



Using reading while listening to develop students' receptive skills: a review literature

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The benefits of reading while listening for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have been investigated in EFL learning contexts, particularly in teaching reading and listening. Some studies found that simultaneous reading while listening promotes positive impacts on students' reading and listening skills. It also helps L2 learners' fluency and comprehension of reading and listening. Moreover, it can assist L2 learners in acquiring new language input in a new learning environment. Hence, this article reviews some research papers related to the implementation of reading while listening (RWL) program in EFL learning context. Furthermore, to answer the research questions: 1) What is reading while listening?; 2) What are the effects of using reading while listening for EFL learners? How to apply the reading while listening program within the EFL classroom? To answer these questions, this article examines the use of RWL for EFL learners based on the research methodology, subject, instrument used, result and suggestion, including the principles of implementing simultaneous reading and listening within the EFL classroom.

Keywords: reading while listening, reading skill, listening skill, receptive skills, English skill

INTRODUCTION

As English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, sometimes, we find it is difficult to acquire a second or foreign language. There some conditions or situations that cause learners to acquire input-poor language, for example, EFL teaching situations (Gobel and Kano, 2014). It might be caused by the L2 learners' native language more dominant when they attempt to communicate in L2 situation (Chang, 2009). Whereas, "input" is believed as the key to learning a language (Renandya and Jacobs, 2016). Many studies proved that language input has a significant role in students' language exposure. For instance, if the EFL learners are frequently exposed to the language input, they will recognize words more that causes the expansion of their vocabularies, and all language proficiency also will increase.

To be more exposed to the language input, EFL learners need to be involved in a good learning environment that provides more language input. Day and Bamford (1998) propose an excellent way to acquire more language input through reading, or widely known as extensive reading (ER). Extensive reading promotes joyful reading that the readers or L2 learners can freely choose what they want to read without emphasized detailed comprehension of the text. Some researchers suggest that ER is beneficial for gaining language in the area of vocabulary and improving general reading skill (Nuttal, 1982), increase learners' reading speed, and promotes reading fluency and (Day and Bamford, 2002; Samuels, 2006; Blevins, 2005), foster learners' linguistic and grammar competence (Rodrigo et al., 2004; Yang, 2001), writing, (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Mason and Krashen, 1997; Robb and Susser, 1989; Smith, 2007) and overall

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language proficiency.

With the advent of technology and the demand for era 4.0, it is not difficult to obtain learning material through the internet. Everybody can access and find the appropriate learning material or resources to his/her level anywhere and anytime. Moreover, by using the internet and technology, EFL teachers can provide a new learning environment for the language learners and allows the improvement of learning outcomes. In addition, schools and classrooms need to become intensive resources when digital resources can be readily delivered and accessed specific goals of teachers and students (Hill and Hannafin, 2001).

Reading while listening (RWL) is one of the language learning programs that has been implemented by L2 researchers in the area of reading or listening or even both. This program is used to help L2 learners in acquiring the second language and improving learners' receptive skills, both listening and reading skills. L2 learners often find it difficult to understand what they heard or read, particularly when they do listening or reading tasks. In the listening task, speech speed rate is the most problem faced by lower learners to comprehend the content being delivered by the speaker. Meanwhile, during reading a second-language text, L2 learners find it is difficult to comprehend the whole meaning of the text when they meet unknown words. Furthermore, less reading fluency also limits reading comprehension, particularly to struggling readers. However, if the learners are able to identify and recognize the words automatically and fluently, they do not need to fully concentrate on basic word identification and just comprehend the whole meaning of the text. Brown et al. (2008) adopting a more beneficial technique, L2 learners may realize a higher comprehension level is possibly obtained through the RWL program, particularly when they involved to a larger chunk of text. Therefore, this program is proposed to assist L2 learners with better comprehension and foster their reading and listening.

METHOD

This paper seeks to understand and synthesize some research papers related to the use of the RWL program in the EFL learning context. There are 10 research papers reviewed in this paper which are taken from the reputable publishers from 2009-2019. This review paper focuses on the implementation of the RWL program on second language learners, particularly to improve L2 receptive skills either both reading and listening skills. Furthermore, this paper examines the research methodology and instrument used in the studies, the intended participants, and the result of studies to answer these questions: 1)What is reading while listening?; 2) What are the effects of using reading while listening for EFL learners? How to apply the reading while listening program within the EFL classroom?

DISCUSSION

What is Reading While Listening?

As a form of extensive reading, recently reading while listening has been noticed by the language teachers and researchers in the language learning context, particularly in the EFL context (Brown et al., 2008). Despite the less research in this area, some researchers found positive effects of RWL implementation for L2 learners in the area of listening comprehension and development (Chang, 2008; Vandergift, 2007), and vocabulary acquisition (Brown et al., 2008). Furthermore, RWL also can foster EFL beginners' reading and listening fluency (Milliner, 2019), reading speed rate (Chang and Millet, 2015).

According to McMahon (1983) as cited in Askildson (2011), reading while listening is a practice of developing listening fluency by involving reading. It provides audio recordings within the reading texts. Audiobooks propose an excellent bridge for struggling readers in term of reading decoding and comprehension. In addition, with the inclusion of audio recordings within the reading text, it can foster L2 learners' listening competence and leads to gain higher listening scores Chang and Millet (2015). Practically, reading while listening simultaneously is not a new strategy in the reading or listening area. It has been used in the reading program of L1 and specifically beneficial for learners who have reading disabilities (Gobel and Kano, 2014). Learners who are reluctant to read, especially those who have a low rate fluency, positively will get benefits from hearing to the audio recording along with reading the script. When learners hear the right pronunciation of the words or phrases, they able to identify words more accurately and adopt the appropriate speed and intonation to read the text (Friedland et al., 2017). In addition, Senechal & Cornell (1993) as cited in Gobel and Kano (2014), argue when reading stories is performed in a shared or pleasure reading environment, it yields greater gains of reading and listening skills.

The Use of Reading While Listening for EFL Learners

Although less of empirical studies in the area of reading while listening, language researchers and practitioners believe it can support and helps L2 learners to acquire target language and improve their receptive skills. Practicing simultaneous reading while listening in the EFL class also can help the L2 learners to gain better comprehension both reading and listening. Low proficiency L2 learners tend to break sentences into words that caused low comprehension to them. With the implementation of RWL, it helps to maintain the integrity of sentences by encouraging the students to process larger semantic units that lead to better comprehension (Brown et al., 2008). From a sociocultural perspective, an audio recording provided along the reading text seems like a knowledgeable assistant and more experienced to help the readers decode and achieve a higher level of reading fluency than they do independently

(without assistance) (Woodall, 2010). Furthermore, the existence of written texts along audio recording helps the learners' comprehension by giving them more access to identify lettersound relationships Askildson (2011). The Aural-written verification stage helps students' form-meaning relationship development (Osada, 2001), develops lower learners' auditory discrimination skills, and develop word recognition skill (Vandergift, 2007; Osada, 2001). In addition, Chang (2009) adds that L2 learners are introduced to the speech rate, rhythm, and natural flow of language through RWL.

Some researchers prove the positive effects of RWL in the EFL classroom. A study conducted by Brown et al. (2008) explored thirty-five L2 learners' vocabulary acquisition by using three modes of input; reading only (RO), reading while listening (RWL), and listening only (LO). These participants were Japanese college students ranged from 18 to 21 years old who learned English for 7.5 years on average. The participants were divided into three experimental groups and they were asked to read and listen at the same time to three graded-reader stories which were approximately 5,000 words for each. At the end of the research, the researchers found the students learned new words incidentally through all modes of input, but the most learned words were in the RWL mode. It was shown in both tests of multiple choice and meaning translation. In addition to students' preferable three modes of input, they preferred RWL mode to others because of the necessity of knowing segment or chunk text of the story when they read and it was done by the narrator on the cassette or audiotape.

Another study was conducted by Chang (2008) which focused on students' listening comprehension. It found that RWL benefits to students' listening comprehension as well as other language competences. Students that received RWL treatment showed a considerable comprehension of spoken narrative English and general vocabulary. A year later, Chang (2009) also conducted an investigation the concept of auralwritten verification proposed by RWL can help the L2 learners in developing their low listening skills, improving word recognition, and gaining form-meaning relationship awareness. Similar to a study of Brown et al. (2008), it was done by comparing modes of input: reading while listening and listening only. In this study, Chang took 84 college students to take two tests: 1) 95 items of sequencing and gap filling and 2) a post-perception questionnaire. Overall, the result showed a more considerable gain in the RWL mode. Although it only increased as much as 10%, the majority of students preferred this mode of input in doing listening tasks because it made the tasks easier, duration seem shorter, and the stories more interesting, so that they paid more attention during RWL.

Six years later, in the reading area, Chang and Millet (2015) compared reading fluency gain from two reading programs: RWL and silent reading. The study showed greater improvement in the reading speed of learners in the RWL group. The improvement of reading speed was caused by the audio recording input that acts as a reading speed racer and helps learners to stay on the tasks. In terms of reading comprehension, RWL has

a stronger impact on increasing reading comprehension than other reading rates enhancement activities such as timed reading, repeated reading, or silent extensive reading.

The effect of RWL on EFL learners' general proficiency was examined by Gobel (2011). The author measured students' general proficiency by using the TOEFL score. The result revealed that RWL is a significant predictor of gaining a high TOEFL score. In addition, he found that the more students practice RWL, the higher score of TOEFL gains was. However, when Gobel and Kano (2014) investigated the use and evaluation of the MoodleReader module (a program of RWL created by Kyoto Sangyo University) on first-year Japanese university students gain score. This study was conducted for a yearlong program by giving the students listening practice to a large volume of spoken English. In evaluating the RWL program, Gobel and Kano used the TOEFL test to measure students' reading rate, vocabulary recognition, and general proficiency, and administered 24 items of the questionnaire to investigate the students' attitudes toward the program. The result of the research showed that the RWL program had a positive effect but there was no significant increase in general proficiency when measured by the TOEFL test. In other words, it does not support the finding of their previous study. In addition, the students' attitude toward the module was less than positive. They preferred doing the RWL program within the classroom than outside the class. It might due to they did not have much free time or lack of explanation on how to do RWL outside the classroom. This result supports the previous study in which the majority of students preferred completing the reading tasks and quizzes in the form of paper-based (as opposed to online) and is administered in the classroom.

A pilot study was conducted by Friedland et al. (2017) on a randomized controlled experiment of forty-six students of third grade in rural Uganda. The authors aimed to investigate the effects of SiMBi, a comprehensive audiobook program developed by The Walking School Bus Literacy, that may potentially improve students' reading comprehension and fluency. There were four steps to implementing this SiMBi software. First, the students' instructional levels were tested by using Florida's Assessment for Instruction in Reading; Ongoing Progress Monitoring Oral Reading Fluency (OPM). Second, assessing students' instructional reading fluency level. Next, the students were divided randomly into 2 groups that received the same treatment; listen and read simultaneously to one audiobook for each school. They had to read for ten minutes per day and after completed their reading, they used the remaining time to learn sight words and sentences. In the last step, both groups' reading fluency was tested by the teacher after 30 days program implementation. Students' fluency was tested for 3 consecutive minutes taking the average WPCM for 3 minutes. The result revealed that SiMBi or RWL software is a promising tool that potentially improves L2 learners' reading comprehension. In addition, students' who received the RWL treatment showed a great improvement in word count per minute (WCPM) which means their reading fluency also increased.

The positive effect of RWL on L2 beginning learners also had been investigated by Milliner (2019). This study was administered to three groups of beginners (CEFR level A1) from different departments. It was examined L2 learners' reading and listening skills by comparing three groups of low proficiency learners who received 1) simultaneous reading while listening (RWL); 2) extensive reading (ER); and 3) traditional reading treatment. In addition, the author used digital books and audiobooks within the Xreading system (xreading.com) for RWL and extensive reading groups. Xreading is an online library of graded readers and learning management system (LMS) specifically provided for extensive reading that allows the learners to read at their own pace and adjust the speech rate to their reading or listening competencies.

The treatment was held for 15 weeks and the researcher taught all classes for two meetings (100 minutes) in a week. The reading materials and grading procedures used were the same, except for the extensive component. The textbooks used were Successful Key for the TOEIC Test Intro. During 15 weeks, half of each textbook was completed to read by the students. In the first 10 minutes of the class, was dedicated to silent reading, book discussions, and follow-up ER or RWL training in the ER and RWL groups. The students read outside the classroom to reach the monthly reading targets. Meanwhile, the control group (traditional class), ten minutes at the beginning of class were dedicated to five-minute quick writing and connected speaking fluency activity. They were also asked to rewrite their quick writing compositions and a class reflection for homework.

The results revealed that students in the RWL group gained higher TOEIC scores on both the listening and reading sections. However, when it comes to LVLT (Listening Vocabulary Level Test) results, the control group showed a great improvement in vocabulary acquisition while RWL and ER groups could not acquire new vocabulary. Investigation that the RWL group failed to achieve a significant improvement at any level of vocabulary. In addition, Brown et al. (2008) also found low vocabulary acquisition in each of the treatment groups.

Reading while Listening in EFL Classroom

Based on some studies of different language input modes implementation in the EFL classroom, different modes of input will give different effects on L2 learners (Chang, 2009). Moreover, Chang argues that different modes of input may also affect students' performances with different levels of proficiency in different tasks. The mode of input that gives the most impact to L2 learners is reading while the listening mode leads the students to gain greater comprehension and development in the area of reading and listening. Despite some of the studies show adequate satisfactory and medium-size effects on the learners, the majority of students show a high preference for this mode of input to others (reading only or listening only).

Reading while listening acted as language learning support

that can help the learners to acquire language. In the listening area, it supports low-level listeners through written text by matching the aural-written forms. Listening according to the text made the learners feel secure and increase their confidence in comprehension (Chang, 2009). In addition, it also helps to develop learners' oral vocabulary and facilitates them in recalling the meaning of spoken form while listening that solves the problem concerning fast speech rates (Chang and Read, 2006; Goh, 1999). Despite allowing learners to listen to the audio along with reading the text does not enhance gain greatly, RWL has positive influences on L2 listeners, particularly on psychology impact. Thus, if the teacher wants to apply this program into the EFL classroom to develop L2 learners' listening competence, he/she needs to conduct the steps cautiously because the learners may depend more on the text and disregard the aural input (Chang, 2009). When the learners are provided with the script before listening to the audio, they may simply translate what they heard and develop an inefficient approach to listening (Osada, 2001). Therefore, when adopting reading while listening (RWL) into the EFL classroom, particularly in developing students' listening skill, the teacher needs to consider to enhance students' listening skills first then their reading skills. It is because RWL requires two language skills, and if the students are not equipped with both reading and listening skills, they may not obtain the expected outcome.

As a program of extensive reading and extensive listening, the teacher is demanded to plan the program carefully and be a commitment to managing time when implementing reading while listening within the EFL classroom Mason and Krashen (1997). Due to the effects of extensive reading/extensive listening is not instant; it should be done for a period of time which turns giving a stronger effect of the program. Moreover, with more durable of implementing simultaneous reading and listening, it helps the students with better reading comprehension as well as the enhancement of other language competences. However, since the effects of RWL emerge only after the learners spend a long time reading and listening, the students' lack of motivation often cause the failure of the program and gain the expected benefits of simultaneous reading and listening. Hence, there some principles can be used to guide the teacher to succeed in implementing the RWL program within the EFL classroom (Renandya and Jacobs, 2016).

A clear objective of implementing the reading while learning program.

The teacher should determine the objective to succeed in the implementation of simultaneous reading and listening program. A clear objective should describe the expected learning outcomes, resources needed, the timeframe needed, the way the program to be carried out, and the instruments to measure the degree of success of the program.

A large amount of reading and listening

Reading or listening to a large number of audiobooks contribute to L2 learners' language development. However, how much reading and listening text is needed to develop fluency and to acquire the language? General consensus agrees that the more reading and listening, the more advantages the readers and listeners will get. To more specific, Nation and Wang (1999) as cited in Renandya and Jacobs (2016), suggest L2 learners read at least one book a week.

Appropriate reading and listening materials that suit learners' linguistic competence

Reading and listening materials for the RWL program should match the students' level where the listening materials should be at or below their current competence level (Renandya and Jacobs, 2016). It is due to the students' vocabulary they obtain from listening is lower than their vocabulary that is obtained from reading. Hence, to more appropriate with the listening text, the teacher needs to provide an easy text which contains familiar words and grammatical constructions with the normal or low-speed rate.

The teacher should support all of the students, particularly those who need the most assistance with their reading or listening

The teacher plays an important role to succeed in the program by helping struggling readers or listeners who cannot follow other students' pace, particularly those who have a faster pace. For example, the teacher encourages their learning process, helps in choosing the appropriate material that suits their level, or teaches useful strategies for learning new words.

The teacher should be able to maintain students' motivation throughout the program

It is a challenge for EFL teachers to keep students' high motivation doing the simultaneous reading and listening program. In the beginning, they might positively respond to the program, but they may soon lose their interest when there is no innovation of the program or school activities/assignments that keep them busy.

The teacher should encourage students to do reading and listening simultaneously

As mentioned above, reading while listening benefits for L2 learners' language acquisition and foster their comprehension

and fluency of reading and listening. However, the teacher should stop the students from over-reliance simultaneous reading and listening when they already developed their language proficiencies at a high level. The teacher can encourage them to do reading or listening separately.

Attractive reading and listening post-activities

The teacher should offer interesting and enjoyable post activities because they can boost students' motivation. Day and Bamford (2004) propose several post-activities can be used in the classroom, for instances, sharing opinions or feelings about the stories they have read or listened, asking students to create the alternative ending of the story, retelling story, or designing a poster that describes the gist of the story.

CONCLUSION

As a program of extensive reading, reading while listening (RWL) can be used in the EFL classroom as learning support, particularly in reading or listening class. It can assist the students to acquire new language input and foster their receptive skills. Despite less empirical researches in this area of learning strategy, it proposes positive effects and promotes a new learning environment for language learners. Moreover, with the audio recording provided along with the reading text, it helps the students to recognize the letter-sound relationship.

With the advent of technology, both teachers and students can access this reading program through the internet, for instance, Xreading (xreader.com) or Mreader (mreader.com) anywhere and anytime. However, language teachers who want to implement this kind of reading program into the classroom need to conduct the steps cautiously to prevent the students from relying on the text and ignore the aural input. In addition, the teacher should be aware of students' receptive skills because RWL emphasizes those two language skills so that the reading program can gain the expected outcomes effectively.

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