

Conference Paper

Reading While Listening (RWL) in an Extensive Listening Course to Reduce Student Teachers' Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA)

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Abstract

In most of initial teacher education (ITE) institutions in Indonesia, teaching listening is mostly anchored with teaching for comprehension in which the inputs are restricted in classroom context or teacher educators' textbooks. Lacking of inputs in listening may cause the inability to process larger aural texts in normal rates. Consequently, it is indicated that the types of listening inputs influence student teachers' foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA). They experience FLLA with less listening inputs and the high rate of listening fluency during processing the authentic listening materials. However, in fact, exposing far richer and the greater quantity of comprehensible inputs in an extensive listening (EL) is the main requirement to become proficient teachers in the actual classrooms. With this reason, reducing their FLLA using comprehensible input in EL is highly pivotal. In addition, their FLLA can also be reduced using listening support to facilitate their comprehension. This correlated experimental study was to examine the effect of reading while listening (RwL) as the support and comprehensible input of listening. It was conducted between March to April 2018 in an English Education Department of a private ITE context in East Java, Indonesia. 57 student teachers participated in the foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) survey to determine their FLLA levels in pre-test. 37 student teachers identified as high FLLA group according to the mean scores of FLLA survey were further investigated in the RwL experimentation. It reveals that the scores of student teachers' FLLA survey after being taught using RwL input in post-test were lower than their previous FLLA scores in initial FLLA scores classification levels in the pre-test. It shows that the scores of FLLA student teachers were significantly reduced. It indicates that reducing student teachers' high FLLA anxiety level via RwL contributes to the application of EL.

Keywords: extensive listening, reading while listening, EFL listening anxiety, initial teacher education

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1. Introduction

In mostly teacher education institution in Indonesia, listening instruction in English has been framed teaching for comprehension (Field, 2008). This paradigm has been believed and practiced by the teacher educators for many years in the classroom. Additionally, teacher educators have been 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). The characteristics of this paradigm have been also influenced by the behavioristic teaching model in which teachers have mostly used textbooks for teaching comprehension. In this regard, students always do the tests after they listen to the recordings to know their comprehension. In addition, the use of textbooks as non-authentic materials in comprehension-based listening instruction also demotivates their communicative competence (Tuanany & Bharati, 2017). Therefore, it is important to raise student teachers' critical awareness of how to best teaching listening (Kaur, 2014). In this regard, teaching real-life materials using authentic materials would be pivotal to obtain longer opportunities for comprehensible inputs. EFL learners frequently experience a number of difficulties because of the limitation of inputs in their academic environment. They do not have sufficient practice in understanding the spoken texts because of the exposures relying on classroom context only.

Additionally, the massive inputs in EFL classroom context are not available since the listening instruction time-frame has also been set and limited so that the opportunities to access the spoken texts other than teacher educators' materials are not considerable. Accordingly, the limited comprehensible inputs during listening activities in the classroom may cause the inability to communicate competently in English when the class ends (Gobel et al., 2013). In fact, learning should be widely exposed by a large quantity of language inputs if they want to enhance word recognition skills, expand their vocabulary, and process the spoken texts to be fluent learners which are beneficially useful in their real life listening experience. Particularly in the foreign language (EFL) listening instruction, the dependence of the quality of listening exposures are affected by the large quantity of meaning-focused input (Nation, 2007). Extensive listening (EL) is the way of providing this quantity. In EL, student teachers are served large quantities of aural target language inputs that interest them and are within their linguistic competence. With this in mind, the success of comprehending spoken texts 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 a large amount of texts that are reasonably and smoothly relevant to their language proficiency levels and their interests (Vo, 2013).

Teaching EL in initial teacher education in Indonesia mainly aims at training student teachers' listening comprehension and fluency on longer authentic spoken texts in normal speech rates levels. The abundant exposures of inputs in EL have proved to be successful in enhancing learners' language proficiency (Renandya & Farrel, 2010; Yeh, 2013). However, student teachers experienced barriers in comprehending the longer speech of spoken language during micro-teaching and teaching practicum of EL. Although the texts were spoken in normal speech rates or even in slow speed, they perceived the texts too fast. They cannot frequently understand much of the information they hear not because the content is difficult but because the speakers speak too fast (Renandya & Jacob, 2016). They are frequently forced to listen to the spoken texts naturally in normal speech rates. The main ideas missing, disability to catch the keywords, the speed rate, and little time to process the aural input are the main variables of foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA). This is in line with Chang (2010) that the characteristics of language input were found to be another major source of FLLA, e.g., fast speech, the difficulty of speech, and lack of clarity, visual support or repetition. Kim (2000) points out FLLA negatively correlated with listening comprehension. The higher learners' FLLA levels, the least their comprehension will be and vice versa.

Therefore, situating student teachers in low and free anxious classrooms should be created by a teacher educator (Fang, 2011). For this reason, teacher educators need to create a learning situation which mediates student teachers to reduce their high FLLA levels and increase their listening comprehension tandemly in EL. Chang (2010) found that FLLA levels could be reduced if learners are able to enhance their listening skills massively such as via radio, television, video, internet, podcasts, audiobooks, and other authentic materials to foster automation. In this regard, the listening instruction is delivered by accessing various listening materials according to the learners' interests in EL. More importantly, high FLLA levels of the student teachers could be reduced if they are trained on how to process comprehension for meaning by paying attention on their language proficiency levels. Additionally, they also need listening supports while listening to longer spoken texts to assist their comprehension because they are mostly unable to match the spoken form with the written form (Chang & Read, 2006). Chang (2009) states that supports can be facilitative for building listeners' comprehension while encouraging their positive psychological effects on their learning. In term of listening instruction, supports can be means for mediating students learning such as visual aids, technological tools, captions, strategy instruction, etc.

Reading while listening (RwL) is a kind of listening support for helping students' comprehension. It is the combination of reading and listening in the same time focusing on

spoken texts. This is very useful to help L2/EFL learners verify the spoken texts with written texts to develop auditory discrimination and word recognition (Osada, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007), get used to the spoken rate, rhythm, and the natural flow of the language, and understand how to chunk texts. The aural-written verification of RwL has been found to be particularly beneficial to lower proficiency learners (Mareschal, 2007). Simultaneous input in RwL has also the significant roles in helping student teachers' comprehension and listening fluency (Chang, 2011). In addition, Hill (2013) also notes that reading and listening at the same time can be very helpful in enhancing reading speed because it weans learners away from a word-by-word style of reading. Other qualitative benefits include promoting concentration and making aural input more interesting with sound effects (Chang, 2009). Therefore, aural written input in RwL should be considered as the listening support relying on the written texts for verifying the listening inputs student teachers have already heard. With this in mind, using written texts during listening activities happened should emphasize on students listening skill not reading because reading is regarded as a supporting skill for enhancing listening comprehension.

Despite the importance of RwL in listening research, unfortunately, listening input through RwL has not been empirically proved reducing learners' FLLA both in a second or a foreign language context. Although RwL has been effective in improving learners listening comprehension and fluency, however, the effect of RWL on student teachers' FLLA has not received attention yet. Whether or not the comprehensible input via RwL is able to reduce their FLLA. However, it should not be neglected that the comprehensible inputs are required for them to acquire language acquisition (Rost, 1994, 2006 as cited in Chang, 2009). If they are able to enhance their language acquisition through supported EL practice in RwL, their listening comprehension can be improved and FLLA can be reduced so that encouraging their language proficiency while boosting their motivation. In response to the gap, the main purpose of this article discusses the effectiveness of RwL input for reducing student teachers' FLLA in an EL course. Therefore, the authors hypothesized the study as follows: simultaneous inputs in RwL can reduce the student teachers' high FLLA in EL course. The following is the research question guided the article:

1. Is RwL effective to reduce students teachers' high FLLA level in an EL course?

2. Theoretical Framework

The present study examined the effect of reading while listening (RwL) on student teachers' high FLLA in an EL course. EL typically involves large quantities of aural target language input that interests learners and is within their linguistic competence (Renandya & Farrell, 2010; Yeh, 2013). Comprehensible input can be easily understood if the learners gain abundant sources of spoken texts in English according to their proficiency levels. However, in the initial stage of the study, the authors identified that some student teachers' had high FLLA which influenced their listening process in longer spoken texts in an EL course. It was identified that the characteristics of spoken texts such as the main ideas missing, disability to catch the keywords, the speed rate, and little time to process the aural input are the main variables of their FLLA (Chang, 2010). More specifically, the fast rates found in mostly authentic listening materials are identified disturbing the learners' listening comprehension and enhanced their FLLA. Meanwhile, other variables such as teachers' instructional methods and students' and teachers' beliefs contribute less listening anxiety (Vogely, 1998). Kim (2000) points out FLLA negatively correlated with listening comprehension. The higher learners' anxiety level, the least their comprehension will be and vice versa. Reducing student teachers' foreign language listening anxiety is highly urgent as they are required to comprehend the longer aural texts in advanced language proficiency level to be fluent English teachers.

Chang (2010) hypothesized that whether second or foreign language learners listening anxiety could be reduced when listening skills improve. This hypothesis has effectively proved in Lee (2007) that the abundant input in reading has fostered students acquiring English as a second language rather than formal instruction with less input. If reading abundantly is efficient to enhance foreign language learners reading skills, it can be assumed that EL with the aim of developing student teachers' listening comprehension in longer spoken texts could have the same effect on EFL listening skills (Chang, 2010). In order to increase student teachers' comprehension in longer texts and reduce their listening anxiety, the authors proposed incorporating RwL as the instructional input in which they listened to the spoken texts using listening and reading in the same time to build comprehension. According to Chang (2009), RwL is also a listening instructional strategy which aims at enhancing listening comprehension through reading. Reading support has been found to facilitate listener comprehension and also to have some positive psychological effects on listeners' learning. Additionally, Chang (2008) points out that making an adjustment on input reduces the negative effect of listening anxiety. With this, learners cannot only listen to the input once but rather they can make repetition

and dual input for building comprehension and later reducing listening anxiety as the listening supports. This study proposed RwL as the instructional listening inputs in which enabling student teachers listening comprehension while further reducing their FLLA.

3. Method

This two-months experimental study was conducted in the Department of English Education at one of the private universities in East Java, Indonesia in the Academic Year 2017/2018. The department prepares the student teachers to become professional English teachers at both primary and secondary school levels. On the yearly basis, it recruits 80 – 90 student teachers using local admission tests. Ranging from 19 to 22 years old, they attended three days second-semester courses weekly offered by the English Education Department including Listening. Listening as a part of courses offered in the Department generally teach student teachers to have good comprehension on English spoken texts started from the beginning level to advanced level and train them how to use the strategies and skills in teaching listening for preparing their career as English teachers. More specifically, this study was part of the Academic Listening or Advanced Listening course in which they are trained to process the longer spoken texts using dual input for building general understanding. This course also provides listening practices in which they learn identifying general and specific information of long lectures with various fields and discourses including EL.

The present study was designed to examine the effect of RwL in reducing student teachers' FLLA. The distribution of the student teachers' in the Academic Year 2017/2018 was ranged into two classes, IA and IB. Out of 63 student teachers in the Department, 57 student teachers participated in the experiment and 6 student teachers were eliminated from the program because they permitted to not actively come to the weekly meetings because of their busy schedules. This study employed a correlated sample in the experimental study in which 57 high FLLA student teachers were examined their FLLA anxiety levels before and after being taught using RwL. Anchored in Kim (2000) foreign language listening anxiety scale (FLLAS), they were tested their FLLA levels. Their levels of FLLA were then classified into two groups, namely high-level FLLA group, and low-level FLLA group. The FLLAS consisted of 33 statements about their feelings when they listened to English and marked their responses whether: (1) *Not true at all*, (2) *Slightly true* (3) *Moderately true*, or (4) *Very true*.

The participants listened to similar news stories as the EL materials. Additionally, the selection of news stories as the listening materials had previously been in line with

the principles of EL in which student teachers selected them according to their needs and interests through a survey. More specifically, the listening activities comprised of three stages namely the pre-listening stage, whilst-listening stage, and post-listening stage. In the pre-listening stage, the student teachers drilled their previous background knowledge of the topics. This activity aimed at building their initial understanding and generating their previous experiences. In the whilst-listening, they listened to several news stories using RwL. In the post-listening stage, they reflected and summarized their learning. Meanwhile, the FLLA post-test was held to examine whether or not their FLLA was successfully reduced after being taught using RwL input. The scores between pre- and post-test were then compared and analyzed using *t*-test.

4. Findings

To determine high and low student teachers FLLA groups, the authors tabulated their responses on the survey items respectively. The distribution of FLLA survey aimed at classifying student teachers' FLLA levels before the experiment begun into high and low groups. Based on the FLLA survey classification tabulation, there were 57 student teachers involved in FLLA survey. The two FLLA groups were then classified by finding the FLLA average scores of student teachers with the formula of the total scores divided by the number of student teachers. Based on the calculation, it was found that the mean score of FLLA survey was 114. The student FLLA mean score above 114 was classified as the high FLLA student teachers group. Meanwhile, the FLLA score below the mean score was classified as the low FLLA student teachers group. From the calculation, there were 37 participants with high FLLA level and 20 low FLLA level. Additionally, from 33 questions in the questionnaire, the authors analyzed that some variables such as the less opportunity to have repeated listening, the main ideas missing, disability to catch the keywords, the speed rate, and little time to process the aural input were mainly the main contributors for FLLA.

Furthermore, the authors conducted the experimentation for high FLLA student teachers only in EL class using RwL input for eight times. The post-test was given after they were taught using RwL input to know whether or not there was a significantly difference in their FLLA scores compared with their pre-test scores. The comparative analysis between pre- and post-test was then conducted to know the scores differences. The results of student teachers' FLLA in pre- and post-test showed that student teachers' FLLA scores before and after the experimentation using RwL were significantly different.

Their FLLA average score was 100 or 0.23 lower than their previous FLLA average score in pre-test (123). It indicates that RwL can reduce student teachers' FLLA in an EL class.

The comparison of *t*-test was conducted after analyzing the comparative analysis between pre- and post-test scores. Before *t*-test analysis, it is necessary to do *t*-test prerequisite analysis in which the data must be normal and homogenous. Normality test was done by the Liliefors method, and homogeneity was done by *F*-test. It showed that after normality analysis on both FLLA data (before and after RwL data) the obtained L_{count} value for data before RwL is 0.1167 smaller than $L_{table} = 0.1457$. While for data after RwL, the obtained in L_{count} value = 0.1201 Smaller than $L_{table} = 0.1457$. Thus, based on the calculation result it was concluded that the two data are normally distributed. In addition to normality test, it was also conducted the homogeneity test with an *F* test for both data. After the analysis, it was found that the value for $F_{count} = 1.5407$ less than $F_{table} = 1.7295$. Thus, it can be concluded that the two data are homogeneous.

After the data were confirmed to be normal and homogeneous, the two data were then analyzed by one party *t*-test. The one-party *t*-test is a left-side *t*-test. Both data were analyzed to know the t_{count} value and then the value was compared with the t_{table} value. After the analysis, the obtained t_{count} value = -13.9838. The value was smaller than the t_{table} value = -1.9925. From the value obtained, it was concluded that there were differences in FLLA scores. The scores of FLLA after being taught using RwL input were lower. It shows that the scores of FLLA participants' are reduced using RwL as the listening support in an EL course.

5. Discussion

Teaching listening in EFL context, the limited input is not quite sufficient to help student teachers reduce their high FLLA. Buck (2001) pinpoints that learners have limited opportunity to make adjustments once the input begins if they hear the input materials only once. Therefore, the difficulties in listening tasks such as unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, fast speech rates, and unfamiliar accents cannot be clarified. For this reason, listening should be scaffolded by the external support to better comprehend the spoken texts. Reading while listening (RwL) is a kind of listening support by matching the spoken form with the written form and helping develop the skills of auditory discrimination and word recognition (Osada, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007).

Although RwL has been effective in improving learners listening fluency in EL (Chang, 2009, 2011, Chang & Millet, 2013, 2014, 2016; and Chang, Millet & Renandya, 2018), however, the effect of RwL on students' FLLA in EL has not received attention yet. Whether

or not the comprehensible input via RwL was able to reduce learners' FLLA. However, it should not be neglected that the comprehensible inputs are required for learners to acquire language acquisition (Rost, 1994, 2006 as cited in Chang, 2009). For this reason, the present study investigated the effect of simultaneous inputs on learners' FLLA. The result of the study found that high student teachers' FLLA scores were low when they were taught using RwL. It may be concluded that the lower FLLA student teachers levels were influenced by dual input processing of the news stories. They looked motivated because their difficulties in comprehending the fast rates in EL materials were assisted through written verification.

In addition, the effect of FLLA scores depends on the learners' learning foreign language level (Aneiro, 1989; Elkhafaifi, 2005; and Mills et al., 2006). For instance, Alpert and Haber (1960) argue that anxiety may have a debilitating or facilitating effect. Meanwhile, others have shown that high proficient and competent learners may have high anxiety level (Scovel, 1978; Horwitz, 2001). On the contrary, some lower learners may have low anxiety if learning a foreign language has little importance (Chang, 2008). However, this study found that RwL did not only reduce student teachers' high FLLA level, but it also enhanced their comprehension on longer authentic spoken texts in EL. With this in mind, student teachers' FLLA could be reduced because they have comprehended the principles of EL. They are not recently instructed with forms but meaning using the abundant exposures of the authentic spoken texts.

As the main principle of EL is to train student teachers' global comprehension which is frequently found in real life listening, they are now positioned as the active learners. The greater involvement of student teachers' in EL is indicated in term of material selection. Renandya & Jacob (2016) view the learners self-select the listening materials according to their own language proficiency. They chose the materials because they were easy and interesting. For this reason, the self-selected materials encouraged them to add their listening capacity and automaticity in processing the longer spoken texts especially in normal speech rates, both for high and low competent student teachers.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

In conclusion, this study highlights the effect of comprehensible input through RwL on student teachers' FLLA. The application of RwL in an EL class enabled student teachers to reduce their high FLLA because they learn to listen to the listening materials according to their interests. In a broader sense, the levels of FLLA can be reduced by listening support like RwL while enhancing their listening comprehension. Nevertheless, there

are a number of limitations of the present study. First of all, the correlated sample used is not empirically proved to be effective in a greater population. Secondly, the selected samples of EL materials are not applicable to different research settings because every individual or group of learners may have different EL materials so that it influences the result of the study. Thirdly, there may be other factors reducing student teachers' FLLA not only the comprehensible input and listening support (RwL). Fourthly, as the study claimed the effect of RwL on enhancing the student teachers' listening comprehension in its finding beside reducing student teachers' high FLLA level, it did not obviously show listening comprehension scores improvement because it only showed the FLLA scores in pre- and post-test and its analysis.

Further studies are highly recommended to fill the present voids of the study such as whether or not there is a significant difference between the student teachers' low FLLA level with similar EL materials and the effect of student teachers' FLLA and listening comprehension scores after the listening support in RwL is no longer used. Additionally, further investigations on the effect of FLLA levels on different contexts using others listening supports such as repeated listening and listening only with different EL resources also need further study to provide more empirical evidences.

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