Arabic Extensive Listening and its Language Learning Benefits

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Abstract

Keywords:
Arabic Grammar, Language learning, Language teaching, Listening skill, Vocabulary

Foreign Language learning is a complex process that requires considerable effort from both teachers and learners, particularly in developing effective listening skills in foreign language classrooms. Among the various approaches, Extensive Listening (EL) has emerged as a promising pedagogical method for enhancing language acquisition. This research investigates the utilization of Extensive Listening (EL) as a pedagogical approach for teaching Arabic listening skills, focusing on its efficacy in facilitating vocabulary and grammar acquisition, as well as exploring students' perceptions regarding the benefits of language learning through EL. Language teachers often face challenges in cultivating listening skills among foreign language learners due to its inherent difficulty. The study employed observation, documentation, and focus group discussions as data collection methods, while data analysis involved several stages: data description, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. The findings reveal that EL was effectively integrated into the Arabic listening course, aligning with the course objectives and learning materials. Students actively engaged in grammar analysis through audiobooks and demonstrated a positive attitude towards EL, acknowledging its role in enhancing their vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar knowledge.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:
Tata Bahasa Arab, Pengajaran bahasa, Keterampilan mendengarkan, Kosakata

Pembelajaran Bahasa asing merupakan proses yang kompleks yang memerlukan upaya besar dari para pengajar dan siswa, terutama dalam mengembangkan keterampilan mendengarkan yang efektif di dalam kelas bahasa asing. Di antara berbagai pendekatan, Extensive Listening (EL) telah muncul sebagai metode pedagogis yang menjanjikan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan bahasa. Penelitian ini menyelidiki pemanfaatan Extensive Listening (EL) sebagai pendekatan pedagogis untuk mengajar keterampilan menyimak bahasa Arab, dengan fokus utama pada dampaknya dalam memfasilitasi penguasaan kosa kata dan tata bahasa, serta mengeksplorasi persepsi para siswa mengenai manfaat pembelajaran bahasa Arab melalui EL. Para pengajar bahasa sering menghadapi tantangan dalam mengembangkan keterampilan mendengarkan/ menyimak pada para pembelajar bahasa asing karena tingkat kesulitannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan observasi, dokumentasi, dan diskusi kelompok fokus sebagai metode pengumpulan data, sementara analisis data melibatkan beberapa tahap: deskripsi data, reduksi data, dan menyimpulkan hasil. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa EL telah terintegrasi dengan efektif dalam mata kuliah menyimak Bahasa Arab, selaras dengan tujuan dan materi pembelajaran mata kuliah. Para siswa secara aktif terlibat dalam analisis tata bahasa melalui audiobook dan menunjukkan sikap positif terhadap EL, mengakui perannya dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosa kata, pengucapan, dan tata bahasa mereka.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of Arabic language teaching (ALT), listening is one of the language skills to learn by Arabic language learners. Out of four language skills, it has its own characteristics and poses challenges for language learners to achieve. Arabic language learning is usually associated with pesantren in Indonesian Islamic education institutions (Wekke, 2015). Like other foreign languages, Arabic language teachers face several problems in teaching listening skill. Foreign language teachers have devoted their efforts to overcome this problem (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). one of the efforts In Arabic listening skill is to have students to be exposed to various foreign learning sources in many platforms. One of the best ways to achieve this is to listen from authentic Arabic learning materials. Technology and internet can be used to improve students' listening comprehension (Sunjayanto Masykuri, 2022).

Extensive Listening (EL) has developed and follow the path of the success of Extensive reading (ER). EL has mirrored several principles and steps from ER in its implementation for language learning. One of the most striking characteristics of EL is that it allows students to deal with a large amount of pleasing and interesting listening materials. The learning materials are appropriate with the students' language competence. In a nutshell, the focus of EL is listening for pleasure, and focus on the meaning rather than form (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

Listening activities can be designed in order to develop their students' foreign language proficiency (Hasna Husniyah et al., 2023). Several activities may allow learners to have ample opportunities to listen various listening materials. This is where EL comes into existence (Pamuji et al., 2019). The advance of information and communication technology and internet have opened the opportunities for language learning to be supported. Researchers have addressed this language learning development by several terms like Mobile assisted language learning (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008) the use of mobile phone for language learning (Yudhiantara & Nasir, 2017).

Foreign Language teaching has all the possibilities to extend and broaden the media and content for language learning using internet. Internet for sure offers the strength and features for language learning (Belz & Thorne, 2006). In internet, several listening materials are available and can be selected by language teachers to suit their students' need and achieve language learning objectives. YouTube materials are abundant

and in similar ways ranging from academic content to hobby and etc. Podcast has grown in its popularity and has been chosen for foreign language learning teachers. Those learning material including appropriate content from YouTube and podcast can be used for extensive listening (Alm, 2013). Researchers have shown that podcast offers potential sources for language learning (Rosell & Aguilar, 2013) and Internet offers million video to select and use for EL to improve students' listening skill (Purnamaningwulan, 2021).

Arabic Foreign Language (AFL) teachers are expected to be able to design and tailor learning activities that suit the principles of EL. To achieve language learning benefits, they are in a position to deliver learning materials and activities that suit the principles of EL in the classroom (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). AFL teachers need to meet their students' need to learn authentic listening materials that are available and exist in students' real life. When they encounter this type of listening materials, they can find their learning meaningful and improve their listening skill (Devinta & Ratri, 2014). In addition, grading learning materials in EL to achieve the benefits of language learning is a skill to possess for AFL teachers (Chang & Millett, 2016).

Language learning benefits are sought by both AFL teachers and language learners. EL has the potential to achieve language learning benefits. In this context, the benefits include vocabulary increase, pronunciation, and grammar. Grammar is one of language components that language learners need to learn. Arabic language learning requires mastery of grammar to be able to communicate using the language. Historically speaking, researcher have discussed a historical perspective on grammar, or knowledge about language (Hodgson & Harris, 2021) When it comes to teaching grammars, there are two approaches that have been shaping teacher beliefs: the traditional approach in favor of explicit instruction and the communicative approach emphasizing on functional linguistic usage in communicative situations (Van Vooren et al., 2012). Grammar knowledge supports language learners to achieve reading skill and other language skills (Sahiruddin, 2018).

There are several ways to teach grammar. Three instructional methods: games, dialogues practiced through role-play, and unfocused tasks for teaching grammar can be deployed by foreign language teachers (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2011). There is a need to offer innovation in teaching grammar. An alternative approach for AFL teachers to try in grammar teaching in the AFL setting is an approach that is based on task

interpretation (Sugiharto, 2005). When it comes to teaching writing, grammar should be taken into consideration. Language teachers should have grammatical content knowledge in supporting meaningful teaching and learning about writing (Myhill et al., 2013).

Several studies have been conducted to investigate how grammar is delivered in foreign language teaching. Grammar can be taught by explicit grammar instruction on grammatical knowledge and writing proficiency in first-year students of French at a UK university (Macaro & Masterman, 2006). Other studies reported the use semantico-syntactic translation practice to teach grammar. It happens through three main stages: upgrading students' explicit grammar knowledge followed by internalizing the knowledge into explicit grammar knowledge, and testing the result (Handoyo, 2010). Other research shows that singing can be used to teach language learners spelling and grammar (Busse et al., 2021).

Studies on EL has been conducted by researchers in Foreign Language setting. Previous studies on EL include teachers' experience in developing their foreign language proficiency by listening to amount of listening materials (Pamuji et al., 2019); the use of podcast to deliver EL (Alm, 2013); the use of video in EL program (Purnamaningwulan, 2021); the use of authentic materials for EL (Devinta & Ratri, 2014). Other researchers focus on language learning benefits in EL. When EL is carefully tailored and delivered in the classroom, Language learning benefits can be achieved (Ivone & Renandya, 2019).

Researchers have investigated Arabic language teaching (ALT) in its various issues. The issues include problems of Arabic language learning at Islamic universities in Indonesia (Rahmawati & Febriani, 2021); difficulty to learn Arabic for non-native speakers (Dajani et al., 2014); and the importance of Arabic language learning for students in Islamic higher education institutions (Aladdin & Musa, 2014). To deal with the problems in ALT, teachers need to design and grade learning materials in EL to achieve the benefits of language learning (Chang & Millett, 2016).

However previous studies have not reported the implementation of Extensive Listening (EL) in Arabic language teaching in Islamic higher education particularly as a subject delivered in Arabic listening course in Arabic education department. This study tries to fill the gap. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions: (1) How is EL implemented in teaching Arabic listening course? (2) how does EL facilitate grammar learning? (3) how do students perceive language learning benefits from EL?

METHOD

This study investigates the implementation of EL in Arabic listening course and the way EL facilitates grammar learning and students' opinion on language learning benefits from EL in-teaching Arabic listening course. It is qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2014). The present study took place at one of State Islamic higher education institution (PTKIN). In Arabic education department, the course Arabic listening is delivered in second semester. There are 40 students taking the course and took a part in this study. The data were collected from the first meeting to Midtest for Arabic listening course.

To collect the data to answer research questions, this study conducted observation, assignment, document analysis and focus group discussion (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). Observation and documentation were deployed to collect data on the implementation of EL course and the way EL course facilitates grammar learning. Focus group discussion was administered to collect the data on students' opinion on language learning benefits from EL. Those technique are compatible to collect qualitative data in the present study (Biklen, 1982).

The data collected were analyzed to answer research questions in the present study. There are several stages for data analysis: data description, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. In this study, all the data collected from observation, assignment, document analysis and focus group discussion were described to answer research questions. Data reduction occurs to find the most relevant data from focus group discussion that best answer research questions in this study. All the relevant data that answer research questions were presented in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of the present study will be described. They will be described into three categories covering the implementation of EL in Arabic listening course, the use of audiobook to learn grammar in EL, and students' opinion on the benefits of language learning in EL. The findings will be discussed with relevant literature and previous studies to explore its contribution in the body of knowledge concerning EL in Arabic language teaching.

The implementation of Extensive Listening in Arabic Listening Course

Arabic listening course is delivered in second semester in Arabic education department. The course is designed to develop students listening skill and promote ample opportunities for listening for pleasure. It has several objectives to achieve. The most important feature of the course is that it promotes the nature of listening for pleasure and students- based preference in deciding and selecting learning materials.

Based on the objectives of the course, several learning materials to delivered in 14 meetings were prepared in the form of audio and audio video. This study found that the course has outlined several sources for students to select. While meetings before focus on the learning materials taken from Arabic songs and audiobook, meeting after midtest focus on podcast, video and movies. Sources for audiobook was taken from the internet. Sources for podcasts on various interesting topics are accessible from many major Arabic news websites, such as BBC Arabic. Some sources taken from YouTube like TED Talk, interview, and movie series are available for students to select. One thing for sure, those sources are available for students to select because they themselves who decide the sources to learn.

To assess students learning activity in the course, a journal for recording students' activity is made and it allows students to fill and report what they had done and accomplished from a particular learning activity. In the journal, students write their identity, listening source they select, their comprehension on the content and several language learning tasks to accomplish. The journal is used to record students' activity when they learn a particular learning material and is submitted in the following meeting. The examples of students' journal are presented in the section of the use of audiobook to learn grammar.

In this study, the lecturer delivered the course using the following pattern: lecturing, modelling and discussion of the student work. To ensure students' understanding on the learning activity, teachers explained the rules, type of learning materials to select, what to do in several steps to accomplish the task. In the following week, students have ample opportunity to demonstrate learn and accomplish the task. Teachers assess and discuss how the learning activity that students have performed in the previous meeting. They tried their best to deal and learn their chosen learning materials. In the classroom, they participated in the discussion and present their work.

On the part of students, they follow the syllabus in terms of learning activities and learning materials. They attended the class to learn how to select the audio they want to listen and how to fill the students' journal. They have one week to learn the audio material and fill the journal to report their learning activities. In the following meeting, they submitted their journals, presented their work and discuss their work.

The Audiobook and grammar learning

This study found that Arabic Extensive Listening course has been tailored to facilitate grammar learning. EL Learning activity ensures that the audio materials students select, listen and learn from, should also demonstrate their grammar knowledge. In other words, students have several tasks to accomplish and one of them is to explain grammar aspect they found in the text/ audio.

The present study collected the data on students' work to deal with two types of text that is Arabic songs and audiobook. Both Arabic songs and audiobook were designed to demonstrate students' ability to accomplish listening comprehension and grammar analysis. They were selected by students themselves. Students selected their preferred Arabic songs. They should take into consideration several criteria: the songs should use Arabic lyrics, the songs are accessible on Youtube, and the Arabic lyrics are available on the internet. Other missions to accomplish deal with language learning tasks. The tasks include: listening comprehension, vocabulary and grammar.

Within one week, they listened, analyzed grammar aspect and wrote their report in their journals. This learning activity was designed to facilitate grammar learning that is applied in the Arabic song that students had chosen. This study found that student had the ability to analyze grammar aspect found in the songs they chose.

It can be seen that in the journal, students reported their work in analyzing grammar aspect found in the song. The journal contains: identity information, selected song, listening comprehension report, grammar analysis report. It facilitates students to report their Arabic EL activities and enables the lecturer to assess students' progress.

Second audio type that students worked is audiobook. The audiobook is taken from the website and it features the work of great novels. The novels were divided into several chapters and they were delivered both in audio file and PDF file. The website offers

language learning benefits for Arabic EL students because listening, viewing and reading activities can be facilitated.

Unlike Arabic lyric song in the first activity, audiobook novel offers more benefits for language learners in EL course. There are more than 100 audiobook novels available to choose by students. This study found that some students chose their audiobook novels because the story seems interesting to listen and learn. Some of them decide to select some audiobook novels because they know that the novel is popular and written by great authors.

Students had one week to listen and learn the audiobooks they chose. They tried to comprehend the audiobook story to demonstrate their listening comprehension. Dealing with audiobook, students had other opportunities to learn: listening the audio file, viewing and reading PDF file. In this activity, students can combine several language learning tasks to deal with the audiobooks. Another mission to accomplish is grammar analysis from the audiobook.

This study found that students submitted their journals to report their works on audiobook novels. In their journal, they demonstrated their comprehension of the story in general. In addition, they performed their analysis to explain the grammar aspect like Tense applied in the text. Their analysis covers several Tense types including, Past, present and future.

Grammar analysis was performed by the students on the audiobook novel and their grammar analysis was reported in their journal submitted to the lecturer. Students analyzed Tense types applied in the audiobook. There are several tables consisting tense type to fill by correct sentences taken from the audiobook. They searched several sentences applying a particular tense including Past simple, past continuous, present simple, present perfect continuous and others to fill in the correct table. The data to answer research question two have been described. In the next section, the data to answer research question three will be described.

Students' opinion on Language learning benefits from Arabic Extensive Listening

This study found that students expressed positive attitude toward the course Arabic EL and the benefits they gained from EL. Based on focus group discussion, there are several points to describe. Students agreed that Arabic EL has offered them language

learning benefits. There are at least three benefits for their language competence in English including vocabulary increase, pronunciation and grammar. They will be described in detailed below.

First, students admitted that they had gained vocabulary increase from Arabic EL course. The audiobook novel uses various vocabulary to support the story to tell the readers. Since the novel consists of several chapters and hundreds of pages, the students were exposed to several new words. A student expressed in the discussion "I need to check my dictionary to search the meaning of some vocabularies. This clearly increases my vocabulary". This student comment represents other students who experienced similar learning activities.

Second, students learned pronunciation from the audiobook. This benefit refers to students' activities after listening from audiobook and learned how to correctly pronounce a particular new word they listened from the audiobook. In each chapter, they found several new words that they learned how to perform correct pronunciation. A student expressed in the discussion "I found some words that are not familiar to me and I learned from the audiobook how to correctly pronounce those words". This statement represents other students' experience to learn pronunciation for some words that they did not know before.

Third, students learned grammar use from the audiobook novel. In relation with the findings in section two, students explained that they learned grammar contextually. In the audiobook, students learned sentences applying correct tense to express the idea and information relevant to the story. A student expressed in the discussion "I learned to understand why a particular type of tense is used in a particular sentence. I learned how to use a particular type of tense based on the context off the situation in the story". This statement represents other students' experiences in learning grammar from the audiobook.

This data on students' opinion concerning language learning benefits from EL course have been described. In the next section, all the three findings will be discussed with relevant literature review and previous studies to show the contribution of the present study to the body of knowledge in EL scholarship.

Discussion

The present study explores the implementation of Arabic Extensive Listening, the use of audiobook to learn grammar, and students' opinion on language learning benefits from Arabic EL. Listening can be very challenging for foreign language learners and to solve this, foreign language teachers devoted their efforts to overcome the problem (Ivone & Renandya, 2019) In this study, students were exposed to various audio types but the learning materials are motivating and interesting to explore. Dealing with Arabic songs and audiobook novels can be very pleasing for language learners. The focus of foreign language EL is on the meaning rather than form (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). In this study, AFL Teacher tried to design learning activities and materials in order to develop students' Arabic listening skill. Several activities may allow learners to have ample opportunities and the audio files are compatible with their language competence (Pamuji et al., 2019).

EL requires foreign language teachers to be able to design and tailor learning activities that suit the principles of EL. In this study, the lecturer has designed learning material and learning activities that are in line with the principle of EL. EL should be carefully tailored and delivered in the classroom to achieve foreign language learning benefits (Ivone & Renandya, 2019) Language learners need to learn authentic materials that are available and exist in their real life. Once they encounter this type of learning materials, they can find their learning meaningful and increase the chance to improve students' listening skill (Devinta & Ratri, 2014). In addition, EFL teachers should be able to design EL and make a graded learning level to achieve the benefits of foreign language learning (Chang & Millett, 2016).

In this study, Arabic EL course is made possible by having access to internet to search for audio and video learning materials. The advance of information and communication technology and internet have opened the opportunities for language learning to be supported (Zhu et al., 2023). Students in this study use their mobile phone to access the audio file and read PDF format. Researchers have addressed this development in foreign language teaching by several terms like Mobile assisted language learning (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008) use of mobile phone (Yudhiantara & Nasir, 2017). Internet for sure offers the strength and features that can help language learners to learn and use for language learning purposes (Belz & Thorne, 2006). Internet offers million video to select and use for EL to improve students' listening skill

(Purnamaningwulan, 2021). Audio book and podcast should be chosen for extensive listening (Alm, 2013) Podcast offers potential authentic sources for language learning (Rosell- & Aguilar, 2013).

In this study, students were required to perform grammar analysis applied in the audiobook they had selected. Arabic language learning requires mastery of grammar to be able to communicate using the language (Hodgson & Harris, 2021). Students tried to understand grammar in use since audiobook deliver novel story. This can be viewed as communicative approach focusing on functional linguistic usage in communicative situations (Van Vooren et al., 2012) When students access PDF file, their grammar knowledge contributes to their reading skill (Sahiruddin, 2018).

In analyzing the story in audiobook, students have the chance to encounter dialog among figures in the story. Grammar that exists in their dialog can be analyzed to find out how a particular situation may indicate the use of a particular tense (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2011) Innovation in teaching grammar should be managed to deliver comprehensive understanding on the use of grammar for social communicative purposes. Analyzing the grammar in audiobook can be considered as task interpretation in learning grammar (Sugiharto, 2005) and shows that grammatical content knowledge is crucial in supporting meaningful learning in language skills particularly writing (Myhill et al., 2013) In this study, Arabic EL provided no explicit instruction on grammar. In many occasions, explicit instruction of grammar can be beneficial for writing skill (Macaro & Masterman, 2006) Learning grammar like Tense can be taught in their real context (Munir, 2019).

Language learning benefits from Arabic EL vary. Listening skill is considered difficult for several reasons: accent, intonation and etc and pronunciation by native speakers. In this study, students gain benefits to overcome those problems in listening. Listening is very important skill to learn and master to succeed in foreign language learning (Sunjayanto Masykuri, 2022).

In this study, students gained benefits in terms of vocabulary increase, pronunciation and grammar. In addition, they also increase their digital literacy. Students were capable of accessing learning media from every platform to show their digital literacy (Agustin & Lina, 2022). Language learning can take several applications to support language learning. In this study, the application used include podcast and audiobook. Those application are powerful to support speaking skill (Mariam et al., 2022).

In this study, Language learning benefits include vocabulary growth. Students learned many vocabularies from the audiobook. Language learners can be exposed to various type of learning sources and media to increase their vocabulary (Miftahuddin & Malihah, 2022). Internet and game might offer the chance to increase language learners' vocabulary (Sundqvist, 2019).

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge in Arabic EL scholarship particularly in Islamic higher education. However, this study has some limitations in terms of method. Further studies are recommended to use more robust method investigate Arabic EL research.

CONCLUSION

This study is aimed at investigating the implementation of Extensive listening in Arabic Listening course, the use of audiobook to learn grammar in Arabic, and students' opinion on language learning benefits in Arabic EL. The course is designed to develop listening skill and provide student centered to select learning materials taken from authentic sources in internet. Students performed their competence in analyzing grammar applied in the audiobook they analyzed. When it comes to their opinion, student expressed their positive attitude toward Arabic EL and agreed that they gain language learning benefits from Arabic EL.

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