

## Research Article

# DEVELOPMENT OF EXTENSIVE LISTENING ACTIVITIES FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF THAI SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## Abstract

This study aimed to 1) investigate the effects of extensive listening on English listening comprehension of Thai secondary students and 2) examine how students listen via extensive listening instruction. Eighteen students from a public secondary school who enrolled in the elective subject were chosen to participate in the 10-week-instruction by convenient sampling. The instruments used to collect data were a listening comprehension test to assess students' listening comprehension for quantitative data, listening journals to explore how students practice English listening outside the classroom and semi-structured interviews to conduct in-depth data qualitatively. It can be concluded that 1) the post-test mean scores of the students from the listening comprehension test were higher than the pre-test mean scores of the students at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ) with a large effect size (Cohen  $d = 1.09$ ) and 2) students who achieved high gain scores reported greater rates of subtitles application, repeated listening strategy, and intrinsic motivation.

**Keywords:** Extensive Listening, Listening Comprehension, Listening Strategies

## Introduction

One of the required skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is effective English communication which plays a vital role even in English as a foreign language (EFL) context, where English proficiency of students has been emphasized by teachers and educators (Suwannasit, 2019, pp. 345-346). Thailand is also one of the countries with policy intended to enhance students' communicative competences, yet the main method used in most public schools is grammar translation (Padermprach, 2017, p. 6; Tieocharoen & Rimkeeratikul, 2019, p. 101).

According to the policy emphasized on communicative approach, the very first skill that should be developed in Thai students is listening, as Vandergrift (2011, p. 455) described that listening is considered the most crucial skill for L2 language learning, as it attributes language rules and promotes other language skills acquisition. However, listening problems were reported widely and claimed as one of the most difficult skills by Thai students (Chaibao, 2017, pp. 11; Chonprakay as cited in Khamprated, 2012, pp. 16). These issues were caused by the lack of effective instruction, including the overuse of traditional methods and the inefficient

exposure of students to the targeted language according to its EFL context (Kaur et al., 2016, p. 354; Simasangyaporn, 2016, p. 7; Tantihachai, 2016, p. 26).

The top listening problems found in general and Thai contexts relevant with perception process includes 1) the speech rate is too fast for listeners, 2) listeners are unable to recognize words in the stream of sound, and 3) listeners are unfamiliar with the variability of language features in the spoken forms, such as fillers or fixed phrases (Bibby, 2020, p. 2; Chaibao, 2017, p. 29; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016, pp. 6-7; Suwannasit, 2019, pp. 345-346). These issues could be solved by repetitive practice and extensive exposure to materials from various sources or an extensive listening approach.

Extensive listening shares many characteristics with extensive reading, which aims to expose students to massive amounts of intelligible and pleasurable materials (Extensive reading foundation, 2011, p. 12). Even though extensive listening has not been widely researched, its benefits have been acknowledged to develop students' overall listening competencies in many studies (Chang et al., 2014, pp.37-38; Ivone & Renandya, 2019, pp. 240-241; Takaesu, 2017, pp. 117-118). Most of the previous studies had implemented extensive listening mainly with tertiary level students. Therefore, this study would like to investigate the effectiveness of extensive listening approach in a Thai public secondary school context.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the effect of extensive listening instruction on students' listening comprehension.
2. To examine how students listen via extensive listening instruction.

## **Literature Review**

Extensive listening is an approach aiming at exposing students to massive amount of listening input, by facilitating variety of materials suitable with their English proficiency levels and interests (Ivone & Renandya, 2019, p. 237). The approach was developed from the success of extensive reading (ER), it was anticipated that the strategy would also improve listening skill. Therefore, extensive listening (EL) which shares many characteristics with extensive reading was proposed (Holden, 2008, p. 304).

### **Benefits of Extensive Listening**

Even with limited numbers of empirical studies, extensive listening is acknowledged to aid the development of various skills including, motivation, listening comprehension, listening fluency, learning independence, and other language skills (Ivone & Renandya, 2019, pp. 240-241). Many studies witnessed its usefulness in enhancing students' language skills, such as in Melani (2020, pp. 129), where the enhancement of Indonesian students' listening comprehension was reported. Similarly, another study showed the Arab students' vocabulary and listening comprehension improvement (Masrai, 2020, p. 55). Also, Takaesu (2017, p. 108) reported the enhancement of students on listening comprehension and motivation. Besides approving its effectiveness, these studies also displayed the increasing trends of extensive listening in EFL/ESL contexts.

### Principles of Extensive Listening

Renandya and Day (2020, p. 12) suggested adopting these most often used principles of extensive reading into extensive listening principles comprise: 1) personal pleasure, 2) quantity, 3) variety, 4) comprehensibility. However, there are a wide range of principles adapted in order to meet the uniqueness of their contexts, as the best instruction should consider the differences of contexts, learners, and other relevant factors. Hence, this study synthesized extensive reading principles by Day and Bamford (2002, p. 138) and extensive listening principles by Mayora (2017, pp. 102) and Melanie (2020, pp. 130) into new extensive listening principles: 1) personal pleasure, 2) quantity, 3) variety, 4) comprehensibility, 5) accountability, and 6) teacher's support.

Based on these principles, nine teaching guidelines were generated to be the instructional guidelines. Teaching procedures were consequently developed. Then, the lesson plans were designed covering the principles, the teaching guidelines, and the teaching procedures respectively.

### Research Methodology

**Population:** There were 1,460 upper secondary students who were studying in regular program (non-English program) at an extra-large public secondary school in the central region of Thailand. The school provided a total of 13 majors for upper secondary levels.

**Sample Group:** The participants were chosen by convenient sampling. They were 18 students from various majors who enrolled in 10<sup>th</sup> grade elective subject: *English in daily life*, in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2020 academic year. Thus, the class was English mixed ability ranged from lower to upper intermediate levels.

#### Research Instrument

##### 1. Instructional instrument

**Lesson Plans;** there were 8 lesson plans designed following the number of weeks implemented. In addition, activities suggested for extensive reading were also adapted into these lesson plans (Bamford & Day, 2004, pp. 1-210). The Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) forms were given to 3 experts to validate the lesson plan by rating 0.66-1 in all items, which indicated the propriety of the lesson plan.

All the lesson plans were conformed to the teaching procedures of extensive listening instruction. They were developed by the researcher herself. Their stages and details were designed to conform to the principles and the teaching guidelines of extensive listening instruction respectively. The teaching procedures consisted of a total of five stages: four stages were conducted inside the classroom and the last stage was assigned for activities outside the classroom. The detail of each step is shown in figure 1.

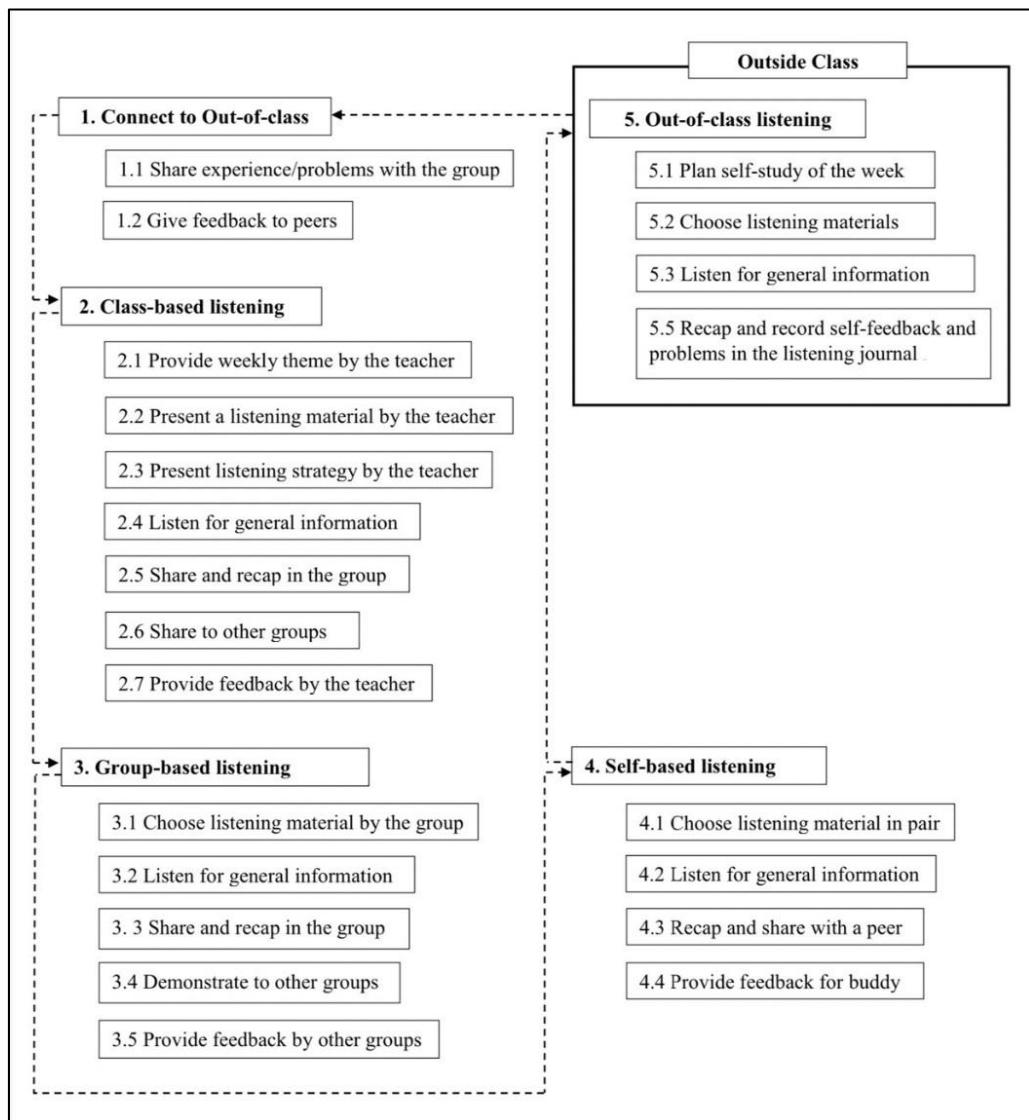
Stage 1 (Connect to out-of-class), students shared their listening experiences, listening journal records, or problems they confronted in small groups of 3-4 people. Their group members were expected to provide some constructive and useful feedback.

Stage 2 (Class-based listening), teacher provided a weekly theme and pre-selected material, presented some strategies or games, then the class practiced listening together.

Stage 3 (Group-based listening), students worked in small group activities, members selected material, practiced together at their own pace, and demonstrated their tasks assigned. Each group was encouraged to provide feedback to other groups.

Stage 4 (Self-based listening), students worked in pairs, selected materials together, listened individually, recapped together, and then provided feedback to each other.

Stage 5 (Out-of-class listening), students were required to individually plan and practice outside the classroom under the weekly theme given. In addition, they were also required to record their practices in the listening journals.



**Figure 1** Teaching Procedures of Extensive Listening

## 2. Research Instruments

**2.1 Listening Comprehension Test** was designed to assess students' listening comprehension before and after the implementation. The test was adapted from the Apt is listening test, it consisted of four parts: 1) information recognition, 2) finding key information, 3) connecting Information, and 4) making inference.

The test contained 25 multiple-choice items relevant to English usage in daily life topics. The time allotment was 45 minutes. To gain reliability, three experts validated the test by rating 0.66-1 in all IOC items which indicated that the test was reliable.

**2.2 Listening Journal** aimed to examine how students listen via extensive listening and to monitor students' listening practice outside the classroom throughout the 8-week implementation. The listening journal was a single template worksheet consisted of five parts: 1) planning, 2) general information, 3) summarization, 4) self-assessment and recommendation, and 5) problems and solutions. The structure of the listening journal was evaluated by three experts which were rated +1 for all the IOC items.

Based on the post-test, the gain scores were ranged by using mean into 3 levels, high, medium, and low score. The top three students from each group range were conducted their listening journals in order to understand more about how students listen via extensive listening instruction.

**2.3 Semi-structured Interview** was administered after the post-test. The interviewees were the same subjects as the listening journals' representatives. These top three students from each group range were selected for the interview and conducted listening journals, both data were compared and analyzed to explore in-depth information on how students listen via extensive listening instruction. The questionnaire comprised 10 open-ended questions using Thai language in order to eliminate the language barrier. The interview was validated by three experts with IOC rating 0.66-1.

#### **Data Collection**

The participants were informed about the study before they participated in the implementation. They were unanimously consented to be subjects in this research. The data was implemented based on the following steps:

1. Pre-test: prior to study, the subjects were required to do a pre-test on listening comprehension. The scores were collected to compare with the post-test.

2. Orientation: after the pre-test, the subjects were introduced to extensive listening instruction, principles, objectives, assessment, listening journal, how to select proper materials, and how to record their practices in the listening journals.

3. Instruction: the 8-week extensive listening instruction was given through 8 lesson plans. The subjects were required to practice both inside and outside the classroom. After the implementation, their 8-week-listening journals were also submitted.

4. Post-test: at the end of the course, the subjects were required to do the post-test. The scores were analyzed and compared to the pre-test.

5. Semi-structured interview and listening journals: based on score from the listening test. The gain scores were ranged by using mean into 3 levels, high-, medium-, and low score. The top three students from each group range were selected for the interview and conducted listening journals, both data were compared and analyzed to understand more about how students listen via extensive listening instruction.

### Data Analysis

1. Quantitative data; the pre-test and post-test scores were compared and analyzed by using Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test due to the small number of participants, followed by the effect size calculation (Cohen, 1977, p. 20).
2. Qualitative data; the data from listening journal and semi-structured interview were compared, analyzed, and described by using content analysis.

### Research Results

The results of the study were presented into two sections based on the research objectives as follows:

**1. To investigate the effect of extensive listening instruction on students' listening comprehension**

As shown in Table 1, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was utilized to analyze the data, the pre-test mean was 7.94 (SD = 4.02), whereas the post-test mean was 13.55 (SD = 6.03). The sign indicated that there was significant difference between pre- and post-test. The result could be concluded that students' listening comprehension significantly developed with a large effect size (Cohen d = 1.09) after the implementation.

**Table 1** A holistic comparison between the pre-test and post-test of listening comprehension

Test	Max	Mean	Median	SD	z	Sig.	Effect Size	N=18
Pre-test	18	7.94	7	4.02				
Post-test	25	13.55	12	6.03	-3.52*	0.000	1.09	

\*P ≤ .05

Regarding the four aspects of listening comprehension, Table 2 shows the comparison of each aspect. Students gained the highest mean score in information recognition (1.33) with a large effect (Cohen d = 0.80), followed by connecting information (1.20) with a medium effect (Cohen d = 0.78), making inference (1.13) with a medium effect (Cohen d = 0.64), and finding key information (0.67) with a small effect (Cohen d = 0.38) respectively.

Overall, the results indicated that English listening comprehension of Thai secondary school students increased remarkably across all four aspects after the implementation of extensive listening instruction.

**Table 2** An analytical comparison between the pre-test and post-test of listening comprehension

N=18

	Pretest		Posttest		Gains	z	Effect Size
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD			
Information recognition	2.53	1.45	3.86	1.84	1.33	-2.62*	0.80
Finding key information	1.93	1.22	2.60	2.16	0.67	-1.90*	0.67
Connecting information	2.06	0.79	3.26	2.01	1.20	-1.98*	0.78
Making inference	2.20	1.65	3.33	1.87	1.13	-1.84*	0.64

\*P≤ .05

## 2. To examine how students listen via extensive listening instruction

Based on the data obtained from the listening journals and the semi-structured interview, both data were analyzed and compared to investigate their listening practices. The results would be presented in two parts: 1) An analysis of listening journals, and (2) An analysis of semi-structured interview.

### 2.1 An Analysis of Listening Journals

Listening journals revealed that students from each group practiced similarly on the aspects of listening quantity and prior planning. Most of the students practiced merely about 40 materials just to meet the minimum requirement, with the duration of each clip or video between 2-28 minutes similarly. The total amounts from each group varied between 296-427 minutes, there was one student spent up to 684 minutes which outperformed the high score group. However, in the high score group, their subtitles used was found to be nearly 100 percentages, and their repetition to one material was at 2-4 times. Whereas, other groups were merely 1-3 times. In addition, their main listening strategies used were identical comprise re-listen, find main idea, and image.

### 2.2 An Analysis of Semi-structured Interview

The findings from the semi structured interview were in line with the listening journals. Correspondingly, the participants from three groups reported their listening practices conforming to the six principles, there was no significant difference found. Nevertheless, the high score group confirmed the necessity of subtitle toward their listening, as it assisted them to overcome some listening difficulties and gained more understanding on materials. In contrast, two students from the low score group reported their attempts in avoiding subtitles usage.

The benefits of strategies were highlighted among all three groups. Especially, the high score group, they verified their exceeding practices on listening repetition and their similarity of main strategies used, namely, 1) re-listen, 2) find main idea, and 3) picture. The majority of them also reported the changes in their listening behavior, they mentioned utilizing more strategies in their listening.

In addition, all of nine students claimed their intrinsic motivation in practice English listening, which was the intention to develop English skills. As respondent B said, “I wanted to be better at English, especially in listening, which I started off from 0 level”. Similarly, respondent H said, “I wanted to practice my

English skills. Before the class, I didn't know how and where to start". Apparently, their motivation was clear due to their choices in the course enrollment from variety of subjects provided.

There were only two students reported their extrinsic motivation, which were their intention to work and study abroad. As respondent E stated, "I wanted to be good at English. I intended to go study or work abroad in the future" and respondent G who said that "Next year, I will try to get a scholarship to study abroad, so I tried to develop my English skills".

Remarkably, all three students from high score group reported their disappointment in the pre-test as their driven force to develop their listening practices. Respondent A described that "I did quite bad in the pre-test, it was embarrassing for me, so in the posttest, I was very attentive" as well as participant B who claimed that "I got very low score in the pre-test, I was so sad, so I practiced a lot". Therefore, it could be concluded that most of the students in this study were driven by intrinsic motivation, especially the high score group.

## Discussion

This study aimed at finding effects of extensive listening on listening comprehension and how students practice via extensive listening. The study demonstrated that students' listening comprehension was significantly enhanced by receiving extensive listening instruction. Students among three groups revealed their similar practices via extensive listening instruction. The high score group reported some notable higher rates of their practices on subtitles used, strategies, and motivation. The discussion is based on the 4 aspects from the findings: 1) the effects of extensive listening on listening comprehension, 2) extensive listening and subtitles, 3) extensive listening and listening strategies, and 4) extensive listening and motivation.

### **1. The effects of extensive listening on listening comprehension**

The study demonstrates that the students' listening comprehension was significantly developed through extensive listening instruction. The development is profited from their exposure to numerous amounts of comprehensible and noticeable English listening materials. Comprehensibility, sheer volume of materials and how interesting these inputs were the key factors for language and literacy development as Krashen et al. (2018, pp. 1-3) described in the comprehension hypothesis that to develop language acquisition, besides interesting enough to grasp students' attention, the input must also be comprehensible. In this way, language acquisition will occur when students are exposed to massive amounts of compelling and interesting input both consciously and subconsciously. This comprehension hypothesis conforms to the principles of extensive listening approach. Therefore, the development of students' listening comprehension could be evidently concluded to enhance by exposing to massive amounts of comprehensive and interesting materials.

### **2. Extensive listening and subtitles**

The exceeding of subtitles application in the high score group indicated its contribution on students' listening comprehension. This finding aligns with the study of Chang et al. (2019, p. 436) which compared students' listening comprehension among read only, listening only, and reading while listening plus listening only groups. The results showed that the students in the reading while listening plus listening only

group could comprehend more difficult and complicated materials at higher levels. The study highly recommended supporting textual support for difficult materials to develop students' levels of comprehension, as could be argued that in easy materials, other supports are less necessary, but when spoken texts contained complexity and faster speech rates, variety of methods are required to contribute their comprehension. Renandya and Day (2020, p. 15) also recommended the integration between extensive listening and extensive reading approaches, with the belief that students will gain dual advantages in developing both listening and reading skills. However, Yeldham (2016, p. 31) suggested that the use of subtitles do not prepare students for daily life basis, if they are only stimulated to depend solely on supporting texts, instead, the combination of various modalities used should be applied in listening practices.

### **3. Extensive listening and listening strategies**

All the students verified the necessity of listening strategies in their listening practices, as these strategies contributed their better understanding of the listening materials. Some students even anticipated their failure without using strategies. This finding supported the statement of Vandergrift (1999) that the application of listening strategies are necessary to help students deal with difficult materials, maximize learning input, and contribute higher achievement in language learning. One of the most popular listening strategies, repetitive practice or repeated listening was highlighted in the high score group, with between 90-100 percentages. This finding is in line with Chang & Read (2006, pp. 375), where the students could deal with problems by repetition.

Also, the resemblance of main strategies used was found in the high score group, namely, image, re-listen, and find main idea. The students drilled heavily on constructing imaginary pictures, grasping the important parts, and repeating to understand the materials more. Accordingly, the strategies used clearly contributed to their gains, as they achieved greater listening comprehension in all aspects, especially finding key information and making inference.

However, Yeldham (2016, p. 31) pointed out that the excessive of one strategy or too frequent used of strategies practices led to demotivation in students, as they usually found them boring. To avoid excess, he suggested teachers combine and balance strategies application in proper ways. Similar to Renandya and Day (2020, p. 10), they suggested teachers emphasize class time on actual listening practice and spend just a little time presenting strategies as tools to cope with listening difficulties.

### **4. Extensive listening and motivation**

Intrinsic motivation to practice English listening was found in all the students. Especially in the high-scoring group, which was driven by the taste of pre-test failure to enhance their competences. This finding was aligned with Deci et al. (1981, p. 2), which explained that self- perceived competence can affect intrinsic motivation, if there is self-determination concerned. It could be described that, once the high score group students were aware of their low pre-test scores, their self-determination or their desires to be competent took a huge part in driving their intrinsic motivation. As a result, the students reported their strong intention to develop themselves.

Moreover, allowing students to regulate themselves and providing engaging or satisfying materials can also increase students' intrinsic motivation. In contrast, amotivation occurs once students feel that materials are not relevant, uninteresting, and too difficult (Bernard, pp. 4-6). Similarly, Ivone and Renandy (2019, p. 243) recommended that pleasant materials could also attract their intrinsic motivation, as it can motivate them to focus and involve more on materials as well as encourage them to continue listening. Accordingly, the activities and materials provided in this study were fitted with these conditions, so it could be related to the increases of their intrinsic motivation as well. This study is consistent with Black and Deci (2000, p. 751) which confirmed that students who were more intrinsically motivated performed better in the classroom which were influenced by positive experiences and enjoyment of the course.

Furthermore, there were merely two subjects revealed in their extrinsic motivation, which were their intention to work and study abroad. Therefore, it could be summarized that intrinsic motivation had stronger effect on the outcomes in this study. However, Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010, p. 376) stated that both intrinsic and extrinsic were interrelated in supporting students. Similar to Day (2018, p. 1), he suggested teachers to create an environment that provide extrinsic motivation for students, such as score or reward. For short, motivation took a huge part in developing students' learning skills, even intrinsic had more efficient effects, yet extrinsic was also beneficial and undeniable. Teachers should find ways to support both kinds of motivation.

## **Recommendations**

1. According to the results, further experimental study on how supporting texts, listening strategies, and motivation can influence the effects of extensive listening on students' listening comprehension is highly recommended.
2. Further research may extend the experimental period as well as enlarge numbers of participants for more reliable and more accurate results. Besides, more studies across different socio-economic layers of Thai students and levels of Thai students are also recommended.
3. Extensive listening approach could be applied to various programs. Further study can design this approach as a course, an extra-curricular activity, or an addition to a course.

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