exercise “6-minute English” programme from the BBC Learning English website was chosen. As a guideline, one activity, “Robots” was completed in the regular English lesson by the whole class. Later, the above-mentioned five students were specifically asked to listen to an episode every day. After listening to it, they had to read the transcript aloud along with the BBC presenter. Then at the end of every week, they had to record their reading of an episode and send it to the teacher by email for analysis.

The teacher-researcher persuaded them into believing the following arguments to raise their metacognitive awareness: the website is easily accessible; they could work on the episode at leisure; it required only six daily minutes; the rate of speech of the programme was slower; the transcripts of the episodes were available; the English used in the programme was simple because it was designed for the immigrants of the UK; and above all, the exercise trained them to become lifelong learners. The teacher-researcher gave them a notepad to record what they had listened to, as per the opinion of experts (Goh, 1996; Schmidt, 2016, Chen, 2017). On the same day, an email was sent to make them conscious of the seriousness of the study they had undertaken (as shown in Appendix 1).

Extensive Listening-while-reading in the First Year

As indicated already, this study reports in detail on the case of only one student whose name is abbreviated to JK. His progress is chosen for analysis as he was regular with the exercises, and the only one who continued completing the task in the subsequent semesters. JK's entry level score at CEPT was A2. He listened to the following episodes in the first semester of the first year, and sent them to the teacher-researcher for analysis. The abbreviation 'AR' in Table 1 stands for JK's 'Audio Recording' available to the teacher-researcher:

Table 1: JK's Listening Episodes in the First Semester

No	Date	Listening Task
1	1/11/2015	Transport Device (AR)
2	2/11/2015	Do We Read to Show Off?
3	3/11/2015	Summer-born Kids
4	4/11/2015	The Earth's Core
5	6/11/2015	The Proms
6	12/11/2015	The Impact of Plastic
7	14/11/2015	What Makes us Laugh?

JK discontinued his listening exercises before the end-semester examination, that is, when his study-holidays began. Two listening comprehension tests were given to all the students of the English Lab during the first semester, in which JK scored 4/40 and 6/40. This result was taken as pre-test in the experimental design. The two tests were based on IELTS previous question papers.

In the second semester of the first year, JK said that he listened to many episodes but sent only the following recordings:

Table 2: JK's Audio Recordings in the Second Semester

No	Date	Listening Task
1	14/02/2016	Underwater Living (AR)
2	25/02/2016	The Ebola Outbreak (AR)
3	2/03/2016	Food Bank (AR)
4	10/03/2016	Literacy Heroes (AR)
5	21/03/2016	Odd Job Interviews (AR)
6	31/03/2016	Purple Tomatoes (AR)

Extensive listening-while-reading in the second & third year

JK continued the listening exercises in the second year too. He was asked to send his Audio Recordings on a monthly basis as against the weekly basis in the first year. He discontinued his listening sessions once again when the end-semester study-holidays began. In the fourth and fifth semesters, he sent the following Audio Recordings as shown in Table 3 for analysis:

Table 3: JK's Audio Recordings in the Fourth and Fifth Semesters

No	Date	Listening Task
1	4 March 2017	Life Expectancy (AR)
2	5 April 2017	Women's Right to Vote (AR)
3	3 May 2017	Who do you Think you are? (AR)
4	1 June 2017	Water Burial (AR)
5	2 July 2017	Asking the Right Questions? (AR)
6	5 Aug 2017	It's Good to Talk (AR)
7	2 Sept 2017	Would the World Stop without Clocks? (AR)

A listening comprehension test was taken in the English Lab at the end of the third year by the above-mentioned five vernacular-medium students. The test was also based on an IELTS previous question paper. JK scored 32/40 with one spelling mistake which was ignored. This result was taken as the post-test in the experimental design.

Discussion

At the end of the first, second and third year, the students' feedback was collected. JK's responses are recorded without any correction and provided in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. His answers were so positive that the gratification of the teacher-researcher is beyond words. In the initial stages, JK could not put words together to make sense. But when the minimalist approach was introduced, he cooperated very well. In fact, he did not stop with just the exercise; he went on to listen to films and English serials. In spite of his hectic academic schedule, he succeeded in doing the exercises even though the teacher was less demanding in his keeping with the minimalist approach.

The teacher-researcher's insights in the first year

Taking into consideration the English acquisition of JK at the initial stages, the study noted the following points:

- JK's vocabulary was limited; the following words were mispronounced: embarrassing, private, surprisingly, canned, preserve, claustrophobic, preservation, liable, dilemma, suspected, sue, crisis, donated, tinned, dignity, dyslexia, convince, inappropriate, desperate, controversial, psychologist, corporation, exaggerated, ripening, etc. Later, JK was asked to pronounce those words, and he articulated them correctly except for words new to him like, 'Embarrassing, canned, claustrophobic, dilemma, sue, dignity, dyslexia, exaggerated and ripening.' The mispronunciations may have been due to oversight.
- JK's pronunciation was immensely influenced by his mother tongue. At first, he could not pronounce words like, 'Ebola, lean, undersea and tinned.' But when the words were repeated, he made a better attempt.
- However, the way he said 'food' in the seventh recording with a long / u: / was admirable, a point to be praised since many English-medium students do not get it

right. Unfortunately, JK pronounced the article “a” with a palatal on-glide all the time, a mother-tongue interference he could not overcome.

- JK’s reading speed improved; his first recordings took 8 minutes or more, while towards the end, he could finish in 7 minutes.
- JK’s listening comprehension showed progress; he read the last passages with less mistakes and pauses, which proved a higher level of comprehension.

On the whole, the teacher-researcher has nothing more to add than quote JK’s concluding words exactly:

Mam I would like to say something. You are the one of the teacher who cares about rural students. Because of you only mam, I am in this level. Now I can speak with my friends in English because of your training mam. Improving my English skill by watching some English movies, serials, reading newspaper, etc. You direct the way to improve my English, now I am following that mam. I am very proud to say I am your student. I owe my thanks (sic).

The Teacher-researcher’s Insights in the Second & Third Year

The study indicates that JK acquired a functional level of English. The recordings show that his acquisition of English vocabulary, pronunciation, reading speed, listening comprehension as well as confidence improved.

- JK’s vocabulary showed a marked improvement; he understood most of the words.
- JK’s pronunciation was still immensely influenced by his mother tongue. The following words were mispronounced: Live, binge, vocabulary, suffragettes, national, wear, cemeteries, off guard. The words ‘host’ and ‘clothes’ were pronounced with an / α /sound. He could not properly pronounce words like ‘binge’ and ‘suffragettes’ in the first attempt, but he pronounced them correctly in all the subsequent readings. Another mistake was pronouncing the silent ‘b’ and ‘h’ in ‘dumb’ and ‘honestly’ respectively.
- JK consistently mispronounced certain words. For e.g. ‘wear’ was pronounced as ‘we err.’ The word ‘vocabulary’ was mispronounced throughout the recordings.
- JK’s reading showed some improvement in stress. For e.g. when he read ‘deep compassion’ and ‘great women,’ he did stress ‘deep’ and ‘great.’
- JK’s reading aloud showed that he could read better without many mistakes.
- JK read with more clarity and his tone showed a better level of comprehension.
- JK’s reading speed, however, did not show a marked difference from his first-year speed.
- Above all, JK’s voice became bolder gradually, showing confidence because he was able to use English at a functional level.

It has to be noted here that JK listened not only to the 6-minute BBC English programme but also to several listening sources outside the classroom. For example, he watched movies, serials and TED talks in English. By the end of the fifth semester, when he

sent the last 6-minute recording, he had already attended 4 periods per week of Technical English courses during the first two semesters; and also 20 to 25 periods per week of engineering classes taught in English, which adds to the 'live listening' or the 'one-to-one listening' done during the 5 semesters. Since JK belonged to the government-school-topper-scholarship category, he took special lessons too on most of the engineering subjects in English. Most of all, the fact remains that he was probably coached by a number of friends and classmates who patiently explained the engineering concepts to him in simplified English, perhaps on request. Therefore, the credit of JK's English acquisition goes to all of the above besides the 6-minute English programme.

In all, JK has listened to 14 episodes in the first semester, 46 episodes in the second semester, 60 episodes in the second year and 90 episodes in the third year. As already stated, he had been placed at A2 level in the Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT). As mentioned before, JK's score for listening comprehension was 6/40 for the first semester. But at the end of the third year, his score was 32/40, that is, it improved from A2 to C1.

The listening input of the other 4 students was almost negligible, because it was difficult for them to cope with the other courses. But obviously, they were exposed to the 'live listening' sessions of lectures and interactions with friends throughout the 5 semesters. Possibly because of that, for the post test, these students went from a lower B2 to a higher B2. So, finally they moved from an A1-A2 to B2. It needs to be noted here that JK, at the beginning of the fourth year, sent an email to the teacher-researcher (see Appendix 4) saying that he got a job in an engineering company.

Limitations and Scope for Further Studies

This is a small-scale study, as the subject of the research is only one student. Another limitation, as stated in the section above, is that it is debatable whether JK improved his listening and speaking skills because of the tasks carried out as part of this research or because of the courses he attended or the extra listening he cared to do. This is a study done for vernacular-medium students with limited exposure to English. They are similar to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners in an international context, where English is not the medium of instructions in schools. This study can be applied to any similar situation where the students need a steady input of English to develop their English skills. The major result of this study is that JK gained confidence in his English skills though with a minimal steady input.

For further studies, research on quantifying the results can be carried out to investigate the impact of the minimalist approach on the listening skills of a large number of learners. The approach can be further extended from the listening skill to the other three skills to prove the effect of the minimalist approach to language learning in general.

Conclusion

The present study is based on the concept of extensive listening-while-reading as an attempt to assist vernacular-medium engineering students of English to develop their listening skills in English by concentrating simultaneously on reading and listening. The study adopts a minimalist approach to language learning as visualized by the teacher-researcher, that is, indulging in at least a minimum listening-input to achieve maximum advantage. The study involved five vernacular-medium students who varied in their output according to their individual input. Only one case, that of JK, is particularised herein. The results showed that the sessions assisted him to improve his vocabulary and listening comprehension. He is confident in using English at the functional level. The significance of this research is that the improvement in JK's performance is a point of awareness and inspiration not only to the rest of the four students but also to the whole class. The secret of success in the study is the minimalist approach employed by the teacher-researcher.

References

- Bozorgian, H. (2014). The Role of Metacognition in the Development of EFL Learners' Listening Skills. *International Journal of Listening*, 28(3), 149-161.
- Brown, R., Waring, R., & Donkaewbua, S. (2008). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading, reading-while-listening, and listening to stories. *Reading in a foreign language*, 20(2), 136-163.
- Brown, S. (2016). Factors in Listening. In Hinkel, E. (Ed.). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, (Vol. III). Routledge.
- Burns, A., & Siegel, J. (Eds.). (2018). *International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing*. Springer
- Chang, C-S. (2011). The effects of reading while listening to audiobooks: listening fluency and vocabulary gain. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 21, 43-64.
- Chang, C-S., & Millett, S. (2014). The effect of extensive listening on developing L2 listening fluency: some hard evidence. *ELT Journal*, 68(1), 31-40.
- Chang, C-S., & Millett, S. (2016). Developing L2 Listening Fluency through Extended Listening-focused Activities in an Extensive Listening Programme. *RELC Journal*, 47(3), 349-362.
- Chang, A., Millett, S., & Renandya, W. A. (2019). Developing listening fluency through supported extensive listening practice. *RELC Journal*, 50(3), 422-438.
- Chen, C.W. (2017). Guided listening with listening journals and curated materials: a metacognitive approach. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 13 (2), 133-146. DOI:10.1080/17501229.2017.1381104.
- Chou, M. (2017). A Task-based Language Teaching Approach to Developing Metacognitive Strategies for Listening Comprehension. *International Journal of Listening*, 31(1), 51-70.

- Conklin, K., Alotaibi, S., Pellicer-Sánchez, A., & Vilkaitė-Lozdienė, L. (2020). What eye-tracking tells us about reading-only and reading-while-listening in a first and second language? *Second Language Research*, 0267658320921496.
- Duy, V. V., & Peters, E. (2020). Learning vocabulary from reading-only, reading-while-listening, and reading with textual input enhancement: Insights from Vietnamese EFL learners. *RELC Journal*.
- Field, J. (2007). Looking outwards, not inwards. *ELT Journal*, 61, 3-38.
- Field, J. (2008). *Listening in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2005). *Second Language Listening: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gobel, P. & Kano, M. (2014). Implementing a year-long reading while listening program for Japanese University EFL students. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 27(4), 279-293.
- Goh, C. (1997). Metacognitive Awareness and Second Language Listeners. *ELT Journal*, 51(4), 361-369.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. (5th ed.). Longman.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (2003). Connectionist Models of Language Processing and the Training of Listening Skills with the Aid of Multimedia Software. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 16(5), 413-425.
- Krashen, S. (1996). The Case for Narrow Listening. *System*, 24, 97-100.
- McBride, K. (2011). The effect of rate of speech and distributed practice on the development of listening comprehension. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(2), 131-154.
- Mestres, E. T., Baró, À. L., & Garriga, À. P. (2019). Linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes of a reading-while-listening program for young learners of English. *Reading and Writing*, 32(3), 819-838.
- Nakashima, K., Stephens, M., & Kamata, S. (2018). The Interplay of Silent Reading, Reading-while-listening and Listening-only. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 18(1), 104-123.
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*. Routledge.
- Nunan, D. (1997). Listening in Language Learning. *The Language Teacher*. Retrieved from <http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/97/sep/nunan.html>
- Renandya, W. A. (2011). Extensive listening in the language classroom. In H.P. Widodo & A. Cirocki (Eds.), *Innovation and Creativity in ELT Methodology* (pp. 28-41). Nova Science Publishers.
- Renandya, W. A., & Farrell, T. S. (2011). 'Teacher, the tape is too fast!' Extensive listening in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 65(1), 52-59.
- Renandya, W. A., & Jacobs, G. M. (2016). Extensive Reading and Listening in the L2 Classroom. In W. A. Renandya, & P. Handoyo (Eds.), *English Language Teaching Today* (pp. 97-100). Routledge.

- Rost, M. (2013). *Teaching and Researching: Listening*. Routledge.
- Schmidt, A. (2016). 'Listening Journals for Extensive and Intensive Listening Practice'. *English Teaching Forum*, 54(2), 2-11.
- Teng, F. (2018). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading-only and reading-while-listening: A multi-dimensional approach. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 12(3), 274-288.
- Wilson, J. J. (2008). *How to Teach Listening*. Pearson Education.
- Woodall, B. (2010). 'Simultaneous Listening and Reading in ESL: Helping Second Language Learners Read (and Enjoy Reading) More Efficiently.' *TESOL Journal*, 1(2), 186-205.
- Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. C.M. (2012). *Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action*. Routledge.

Appendix 1

The following email was sent to make students aware of the seriousness of the study they had undertaken:

“Dear -----

I'm glad you have decided to take the first step to improve your English, and you should be very happy about it. Congratulations! I am reminding you of the exercise I suggested this morning:

Listen to an episode of the “6-minute English” programme from the BBC Learning English website every day with your headphones on.

Listen to the same episode a second time and read it aloud along with the BBC presenter.

At the end of every week, read aloud any one episode; record it, and send it to me regularly.

I am sure you will find this exercise rewarding. Do remember that you are working towards your own advantage. Thank you.

Happy listening!

D-----”

Appendix 2

JK's Responses at the End of the First Year

At the end of the year, the students were asked to answer the following questions: JK's answers are recorded here without any correction:

1. Did you understand the episodes of "6-minute English"?
 "By honestly speaking, I couldn't understand all the meaning of that conversation. But after watching that episodes I tried to know the meaning of some words by using google. After that I watched again and understood some little conversation."(sic).
2. What do you feel about your level of English now?
 "Previously I was having a fear in English. After watching these episodes I slightly entered into watching some English serials as you suggested. So I can understand that episodes better than previous time. By saying about my level of English now I am in moderate level only. I know my English is not good enough. I want to improve my level. Surely one day I will become one good speaker in English, my level will increase into high" (sic).
3. Was this exercise beneficial to you in any way?
 "This exercise really change myself. It improves my listening skill, speaking skill and writing skill. Nowadays I can read and understand the newspaper somewhat, I can watch English movies with understanding. Now I am trying to speak with my vernacular-medium friends in English. I can understand English during my engineering periods. BBC exercise is my first step to improve my English" (sic).

Appendix 3

JK's Responses at the End of the Second & Third Year

At the end of the second year, the students were asked to answer the following questions: JK's answers are recorded here:

1. Did you listen to the "6-minute English" every day in the second year from 4 March 2017 to 2 Sep 2017?
 "Surely, during the above specified period I listened to the "6-minute English" everyday mam."
2. Did you understand the episodes of "6-minute English"?
 "I could really understand the meaning of each episode of "6-minute English"."
3. What do you feel about your level of English now?
 "I am really improved in speaking now. I can understand English movies and serials nowadays. It makes me to be proper in pronunciation. At the end of the 2nd year, my level of English improved drastically. I am very proud myself because now I can talk to my friends in English. They also talk to me in English not like before mam."

4. Was this exercise beneficial to you in any way?

“Yes, It improves mainly my vocabulary mam. My pronunciation is improving. I can understand the episodes mostly because I am checking the meaning of new words. I can understand words in the context also. Thank you for your help.”

Appendix 4

It needs to be noted here that JK, at the beginning of the fourth year, sent an email to the teacher-researcher:

Dear mam,

I am very glad to inform you that I got placed in Tech----- . Without your guidance it wouldn't be possible. As a rural scholarship student, it was my dream to get into core company (sic). The BBC listening practice helped me a lot to improve my skills. I will be grateful for your guidance.

Thank you,

With respectful regards,

JK