

Input hypotheses for developing EFL/ESL learners' listening comprehension skills

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to examine the significance of the input hypothesis in enhancing the listening comprehension abilities of EFL/ESL learners. The methodology employed in this study is a critical literature review. This entailed a comprehensive search for relevant articles and other sources, a meticulous reading of the material, the categorization of data, a thorough analysis, and the synthesis of findings. The findings of this study indicate that the input hypothesis plays an essential role in developing ESL/EFL learners' listening comprehension abilities through the acquisition of comprehensible inputs. The activation of linguistic background knowledge enables EFL/ESL learners to develop pronunciation skills, understanding of grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and meaning. Optimizing the inputs of the listening strategy (cognitive, metacognitive, socio-affective) assists EFL/ESL learners in activating their memory about listening materials. This is achieved through making inferences, elaborations, summaries, translations, observations, assessments, and becoming involved in the community. Inputs from media, audio (visual), and practices can develop EFL/ESL learners' cognition, motivation, stimulating perception, activating prior knowledge. In conclusion, the components of the comprehensible inputs must be integrated and developed in a coordinated manner during the teaching and learning process of listening skills.

Keywords: Linguistic background knowledge, listening strategies, audio media

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji signifikansi dari hipotesis input dalam meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman menyimak pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Kedua (ESL) dan Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Metodologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah tinjauan literatur kritis. Hal ini memerlukan pencarian yang komprehensif untuk artikel yang relevan dan sumber-sumber lain, pembacaan materi yang cermat, kategorisasi data, analisis menyeluruh, dan sintesis temuan. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa hipotesis input memainkan peran penting dalam kemajuan kemampuan pemahaman mendengarkan peserta didik ESL / EFL melalui akuisisi input yang dapat dipahami. Aktivasi pengetahuan latar belakang linguistik memungkinkan pelajar ESL/ESL untuk mengembangkan kemampuan pelafalan, pemahaman akan keakuratan tata bahasa, sumber daya leksikal, dan makna. Mengoptimalkan input dari strategi mendengarkan (kognitif, metakognitif, sosio-afektif) membantu pelajar EFL/ESL dalam mengaktifkan ingatan tentang materi mendengarkan. Hal ini dicapai dengan membuat kesimpulan, elaborasi, rangkuman, terjemahan, observasi, penilaian, dan terlibat dalam komunitas. Masukan dari media, audio (visual), dan praktik memainkan peran penting dalam mengembangkan kognisi pembelajar EFL/ESL, meningkatkan motivasi, menstimulasi persepsi, dan mengaktifkan pengetahuan sebelumnya. Sebagai kesimpulan, temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa untuk mengembangkan kompetensi peserta didik EFL/ESL dalam pemahaman menyimak, komponen-komponen dari input yang dapat dipahami harus diintegrasikan dan dikembangkan secara terkoordinasi selama proses belajar mengajar keterampilan menyimak.

Kata kunci: Pengetahuan latar belakang linguistik, strategi mendengarkan, media audio

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INTRODUCTION

In learning or acquiring English as Foreign Language (EFL) or English as Second Language (ESL), input hypothesis has become the fundamental pedagogical model. It is thus

imperative that EFL/ESL learners be exposed to the requisite linguistic inputs. The input hypotheses concern with the messages received by EFL/ESL learners through listening, reading, and practice (Krashen, 1991) with the purpose of facilitating the development of language proficiency and linguistic competence, including language form and meaning (White 1987), vocabulary and spelling (Gregg & Krashen, 1986). Thus, the input hypothesis postulates that learners exhibit advancement in their linguistic abilities when they are exposed to language input that is slightly more sophisticated than their current proficiency level. Krashen and Terrell (1985) denotes this level of input as "i+1," where "i" symbolizes the learner's second language and "+1" refers to the subsequent phase of language acquisition.

Ortega (2009) proposed comprehensible input theory for the second language learners to comprehend linguistic data. This argument is based on the conceptual understanding that input hypothesis postulates that human language acquisition occurs exclusively through understanding communicative messages or through the receipt of comprehensible input (Gallaway & Richards, 1994). Particularly, Krahnke (1985) emphasized second language learners require to understand input language as Taft (2003) documented such as sounds, language forms and language meaning which are deeply comprehensible as input hypothesis in English language learning particularly in developing ESL/EFL learners' listening skills. Thus, it is widely acknowledged that listening plays a pivotal role in English language acquisition. The ability to comprehend language is contingent upon the capacity to hear, process sounds, and language structures. This serves as the foundation for language input, underscoring the critical role that listening plays in developing EFL/ESL learners' listening skills.

Listening comprehension is one of the basic skills in learning English, the practicality of new languages supported by the input hypotheses (Osada, 2004), the receptive skills (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Moreover, listening comprehension can be technically defined as a psychomotor process whereby sound waves are received and conveyed as nerve impulses to the brain (Hasan et al., 2018), requires language literacy and linguistics comprehension (Gregg & Krashen, 1986). Therefore, ESL/EFL learners need to be obtaining comprehension of those factors before developing English productive skills linguistics abilities (Hasan et al., 2018), such as writing and speaking skills.

Furthermore, EFL/ESL learners gains insights into the language sounds, form, and meaning through developing listening comprehension skills. For example, listening to the English songs could improve EFL/ESL learners in language accent (Muhammed, 2024), understanding of word-formation (Latupono & Nikijuluw, 2022). Moreover, the development of listening skills plays an instrumental role in the acquisition of a multitude of linguistic competencies. These include the ability to accurately pronounce words, comprehend the internal structure of words, discern the relationships between words, interpret words, signs, sentence structure, derive the meaning of a sentence, construct phrases and words into grammatically correct sentences, and comprehend the nuances of word order in different contexts (Ambubuyog et al., 2023). Nevertheless, a number of factors continue to impede the development of students' listening comprehension, including a lack of proficiency in the English language, a low level of interest in learning, affective factors, a lack of background knowledge, and the absence of appropriate listening strategies and methods, frequently experience frustration (Zhang, 2012). Furthermore,

EFL/ESL learners continue to encounter challenges related to their background knowledge, cognitive abilities, motivation, and effective communication skills (Kharzhevskaya et al., 2019).

This study is based on the aforementioned problems and background elaboration and attempts to investigate the significant role of input hypotheses in developing EFL/ESL learners' competence in listening. The research question is twofold: first, what are the comprehensible inputs that must be acquired or learned by EFL/ESL learners in order to develop their listening skills, and second, how are those types acquired or learned? The data is analyzed through a comprehensive review of relevant previous studies and other related sources concerning the development of listening comprehension, reading between the lines, grouping and categorizing, analyzing and synthesizing. The hypothesis is that comprehensible input is a key factor in enabling EFL/ESL learners to develop their listening comprehension and other language skills in the context of English language learning.

METHOD

This study employs critical literature review methodology with the objective of analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, contradictions, controversies, and inconsistencies of previous research findings and related topics (Lau & Kuziemyk, 2016). This analysis aims to provide an overview of input hypotheses in developing EFL/ESL learners' competence in listening skills. Lau and Kuziemyk (2016) put forth a series of interconnected steps, including the formulation of research questions and objectives, the search, screening, and assessment of relevant sources, and the extraction and analysis of data. Moreover, the process is conducted through several interrelated procedures as proposed by Snyder (2019), including the following steps: The preliminary phase of the review process involves outlining the elements of the literature review and selecting the subjects to be examined. The second stage of the process entails a review of previous studies and related sources based on the selected topics, subtopics, and themes. The third stage is the analysis of the data, which is conducted by comparing and synthesizing based on the provided themes. The fourth stage is the composition of the review, which is undertaken with precision and in a methodical fashion based on the identification of recurrent themes within related articles and other pertinent resources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The critical literature review focuses on the significant role of the types of comprehensible inputs in developing EFL/ESL learners' competence in listening.

Table 1. Linguistics background knowledge inputs

Comprehensible inputs	Study	Variables	Findings
Vocabulary and lexical understanding.	Nguyen and Boers (2018)	The effect of content retelling on vocabulary from Ted Talk	The number of new words learned from the TED Talk remains modest, even though vocabulary learning from such sources is a promising area of study.

	Hu and Jiang (2011)	Applying priming methods to L2 learning.	Auditory input can improve the ability to understand word meaning.
Phonology and pronunciation competence	Li and Zhang (2019)	L2 vocabulary knowledge and L2 listening comprehension	Language accent play crucial role in the development of English listening comprehension
	Büyükahıska and Uyar (2019)	The effects of different accents on listening comprehension in EFL classes.	Understanding the language accent enables EFL/ESL learners to comprehend the phonological awareness.
Syntax/sentence construction competence	Mirzaei and Meshgi (2020)	Sentence complexity as an indicator of L2 learners' listening difficulty	Understanding the lexical and syntactic surprisal helps EFL/ESL learners to overcome L2 listening difficulty.
	Gottardo et al. (2018)	Unpacking listening comprehension: the role of vocabulary, morphological awareness, and syntactic knowledge	Listening comprehension as one of the key skills that is related to reading comprehension in the areas of morphological awareness and syntactic knowledge.
Semantic/ language meaning	Li and Zhang (2019)	L2 vocabulary knowledge and L2 listening comprehension.	Effective listening comprehension necessitates the processing of incoming linguistic data and the integration of that data with pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and general lexical knowledge in an efficient manner. The development of contextualized semantic integration skills facilitates the enhancement of listening comprehension abilities

Table 2. Listening strategies inputs

Comprehensible inputs	Study	Variables	Findings
Cognitive strategy	Krebt (2013)	The effect of proposed teaching listening strategies programme	Six listening strategies : analyzing/reasoning, imagery, inferencing/guessing, rehearsal/repetition, selective attention, and transfer/translate.
Metacognitive strategies	Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011)	Factors affecting Listening comprehension and the strategies for improvement.	self – monitoring, self – evolution, and direct attention
Socio – affective strategy	Shamshiri and Noordin (2009)	Effects of socio-affective strategy training on listening comprehension	Test familiarity, risk taking, self-confidence, peer learning, more interaction can lead to the development of listening comprehension.
Media, audio (visual) inputs, and practice.	Zarei and Parhizkari (2017)	Media literacy and listening comprehension	Media literacy are closely inter-related, and that the integration of these two can enable learners to develop better understanding of both new media and language.
	Woottipong (2014)	Using video materials in the teaching of listening skills.	The incorporation of authentic video materials has been demonstrated to enhance students' listening comprehension abilities. This is due to the combination of visual images and sound, which stimulate perceptions and facilitate comprehension.

Linguistics background knowledge Inputs

Mahmoudi (2017) hypothesized that English foreign language learners are expected to activate their background knowledge related to the linguistic features. This process has been considered essential for the purpose of developing their understanding concerning the listening comprehension materials. Idrissova et al. (2015) documented that developing the background knowledge covers the language accent/pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, context based vocabulary or lexical resources, sentence constructions, types of meaning. Similarly, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) confirmed that to advance the listening

comprehension skills, EFL/ESL learners need to be competent in linguistics components (*phonemes, morphemes, and semantic, and syntactic structure*). Thus, Mahmoudi (2017) stated educators must be able to develop new schema or background knowledge related to a specific topic in which EFL/ESL learners could comprehend the linguistics features as researched documented that in developing listening skills, EFL/ESL learners must be capable to construct the words formation (Hu & Jiang, 2011), lexical comprehension, syntactic structure, phonological proficiency, cognitive and metacognitive and socio affective strategies (Ramli et al., 2019).

Vocabulary / lexical understanding

The vocabulary of a language plays a significant role in the development of listening comprehension in second/foreign language learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1985), since vocabulary and lexical items are fundamental to the development of listening proficiency and should be a primary focus for language learners (Nguyen & Boers, 2018 ; Krahnke, 1985). Therefore, EFL/ESL learners must be taught to understand the contextualized vocabulary, the process whereby a word gains acceptance into the individual's mental vocabulary, achieved through auditory analysis (Hu & Jiang, 2011). Krahnke (1985) also affirmed that vocabulary is learned through the acquisition of comprehensible input, whereby new words are integrated into the learner's lexicon when encountered in oral or written utterances or within sentences that can be understood without difficulty. Furthermore, Ramli et al. (2019) revealed, vocabulary knowledge and grammar proficiency have been demonstrated to be significant determinants of L2 listening performance and the greater a student's ability to recognize words, the more potential they possess for enhancing their L2 listening comprehension. Hence, listening input provides learners with the different types of knowledge required for language learning: phonology, grammar, vocabulary, language use.

Phonology/ pronunciation competence

The development of English listening comprehension is significantly influenced by the structure of the English phonological system (Li & Zhang, 2019). In contrast to the position advanced by Büyükahıska and Uyar (2019), which suggests that the practice of listening skills based on a specific accent may present certain disadvantages for learners in terms of linguistic abilities. However, EFL/ESL learners need to comprehend the phonological system as it is a key predictor of subsequent English listening comprehension (Li & Zhang, 2012). Consequently, to enhance students' phonological proficiency, it is imperative to furnish comprehensive elucidations of the distinctive attributes of each phoneme, pronunciation exercise that integrate the sounds, differentiate between disparate words with a singular sound, reiterate and rewrite the spoken words or sentences (Kharzhevskaya et al., 2019). Moreover, it is anticipated that EFL/ESL learners must be able to diagnose speech sounds in accordance with the findings of Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) that includes the ability to recognize sounds based on their recognition of word forms, group sounds based on their similarities, to code sounds in accordance with established conventions.

Syntax / sentence construction competence

It is of the utmost importance that EFL/ESL learners are encouraged to develop their syntactical and sentence-building abilities. This competence enables EFL/ESL learners to understand the form and meaning of each sentence construction found in the listening texts (Gottardo et al., 2018), and to avoid the misunderstanding of meaning paraphrasing process (Mirzaei & Meshgi, 2020). Ramli et al. (2019) posit that comprehension of sentence construction in listening texts constitutes a significant component of linguistic knowledge, and that it is a key factor in enhancing students' listening abilities. This can be developed by decomposing each sentence in the listening text based on the syntactic structure that determines the relationship between each word (Li & Zhang, 2019). Thus, Krashen (1991) posits that when learners comprehend the input and are exposed to a sufficient quantity of it, the requisite grammar will become accessible to them.

Semantic / language meaning competence

In this context, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) learners are expected to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of semantic incorporation. This entails utilizing lexical and syntactic constructions in conjunction with pragmatic and sociolinguistics knowledge to arrive at sentence interpretations (Li & Zhang, 2019). This is equal importance is given to input in the sorting out semantics, in learning the grammar of a language, and in learning the lexical meaning (Gass, 2011). Therefore, the integration of meaning can facilitate the development of pedagogical competence of EFL/ESL learners as listening comprehension requires the processing of understanding linguistics data in conjunction with the integration of that data with pragmatic, sociolinguistics, and general lexical knowledge, to achieve comprehensive listening skills.

Listening strategies inputs

Listening competence is a multifaceted ability that necessitates deliberate practice to be fully acquired (Liubinienė, 2009) done through some strategies that will assist EFL/ESL learners in translating English input and thereby enhance their English language learning progress (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). The research demonstrated that EFL/ESL learners could integrate cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategy that includes visualization, prediction, imagery, word recognition, inferencing, utilization of person knowledge, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and directed attention (Irgin & Erten, 2020).

Cognitive strategy

Listening comprehension is a complex cognitive operation which requires the use of working memory of cognitive linguistics competence (Kim & Phillips, 2014) in a listening comprehension strategy. The implementation of this strategy is developed through transforming, repeating and summarizing the listening materials (Zonoubi, 2020), visualization, prediction imagery, word recognition, and inferencing (Maden & Önal, 2020). Thus, it can be reasonably deduced that the discrepancies in listening comprehension outcomes are attributable to the deployment of disparate cognitive strategies (Yousefi, 2011) and the EFL/ESL learners can practice the strategies such as

inference, elaboration, imagery, summarization, translation, transference, and repetition exercises (Krebt, 2013).

Metacognitive strategy

Metacognitive strategies are techniques employed by EFL/ESL learners to facilitate the learning process consisting of planning, observation, and assessment (Krebt, 2013), self-regulating (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Zarrabi, 2016), monitoring, evaluation (Maden & Önal, 2020) and instructional design (Whitehead, 2020). Metacognitive strategy is beneficial for EFL/ESL learners to apply more suitable methods for successful listening comprehension (Ramli et al., 2019) and to activate linguistics background knowledge (Okmawati, 2021; Ramli et al., 2019) done through developing the systematic independent learning (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). The study has indicated that there is a noteworthy interrelationship between metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy concerning listening comprehension in the context of learning English as a foreign or second language (Ramli et al., 2019). Therefore, input of listening strategies impacted positively on the meta-cognitive listening strategies awareness for EFL/ESL learners. Furthermore, developing EFL/ESL learners comprehension skills can be achieved through videos engagement. The research showed that EFL/ESL learners who participated in online video self-dictation generation activity demonstrated a significantly higher level of proficiency in listening comprehension as evidenced by their performance on the listening comprehension test (Chang & Chang, 2014).

Socio - affective strategy

This strategy is of paramount importance for English language learners and must be practised with full engagement in the social life of the community. EFL/ESL learners listeners are occupied in communication with English speaker to accomplish the community and affective experiments of listening occurrences. The research by Shamshiri & Noordin, (2009a) discovered that the opportunity for interaction within the IELTS learning community is beneficial for those engaged in the process of developing their proficiency in IELTS Listening. As a result, the socio-affective strategy offers learners of English as a Foreign Language/Second Language (EFL/ESL) the chance to become involved in their local communities, thus developing their capacity to comprehend a range of spoken language in a technical context, including feedback, upward inflection, inquiries for clarification, and the regulation of their emotional state (Liubinienė, 2009).

Media, audio (visual) inputs, and practice.

Zarei and Parhizkari (2017) posited that media, in both audio and visual formats, facilitates the enhancement of EFL/ESL learners' comprehension of language functions within media contexts. It can be reasonably deduced that EFL/ESL learners would benefit from access to mobile assisted language learning, YouTube, podcasts, Vodcasts, games, and online dictionaries. This is due to the fact that such resources offer a combination of visual images and sound, which have been proven to stimulate perceptions and motivation, thereby improving cognitive development in listening comprehension (Woottipong, 2014). Moreover, the research found that the implementation of extensive listening exercises with podcasts and vodcasts has yielded a markedly positive outcome with regard to the

enhancement of EFL/ESL learners' listening abilities (Gönülal, 2020), as the role of media in classroom listening activities can provide the specific information and integrate it into the group discussion. Similarly, the integration of online applications into listening comprehension exercises encourages EFL/ESL learners to adopt language accents that are similar to those of the native language (Faramarzi et al., 2019). Additionally, multimedia tools, such as PowerPoint, can facilitate students' comprehension of the content in listening texts (Sehati & Khodabandehlou, 2017), self-discipline, encouragement (Liubinienė, 2009), prior knowledge activation (Sajjadi et al., 2012), language contexts (Krahnke, 1985a). In vice versa, without text/pictures aids, the processing of the listening information turned out to be difficult for the participants to develop advanced listening skills.

Moreover, research has demonstrated that regular practice is an effective method for enhancing listening comprehension abilities particularly in fostering the logical thinking and the capacity to comprehend instructions on an ongoing basis (Krahnke, 1985b), and familiarize EFL/ESL learners with word formation and sound (Kharzhevska et al., 2019). Additionally, EFL/ESL learners can have listening practice through involving themselves into the interaction or conversation outside the process of teaching and learning in the classroom (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). In light of these considerations, Al-Nafisah (2019) puts forth a framework of six distinct listening practices: concentrative, pluralistic, participatory, prolonged responsive, and auto-didactic listening. The utilization of these listening practices has been demonstrated to facilitate vocabulary development and enhance accent recognition (Reinders & Cho, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Based on the presented materials, explanation and discussion above, it can be concluded that the listening comprehension is one of the four fundamental competencies that must be developed by learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL). Attaining proficiency in listening comprehension necessitates the integration of comprehensible inputs in a collaborative manner, with due consideration given to the learner's linguistic background knowledge, development strategies, media intervention, and the intensity of practical activity. Input hypotheses has great importance in developing EFL/ESL learners' listening skills as this facilitates the development of pronunciation skills, grammatical accuracy, lexical resources, and meaning. Moreover, these inputs facilitate the engagement of learners' memory regarding listening materials, thereby developing their cognitive abilities, enhancing motivation, stimulating perception, and activating prior knowledge. The process of learning linguistic component inputs must be carried out systematically, beginning with the lexical input and sound and progressing to sentence construction and sentence meaning. This indicates that learners of the English language are strongly encouraged to engage in collaborative learning of the input hypothesis steps, as all inputs must be correlated with one another to achieve comprehensive understanding.

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