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Thanks very much to the reviewers, whom we wish to keep anonymous at this time. This issue would not have been possible without their hard work.

The Listening Special Interest Group (Listening SIG) provides a forum for focused listening research and discussion in specific regard to teaching and learning. The group offers both teachers and researchers a place to connect, collaborate and share practice and research regarding how teachers teach listening and assess their learners, how learners improve their listening and use it to improve their knowledge, and finally how theoretical aspects connect to classroom practice. The Listening SIG aims to be a driving force for both current and future research in the field of how listening can be taught, learned, and tested in an increasingly global context.

Editorial

Another year, or actually more, in the life of listening. As the year takes us from clickbait articles extolling the benefits of AI, or else the dangers of AI, one could be excused for thinking that in this brave new world, all a teacher or language learner needs to do is prompt ChatGPT for literally anything at all. Of course, the need for listening and teaching of the skills involved is not going away any time soon, and in spite of a delayed issue, nor is this journal.

For this, our second issue, **Michael Alan Essex** details his research comparing the effects of reading then listening with listening only, something that is overdue for attention. **Naheen Madarbakus-Ring** provides a *Live Listening: Teaching Report* on using independent listening journals, and **Liam Ring** provides a review of Marnie Reed and Tamara Jones' (2021) *Listening in the Classroom: Teaching Students How to Listen.*

We would like to thank all our writers for their hard work and the reviewers who volunteered their time and expertise to provide a rigorous environment for listening research to flourish. Without your hard work, we have nothing.

We hope that this issue provides you with food for thought for your own research and practice. Please get in touch with us at listening@jalt.org if you have any ideas for an article, or a review.

Marc Jones

The Listening Post Editor
Listening SIG Publications Officer

Exploring Input's Impact on Comprehension Differences: Reading-Then-Listening and Listening-Only

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore how two types of input, reading-then-listening (RL) and listening-only (LO), contribute to differences in second language (L2) learner comprehension, perceptions of difficulty, and enjoyment of a short graded reader written in English. Comprehension was assessed with multiple-choice main idea and specific detail questions, while perceptions of task difficulty and enjoyment were measured using 4-point Likert scales. The participants in this six-week study were 22 first-year students at a university in western Japan. The participants performed better on the RL tasks, which were also rated as less difficult and more enjoyable. Although perceived task difficulty and task enjoyment ratings were significantly different, they were not significantly negatively correlated. The findings suggest that researchers and educators should consider the role of the input mode and the potential scaffolding benefits of RL activities on L2 comprehension, perceived task difficulty, and task enjoyment.

本研究の目的は、「読んでから聴く」と「聴くだけ」という 2 タイプの英語インプットによる第二言語学習者の短編英語リーダー（段階別読本）に対する理解度の差、および、難しさや楽しさの認識の差を探るものである。理解度は、要点と具体的詳細を問う多肢選択式の質問で評価し、難しさや楽しさの認識は 4 件法のリッカート尺度を用いて測定した。調査は、西日本にある大学の 1 年生 22 人を対象に 6 週間（6 回授業）行われた。調査参加者は「聴くだけ」よりも「読んでから聴く」で良い成績を収め、難しさの認識が低く、楽しさの認識が高かった。難しさと楽しさには有意な差がみられたが、有意な負の相関はなかった。これらの結果から、研究者や教育者は、インプット方法の役割ともに、「読んでから聴く」活動の潜在的な足場かけ効用が第二言語学習者の理解度、および、難しさや楽しさの認識に働くことを考慮する必要があることがわかった。

Keywords: Pedagogy, comprehension, graded reader, scaffolding, task difficulty, task enjoyment

In second language acquisition (SLA) research and pedagogy, the receptive skills of reading and listening and their relationship to second language (L2) comprehension have often been treated similarly despite consisting of key fundamental differences (Lund, 1991). Similarities in reading and listening include the fact that both reading and listening are receptive skills that require an understanding of lexis, grammar, syntax, and pragmatics. According to the cognitive approach to language use, both written and aural language make up input that can be later used to communicate ideas and experiences through organized structures. Language learning relies on attending to language in use, determining structure and meaning from examples of language in context, remembering the content of messages, and being able to make generalizations from input (Ellis & Robinson, 2008). In short, both written and aural input make up language data that can promote language learning and lead to L2 comprehension.

While written and aural input share similarities in how they are processed, comprehended, and retained, there are also fundamental differences (Baddeley, 2000; Baddeley & Hitch, 1974). Readers must understand the orthography of the language and its phonemic representations (Oliver & Young, 2016). However, readers who possess this knowledge typically benefit from the ability to control the pace of their reading and re-read earlier sentences if necessary. Furthermore, words in text are separated by clear visual cues.

Although comprehending aural input does not require the ability to decode (i.e., transform written text into meaningful language input), it poses numerous other complexities. First, the speech rate that listeners must attend to is largely determined by the speaker. Listeners must process the incoming speech stream while simultaneously working to comprehend the message without the visual cues that are afforded to readers (Vandergrift, 2007). Difficulties in listening comprehension are further compounded by connected speech and dialectical variations (Rost, 2016). In certain instances, listeners can seek repetition or clarification when a misunderstanding occurs, but doing so can disrupt the natural flow of conversation.

Examples such as these highlight how listening can pose additional comprehension challenges for literate L2 learners —those capable of effectively converting written L2 text into its corresponding sounds. If listening is more difficult to comprehend, then reading prior to listening might provide L2 learners with scaffolding that can facilitate their comprehension. Several researchers have investigated the potential differences in L2 comprehension as a result of input mode (Chang & Millett, 2014; Park, 2004; Zhang & Zhang, 2022), but I am aware of none that have examined the potential comprehension differences between scaffolded reading-then-listening (RL) and listening-only (LO) comprehension activities. The current study explores the potential differences in comprehension between reading-then-listening and listening to a graded reader. In addition, English L2 learners' perceptions of task difficulty and task enjoyment were also explored.

Literature Review

Comprehension

Comprehension is central to acquiring a new linguistic system (Pulido, 2004). Essentially, language comprehension involves extracting meaning from linguistic input. L2 learners can benefit from the ability to use their first language (L1) and prior knowledge to convert L2 input into intake, or language that becomes part of the learner's interlanguage system.

Language distance, which refers to how similar or different languages are from one another, plays a significant role as to the ease at which an L2 is comprehended and learned (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). In the case of Japanese and English, there are very few linguistic similarities from which Japanese L2 learners of English can benefit. It is important for educators to be aware of L1-L2 differences to ensure that the input provided to L2 learners is comprehensible and not beyond their capability in order to facilitate L2 learning.

The significance of comprehensible input in language acquisition has been extensively explored in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The Input Hypothesis, as proposed by Krashen (1981), posits that "optimal input includes [language] structures that are 'just beyond' the acquirer's current level of competence" (p. 102). According to this hypothesis, input that is largely understandable can lead to intake, contributing to language acquisition. The importance of input comprehension has been pivotal in influential pedagogical theories such as Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993) Input Processing, and Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis. These theories highlight the significance of providing learners with input that is appropriately challenging yet comprehensible, facilitating their language development within a supportive learning environment.

Reading Comprehension

While some researchers have commented that L2 reading comprehension has trailed significantly behind L1 research, it has also benefitted greatly from L1 findings (Brown, 1998; Grabe, 2009, Grabe & Stoller, 2020). Today, L2 reading comprehension is arguably one of the more well-researched areas of SLA. One reason for this is due to support for the component skills approach (Carr & Levy, 1990). According to this approach, reading comprehension is a complex construct made up of several component skills that include lower-level processes such as orthographic processing, phonological processing, word recognition, morphological processing, semantic processing, syntactic parsing, and semantic-proposition encoding (Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2005). Grabe (2009) stated "Describing certain skills as 'lower-level' does not mean that they are simple or undemanding; rather, they form a group of skills that have the potential to become strongly automatized" (p. 21). The automatization of these skills is necessary for fluent reading (Koda, 2005). Higher-level skills such as strategy use, background knowledge, inferencing, and hypothesis testing focus on what the reader brings to the reading comprehension process.

The importance of the contributions made by lower-level and higher-level processes has been debated, but reading researchers have acknowledged that both contribute to reading comprehension (Hannon, 2012; Nassaji, 2003). According to the interactive model of reading introduced by Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), lower-level and higher-level processes occur simultaneously and independently. Comprehension is therefore the result of the combination of both lower- and higher-level processes. Improving upon this idea, Stanovich (1980) introduced the interactive-compensatory model of reading. According to this model, reading is primarily a lower-level process, however, higher-level processes can compensate for deficiencies in lower-level processing, albeit at the expense of cognitive capacity.

Cognitive capacity is usually operationalized as working memory. Reading researchers have commonly included working memory as a predictor of reading comprehension (Alptekin & Ercetin, 2009; Fontanini & Tomitich, 2009; Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Jeon & Yamashita, 2014). Working memory as originally conceived by Baddeley and Hitch (1974) consists of the central executive that processes incoming information from the visuo-spatial sketchpad and the phonological loop and has limited capacity. The visuo-spatial sketchpad can be thought of as a visual representation of visual information that is held in the mind's eye while the phonological loop is an auditory repetition of aural information that is heard in the mind. Later, Baddeley (2000; 2003) added an additional component called the episodic buffer. Baddeley proposed that this component is responsible for short-term storage and the integration of information and that it can interface with the visual-spatial sketchpad and phonological loop. According to this theory, those with better working memories tend to perform better on reading comprehension tasks because they have more mental resources available for higher-level processing.

Listening Comprehension

While less frequently studied than reading comprehension, listening comprehension shares many of the same underlying top-down and bottom-up cognitive processes (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015). The key distinction lies in the auditory nature of the input. To understand spoken content, listeners need to hear, perceive, and pay attention to the incoming stream of speech. Accurate perception involves identifying phonemes, decoding speech into meaningful segments, and dealing with challenges like accent variations, differences in phonemic representation, epenthesis, coarticulation, elision, intonation, lexical competition, and unclear word boundaries (Cutler & Clifton, 2000). Aural input must be processed in an online manner, meaning that listeners receive aural input while simultaneously attending to meaning. When a breakdown in comprehension occurs, it is not always easy or appropriate to ask for clarification. Instead, listeners engage in top-down processing to derive meaning while decoding the incoming speech stream, a process which greatly taxes working memory.

Cutler and Clifton (2000) divided the process of transforming aural input into comprehended intake into four stages: decode, segment, recognize, and integrate. First, auditory input is selected from the acoustic background and transformed into an abstract representation. Next, this representation is segmented into its semantic and syntactic components based on listeners' knowledge of possible word candidates. Listeners then interpret the meaning of the input in context. Finally, when this process has been completed, the utterance can be integrated into the listeners' L2 discourse model.

Rost (2016) states that the listening process consists of the following: neurological processing, linguistic processing, semantic processing, and pragmatic processing. Neurological processing involves converting sound waves into information that can be perceived by the brain. This process is mediated by attention, which is limited in capacity and selective. Linguistic processing is akin to Cutler and Clifton's (2000) decoding stage. Auditory input that has passed from the hearing to the listening stage can then be parsed into recognizable words and prosaic features.

Rost (2016) further explains that linguistic processing faces influences from co-articulation processes like assimilation and elision. Syntax parsing occurs in two passes at the sentence and discourse levels, identifying syntactic categories in the first pass and integrating syntax into the larger context in the second. Next, the listeners' schemata and background knowledge aids in cross-referencing new aural input with existing understanding. Once semantic understanding is achieved, the aural message is stored in memory. Pragmatic processing, the final stage, involves understanding the intended meaning in context. Deixis connects spoken messages to meaning, encompassing factors like the speaker's identity, topic, location, and purpose. Intention relates to language's emotional impact, while strategy involves negotiation of intended meaning through inferences, assumptions, and clarification. Conversational meaning reflects socio-cultural roles and norms of the speaker and listener.

Scaffolding

Information processing theory has been used as a means of understanding how humans transform sensory input into long-term memory in psychology since the 1950s (Miller, 1956). People must first perceive sensory input and then focus their attention on it for it to potentially become part of short-term and later long-term memory. Schema theory is based on the idea that information stored in long-term memory is organized into neural units. Activating one of these units facilitates the activation of other nearby units (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). For instance, the word *dog* can prime other words such as *animal, bark,* and *bite.* Scaffolding then, which is based on these theories of mind, provides learners with known input that facilitates the learning of new ideas. Ways to scaffold input so that learners can expand their knowledge include pre-teaching relevant vocabulary, contextual information, and thematic information. Successful scaffolding depends on learners having sufficient knowledge and cognitive processing capacity available to perform the bottom-up task of attending to the input in parallel with the top-down task of applying metacognitive scaffolded knowledge.

Perceptions of Task Difficulty

According to Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, L2 input should be slightly beyond what the learner already understands. Additionally, attitudinal factors such as positive or negative emotions can enhance or diminish the ability of learners to transform language input into language intake. As a result, input comprehension can be mediated by learners' perceptions of task difficulty. However, real difficulty as measured by task performance and perceived difficulty are not necessarily the same. Self-efficacy, "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3), overlaps with perceptions of task difficulty. People who believe that they can achieve a desired outcome are more likely to be able to do so. When a task is perceived to be difficult, it can produce negative self-efficacy and result in increased anxiety, the latter having a detrimental contribution to learner performances (Teimouri et al., 2019; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Tasks that are too difficult can also result in lower perceptions of competence, which has been found to inhibit intrinsic motivation (Vallerand & Reid, 1984).

Task Enjoyment

Affect, which includes emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation is closely tied to learning outcomes (Yamashita, 2015). However, in SLA, emotions such as "enjoyment, relief, anger, happiness, hope, gratitude, jealousy, [and] love" have often been overlooked (Imai, 2010, p. 280). Several more commonly researched areas of positive affect in SLA include autonomy (Benson, 2011), attention (Schmidt, 1990), interest (Abrantes et al., 2007; Hidi, 1990), positive self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2010). Despite beneficial findings by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), L2 task enjoyment has rarely been investigated directly as a contributor of L2 learning.

Task enjoyment is closely linked to theories of flow experience, intrinsic motivation, and achievement goal theory because it can help to foster them (Puca & Schmalt, 1999). Briefly, flow is a state of being in which a high degree of attention is applied to accomplishing a singular goal and results in optimal performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993).

Intrinsic motivation, performing tasks for the inherent interest or enjoyment, consistently predicts learning gains (Harpine, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to achievement goal theory, learner goals are related to mastery or performance, and these are affected by approach or avoidance (Elliot & Hulleman, 2017). Enjoyable tasks promote mastery-orientation and reduce task avoidance, resulting in improved learning (Conroy, 2017).

Although task enjoyment is infrequently studied in SLA research, it is a recognized concept in the field of psychology, particularly positive psychology (MacIntyre et al. 2019). Positive psychology explores what makes people feel fulfilled in life. It addresses "the workings of positive internal experiences such as emotions, positive individual characteristics such as traits associated with living well, and institutions that enable people to flourish" (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p. 154). More

recent studies by Dewaele (2019) and Lee (2020) have included foreign language enjoyment and found it to be a significant positive predictor of willingness to communicate (WTC) in a foreign language. Similarly, Teimouri et al. (2020) included L2 language joy as a factor that was positively correlated with grit and negatively correlated with anxiety. Grit, the ability to continue maintaining effort and interest despite difficulty over long periods of time, has predictive validity for achieving difficult goals (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Gaps in the Literature and Purposes of the Study

Multiple input methods have been less commonly used as predictors of L2 comprehension. In this study, two types of input were used. The first type, reading-then-listening (RL), provided the learners with an opportunity to read a section of a graded reader prior to listening to it. This treatment resulted in the learners having the opportunity to scaffold from the reading input to the listening comprehension tasks. The listening-only (LO) tasks also afforded the participants opportunities to receive target input. The current study contributes to L2 comprehension research by investigating how RL scaffolded activities and LO input activities differentially impact learners' comprehension of a graded reader. As of now, I am aware of no L2 studies that have done this.

Learner perceptions of difficulty have been investigated in studies focused on self-efficacy, expectancy-value theory, and areas of learner affect. This study builds on past literature regarding learner perceptions of difficulty and contributes to it by comparing perceptions of difficulty to task enjoyment and L2 comprehension (Kim, & Tracy-Ventura, 2011; Li et al., 2007). Previous researchers have tended to investigate the impact of perceptions of difficulty on productive tasks such as speaking and writing, whereas in this study I consider its role on receptive L2 comprehension.

Learner task enjoyment is an aspect of positive affect (Imai, 2010), but it has been studied little in SLA in comparison to other aspects of positive affect. When a task is enjoyable, it is likely that the learners have more intrinsic motivation and interest and perform better as a result. How input method influences L2 learners' task enjoyment has not been well researched. If input itself plays a role in promoting or reducing affect, this finding should be valuable to SLA researchers.

Research Questions

In this study, I seek to explore the following research questions.

RQ1: How do RL and LO inputs affect learner comprehension of a graded reader?

RQ2: How do RL input and LO input contribute to differences in learner perceptions of task difficulty and task enjoyment?

RQ3: To what degree are comprehension performances related to-learner perceptions of difficulty and enjoyment?

RQ4: To what degree are perceptions of difficulty and enjoyment related to one another?

Methods

Participants

The study was conducted with a single intact class at a women's university in western Japan, spanning six weeks. The 22 participants, aged 18–19, were first-year Japanese university students enrolled in a mandatory English class. Despite having a minimum of six years of prior experience studying compulsory English in secondary school, their proficiency was at a beginner level, as determined by the university's English proficiency test, with TOEIC scores below 400. During the study period, participants attended 90-minute compulsory intermediate listening classes weekly and engaged in a 90-minute reading and writing course each week.

The participants' background information, obtained one week before the study, revealed that eight had engaged in extracurricular activities, including studying English education in cram schools for up to three years. Additionally, four participants had brief experiences abroad in English-speaking countries, lasting less than one month. There was minimal variation in self-reported recent English standardized test scores among the participants.

Design

This quasi-experimental study involved one-intact, non-randomized group. Participant comprehension data were obtained from main idea and specific detail multiple-choice questions in response to a graded reader. The participants completed the text using two input methods, reading-then-listening (RL), and listening-only (LO) alternating each input method weekly. Task difficulty measurements and task enjoyment measurements were gathered via 4-point Likert scales. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, paired samples *t*-tests, and Pearson correlation coefficients.

Instrumentation

A graded reader published as part of the Oxford University Press Domino Series called *The Happy Prince* (Wilde, 2010) was used to generate comprehension input. This graded reader was the lowest of four levels and consisted of 250 headwords (i.e., words that represent a distinct concept and encompass all of their inflected forms). It was rated by the publisher as level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The Lextutor website (Cobb, n.d.), using the BNC-COCA 1–25k for textual analysis, indicated that the text had 3,145 tokens and 488 types. Tokens can be understood as separate occurrences of each word, including repeated words, whereas types represent unique words. The type-token ratio was 0.16, and the tokens per type was 6.44. The lexical density, which is the number of lexical items—nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs—divided by the total words used, was 0.49. The story was rated as grade 2.4–3.4 by the Flesch-Kincaid Scale. Audacity recording software (https://www.audacityteam.org/) was used to record the voice of a female English L1 speaker from the United States. She read at a speech rate of approximately 138–157 words per minute, making sure to maintain natural intonation patterns and to speak clearly.

Procedure

In the week prior to the study, the participants completed an informed consent form and background information sheet. They also received word lists with Japanese translations and brief English definitions of vocabulary from the graded reader that fell beyond the 1K (1 to 1,000 most frequent English words) range of the BNC-COCA (see Appendix A) and were instructed to study relevant sections of these vocabulary the week prior to each comprehension task. In the final half hour of each 90-minute class, the participants engaged in one-chapter RL or LO tasks. They then rated the task difficulty and task enjoyment of the chapter on 1 to 4 scales (see Appendix B). The story's vocabulary were projected on the board for participants who might have forgotten them prior to conducting the RL and LO tasks. The participants were not allowed to take notes, use electronic devices, or collaborate. The LO task audio was played through the computer lab's speaker system at an appropriate volume, as confirmed by the participants.

In the RL task, the participants had 10 minutes to read a 2–3-page chapter. The participants were instructed to re-read the chapter until the 10 minutes had expired if they finished it early to promote comprehension. The participants verbally assented that this amount of time was sufficient to read the section at least one time, but few could complete a chapter more than twice. After the participants had completed the reading, their copies of the story were taken away and the audio from that chapter was played once. In this way, the participants had an opportunity to read the chapter at least once and listen to it once.

The LO task mirrored the RL task in vocabulary instruction and support from the projector; the content came from the next chapter of the same story, but the participants did not receive written copies of the chapter. In the LO task, the participants listened to the chapter's audio three times with brief five second pauses between each listening. Repeated listenings were used to approximately equalize time on task, given that reading took more time than listening for the participants. In Chapter 1, for example, the participants read the story for 10 minutes and listened for 4 minutes and 5 seconds for a total of 14 minutes and 5 seconds to complete the task; whereas, three repeated listenings would have taken 12 minutes and 33 seconds.

After completing each RL and LO task, the participants answered six multiple-choice questions that were comprised of three main idea questions and three specific detail questions. The main idea questions were designed to target larger, essential concepts within the chapter, while the specific detail questions targeted incidental facts from the story. This approach was taken to explore whether the participants answered one question type more easily than the other. Main idea and specific detail questions commonly appear in reading comprehension sections of English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks to assess learners' comprehension of larger ideas, themes, and details of reading passages. At the end of each comprehension test, the participants also answered Likert scale questions relating to task difficulty and task enjoyment (see Appendix B).

Results

Research Question 1: How do RL and LO inputs Affect Learner Comprehension of a Graded Reader?

To address Research Question 1, which explores the impact of RL input and LO input on learner comprehension, analyses were conducted using a paired-sample t-test, Bayesian analysis, and Pearson's correlation. These analyses aimed to elucidate the relationship between comprehension scores for mean RL and LO comprehension tasks. Descriptive statistics for comprehension questions, organized by chapter and task, are presented in Table 1

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Comprehension Questions by Chapter and Task

Comprehension Scores	*N*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Chapter 1 RL Total 1	21	3	6	4.14	1.06
Chapter 2 LO Total 1	20	1	6	3.20	1.15
Chapter 3 RL Total 2	20	1	6	3.70	1.63
Chapter 4 LO Total 2	22	1	5	2.36	1.29
Chapter 5 RL Total 3	20	0	6	3.15	2.01
Chapter 6 LO Total 3	11	1	6	2.64	1.50

Note. RL = reading-then-listening; LO = listening-only.

The mean performances of the three RL and LO tasks were used to create the comprehension scores for the participants. Prior to conducting all analyses, assumptions were checked and met unless stated otherwise. An alpha of .05 was used for statistical interpretations of significance based on recommendations by Field (2009). A paired sample *t*-test indicated that the RL ($M = 3.66$, $SE = 0.29$) and LO ($M = 2.74$, $SE = 0.19$) task performances differed significantly, $t(21) = 2.86$, $p < .01$, $r = .53$. This study uses interpretations of Bayes factors based on Norouzian et al. (2019), and the Bayes factor of 10.50 strongly supported the alternative hypothesis that RL input resulted in better comprehension than LO input.

Three sets of RL and LO comprehension tests were used to bolster the reliability of the participants' comprehension assessment, but the questions themselves were designed so that they would not be significantly different from one another. Two repeated measures ANOVAs were used to investigate if each of the RL and LO tests were in fact of similar difficulty. For the RL comprehension tests, Mauchley's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been met, $X^2(2) = .84$, $p = .25$. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the RL comprehension tests, $F(2,34) = 2.73$, $p = .079$. Likewise, for the LO comprehension tests, Mauchley's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been met, $X^2(2) = .94$, $p = .74$. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the LO comprehension tests, $F(2,20) = 1.50$, $p = .25$. Because the tests

were not found to be significantly different from one another, I felt justified in my decision to include mean comprehension data for participants who had completed at least two of the three RL or LO comprehension tests. When one of the three tests was not completed, these data were treated as missing and were not included in the mean.

The decision to use multiple comprehension tests was grounded in classical test theory (CTT), which emphasizes the importance of minimizing measurement error and maximizing the consistency of test scores. By incorporating multiple sets of questions, I aimed to increase the reliability of the participants' comprehension assessment by reducing the impact of random fluctuations and potential biases associated with a single set of questions. According to CTT, reliability is enhanced when multiple measures of the same construct are aggregated, as this helps to compensate for the inherent variability in individual items or questions. Therefore, by administering three sets of RL and LO comprehension questions, I sought to provide a more robust and dependable measure of participants' comprehension abilities, despite the fact that the tests themselves were not designed to be, nor were they found to be, significantly different from one another.

Next, I investigated if there was a differential effect of input method as a result of main idea and specific detail questions specifically. The mean score for RL tasks 1 through 3 was 1.90 ($SE = 0.15$) for main ideas and 1.77 ($SE = 0.15$) for details, while the mean score for LO tasks 1 through 3 was 1.34 ($SE = 0.13$) for main ideas and 1.11 ($SE = 0.13$) for details. The maximum possible score for each of these sections was 3. See Table 2 for descriptive statistics for main idea and detail questions.

The mean task performances did not differ significantly for either the RL main idea ($M = 1.90$, $SE = 0.15$) and RL specific detail comprehension questions ($M = 1.77$, $SE = 0.15$), $t(21) = .94$, $p = .36$ or the LO main idea ($M = 1.38$, $SE = 0.13$) and LO specific detail tasks ($M = 1.11$, $SE = 0.13$), $t(21) = 1.40$, $p = .18$. Pearson's correlation tests indicated that the participants performed similarly on the RL main idea and RL specific detail questions $r = .58$, $p = .004$. A significant correlation was not found between the LO main idea and LO specific detail scores $r = -.13$, $p = .57$. According to Field (2009), a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.50 or more represents a large effect, 0.30–0.50 is a medium effect, and 0.10–0.30 is a small effect (p. 170).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Main Ideas and Detail Questions

	N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
RL Main 1	21	1	3	1.90	0.70
RL Detail 1	21	1	3	2.33	0.73
LO Main 1	20	1	3	1.95	0.76
LO Detail 1	20	0	3	1.25	0.91
RL Main 2	20	0	3	2.15	0.93
RL Detail 2	20	0	3	1.45	1.00
LO Main 2	22	0	3	0.95	0.84
LO Detail 2	22	0	3	1.41	0.80
RL Main 3	20	0	3	1.70	1.17
RL Detail 3	20	0	3	1.45	1.05
LO Main 3	11	0	3	1.09	0.83
LO Detail 3	11	1	3	1.55	0.93

Note. RL = reading-then-listening; LO = listening-only.

Research Question 2: How do RL input and LO input contribute to differences in learner perceptions of task difficulty and task enjoyment?

Research question 2 concerns the role of input and its relationship to L2 learners' perceptions of task difficulty and task enjoyment. The descriptive data show that the LO tasks were more difficult than the RL tasks on average. The participants also tended to rate the chapters of the story as being more difficult over the span of the six-week treatment. However, the story's vocabulary level did not vary considerably as measured by Flesch-Kincaid—ranging from the 2.4 to 3.3 grade level. See Table 3 for descriptive statistics for perceived task difficulty ratings.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Task Difficulty Ratings

Difficulty by Chapter	*N*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Chapter 1 RL 1	21	2	4	2.86	0.65
Chapter 2 LO 1	20	2	4	3.50	0.61
Chapter 3 RL 2	20	2	4	3.00	0.56
Chapter 4 LO 2	19	3	4	3.42	0.51
Chapter 5 RL 3	20	2	4	3.20	0.52
Chapter 6 LO 3	10	3	4	3.50	0.53

Note. Higher ratings represent greater participant perceptions of task difficulty.

RL = reading-then-listening; LO = listening-only.

A Shapiro-Wilk normality test revealed that the task difficulty data were not normally distributed, so a non-parametric Wilcoxon rank test was used to analyze if the input types had a significant effect on task difficulty. In the RL condition, difficulty was rated $M = 3.01$ out of 4. ($Mdn = 3.00$, $SE = .10$), indicating that most participants found the RL condition to be a little difficult. The LO task received

higher mean difficulty ratings (M = 3.50, Mdn = 3.50, SE = .09). The Wilcoxon rank test revealed a significant effect, W = 119, p < .001, r_{pb} = .98. The Bayes factor statistic 62.10 provided very strong evidence for the alternative hypothesis that LO tasks were perceived to be more difficult than RL tasks.

Regarding the participants' task enjoyment ratings, the participants rated the RL tasks as more enjoyable than the LO tasks. The task enjoyment values decreased steadily across measurements except between the LO Tasks 1 and 2. See Table 4 for descriptive statistics for task enjoyment.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Task Enjoyment

Enjoyment by chapter	*N*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Chapter 1 RL 1	21	2	4	3.14	0.48
Chapter 2 LO 1	20	2	4	2.75	0.64
Chapter 3 RL 2	20	2	4	3.10	0.55
Chapter 4 LO 2	19	2	4	2.95	0.71
Chapter 5 RL 3	20	1	4	2.95	0.69
Chapter 6 LO 3	10	2	4	2.60	0.70

Note. Higher ratings represent greater task enjoyment.

RL = reading-then-listening; LO = listening-only.

A Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicated non-normal distribution of the task enjoyment data, prompting the use of a Wilcoxon rank test to examine the impact of RL and LO tasks on enjoyment. In the RL condition, enjoyment was rated M = 3.05 (Mdn = 3.00, SE = .09), and M = 2.79, (Mdn = 2.67, SE = .13) for LO condition. The Wilcoxon rank test revealed a significant effect, W = 69.00, p = .01. The Bayes factor statistic 6.23 provided substantial evidence for the alternative hypothesis that RL tasks were more enjoyable than LO tasks. Participant ratings significantly correlated with one another (r_{pb} = .77). This means that while participants rated the RL condition as more enjoyable than the LO condition as a group, individuals tended to provide similar ratings in both conditions. In other words, those who gave high RL task enjoyment ratings were more likely to give high ratings in the LO condition and vice versa.

Research Question 3: To what degree are comprehension performances related to learner perceptions of task difficulty and enjoyment?

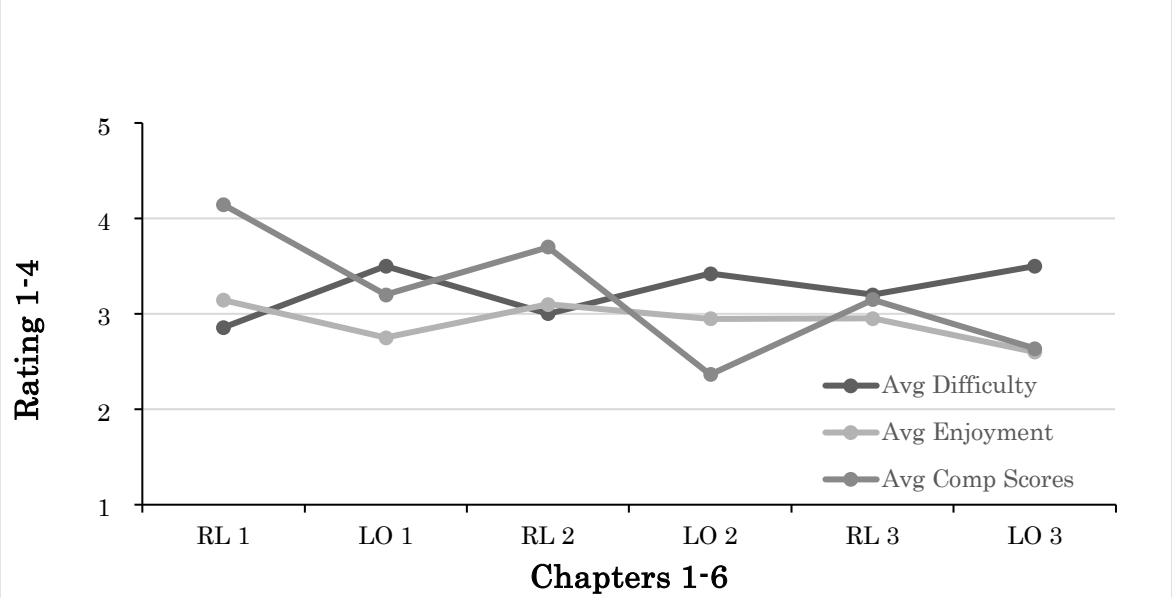
Research question 3 is related to understanding how comprehension performances are related to task difficulty and task enjoyment. A Pearson correlation showed that task difficulty ratings were found to have a significant negative correlation with comprehension performances (r = -.47, p = .03) for a medium effect. Comprehension scores were not found to be significantly correlated with task enjoyment (r = .21 p = .36). This suggests that the participants' enjoyment of the tasks was not related to their comprehension performances.

Research Question 4: To what degree are perceptions of task difficulty and enjoyment related to one another?

For the final research question, I investigated the relationship between the participants' ratings of task difficulty and task enjoyment. A Pearson correlation (r = .14, p = .53) revealed no significant correlation between the two affective ratings. However, a paired sample t-test indicated significant difference between the two variables, $t(21) = 3.06$, p = .006, r = .56. Under the hypothesis that perceptions of task difficulty and task enjoyment were different, the Bayes factor was 7.70, representing a substantial alternative to the null hypothesis. Furthermore, if posited that RL and LO comprehension tasks were perceived as more difficult than enjoyable, the Bayes factor rises to 15.30, providing strong evidence for this alternative hypothesis. Figure 1 displays mean comprehension on a scale of 0–6 while task difficulty and enjoyment ratings ranged from 1–4.

Figure 1

Average Comprehension Scores and Ratings of Task Difficulty and Enjoyment



Note. Higher values indicate better comprehension, higher perceptions of task difficulty, and greater task enjoyment.
RL = reading-then-listening; LO = listening-only; Comp = comprehension; Avg = average.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the effect of RL input and LO input on Japanese L2 learners' comprehension of a short, graded reader. The findings indicate that the participants comprehended the RL tasks better than the LO tasks. This is likely because reading before listening provides L2 learners with opportunities to re-read sections and have more control over the speed of the input. Furthermore, as English and Japanese are maximally distant languages, aural perception of phonemes can be particularly difficult for Japanese L2 learners. Also, the written text provides clear word boundaries that can be difficult to discern aurally in connected speech. Main idea and specific detail questions shared a positive correlation in the RL task, meaning that participants who were

likely to perform well on RL main idea tasks also performed well on RL specific detail comprehension tasks. However, no significant correlation was found between the main ideas and specific detail questions in the LO condition.

The comprehension findings align with Park's (2004) study, where she compared the L2 listening and reading comprehension of Korean university students. Park found that the students scored worse on both global and local comprehension questions with aural input than with reading input. Vidal's (2010) study comparing the effect of reading and listening input on vocabulary acquisition and retention also supports the results of this study as the reading participants in her study showed greater gains. In both Park (2004) and Vidal's (2010) studies, these discrepancies were larger for participants with lower proficiencies. As the students in this study were not estimated to have above TOEIC 400 proficiency test scores, the RL and LO differences could be discerned.

The second purpose was to investigate how the two input methods affected learners' perceptions of task difficulty and enjoyment. Despite their similarities, the aural input was rated as being more difficult. As the task difficulty ratings increased, task enjoyment ratings decreased, however, these ratings were not found to share a significant negative correlation. Révész and Brunfaut (2013) also found that higher participant ratings of listening difficulty strongly correlated with worse comprehension, $r = -.90$, $p < .01$, $n = 18$ (p. 54). In this study, the RL treatment provided the participants with a scaffolded opportunity that lowered perceptions of task difficulty, improved task enjoyment, and increased comprehension.

While the positive effects of task familiarity (Mackey et al., 2007) and task repetition (Fukuta, 2016) on L2 learning are well-established, limited research exists on the potential negative impact of repetitive tasks on participants' behavioral and cognitive engagement. Qiu and Lo's (2017) study revealed that repeated oral narrative tasks led to decreased engagement, with initial interest declining over time. In this study, as the RL and LO tasks were repeated over the course of the story, participant enjoyment similarly declined. Increased perceptions of difficulty and lower task enjoyment over time might be indicative of a gradual loss of interest in the task. The development of L2 reading and listening tasks has posed challenges for language teachers and learners alike, particularly in the areas of learner task interest and level appropriateness (Ducker & Saunders, 2014).

In sum, these findings suggest that there is a benefit to using scaffolded reading-then-listening activities to improve L2 comprehension. Incorporating reading into a listening task might be beneficial in improving L2 learner comprehension and task enjoyment, while lowering perceived difficulty. Educators must also be careful when challenging L2 learners to complete listening-only comprehension activities, especially when learners have little experience with the task, as was mentioned by several participants. This fact might have further contributed to lower performances, higher task difficulty ratings, and lower enjoyment ratings for the LO task.

Limitations

The generalizability of this study is limited due to the relatively small *N*-size of 22 and the homogeneous cultural and educational background of the participants. It would have been useful for the purposes of statistical analysis and improved reliability to have had more test items and a larger, varied pool of participants. The participants used in this study were all beginner level university students enrolled in a compulsory class, so it is unclear how higher-proficiency students might have performed on the comprehension tasks used in the study. In addition, the constructs used to measure comprehension, perceived task difficulty, and task enjoyment should be further developed.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the RL tasks yielded better comprehension than the LO tasks. The participants also perceived the RL tasks as less difficult and more enjoyable than the LO tasks. The participants' ratings of enjoyment and difficulty were found to be significantly different, but they did not have a significant negative correlation. Because Japanese is a phonologically distant language from English, accurately perceiving phonemes in the speech stream can be particularly challenging. The findings of this study suggest that using reading as a scaffolding activity for listening can facilitate L2 learner comprehension, lower their perceptions of listening task difficulty, and improve their enjoyment of listening tasks. Future L2 researchers and educators should consider the potential impact that the method of input might have on L2 learner comprehension, perceptions of task difficulty, and task enjoyment.

About the Author

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Appendices

Appendix A. The Pre-teaching Vocabulary List

		The Happy Prince Vocabulary
bake	焼く	to cook (food) in an oven using dry heat
blind	目が見えない	unable to see
rubbish heap	掃き溜め	a pile of garbage
melt	溶かす	to change or to cause (something) to change from a solid to a liquid usually because of heat
angel	天使	a spiritual being that serves especially as a messenger from God or as a guardian of human beings
beggar	こじき	a very poor person who asks for money and/or food
crack	割れる	a thin line in the surface of something that is broken
match	マッチ	a short, thin piece of wood or thick paper with a special tip that produces fire when it is scratched against something else
wing	翼	a part of an animal's body that is used for flying or gliding
sword	剣	a weapon with a long metal blade that has a sharp point and edge
swallow	ツバメ	a small bird that has long wings and a deeply forked tail
chapter	章、チャプター	one of the main sections of a book
councillor	参事官	a member of a group of people appointed or elected to make laws or give advice
column	円柱	a long post made of steel, stone, etc., that is used as a support in a building
mayor	市長	an official who is elected to be the head of the government of a city or town
palace	宮殿	home of the king and/or queen
statue	像	a figure usually of a person or animal that is made from stone, metal, etc.
fever	熱	a body temperature that is higher than normal
leaf	葉	one of the flat and typically green parts of a plant that grows from a stem or twig
attic	屋根裏	a room or space that is just below the roof of a building and that is often used to store things
reed	葦（あし）	a tall, thin grass that grows in wet areas

furnace	窯（かま）	an enclosed container in which heat is produced: such as one for melting metals
sapphire	サファイア	a clear, usually deep blue jewel
ruby	ルビー	a deep red stone that is used in jewelry
Egypt	エジプト	a country in Africa
Egyptian	エジプト人	a person from Egypt
forever	いつまでも	for all time
Sans- Souci	場所の名前	a name of a place. It means “without worry”
Nile	ナイル	a river in Africa
lead	鉛	a grey, heavy, soft metal
Cairo	カイロ	a city in Egypt

Appendix B. A Sample of the Test Instrument

The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde

Chapter 1

Main Idea Questions

1. Why was the prince happy?
a. He was happy because he has the best garden in the palace.
b. He was happy because the people in his city were happy.
c. He was happy because he had new things in his palace.
d. He was happy because he could laugh and play with his friends every day.

2. How does the swallow communicate with the reed?

a. The swallow and the reed write to each other.
b. The reed can talk.
c. The swallow talks and the reed uses gestures.
d. The swallow flies around.

3. Why did the people at the palace make a statue of the Happy Prince?
a. Because the prince told the people to make him a statue.
b. Because the prince died.
c. Because the city had a lot of extra money.
d. Because the children liked him.

Specific Detail Questions

1. What do the young students say he looks like?
a. He looks like he has a lot of money.
b. He looks handsome.
c. He looks like an angel.
d. He looks like a nice person.

2. Where do the swallows fly to after summer ends?

a. Mexico
b. South Africa
c. Europe
d. Egypt

3. Nothing _____ comes through the door of the Happy Prince's palace.
a. sad
b. happy
c. wonderful
d. scary

Rate the difficulty of the task from 1-4

1. Very easy (とても簡単だった)
2. A little easy (少し簡単だった)
3. A little difficult (少し難しかった)
4. Very difficult (とても難しかった)

Rate your enjoyment of the task from 1-4

1. I didn’t enjoy the task (全く楽しくなかった)
2. I mostly didn’t enjoy the task (あまり楽しくなかった)
3. I enjoyed the task a little (少し楽しかった)
4. I enjoyed the task (楽しかった)

Listening Live: Teaching Report

Using Listening Journals as an Extensive Component

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Rationale

Journals elicit a personal narrative from learners to help describe their learning (Lee & Cha, 2017). Dornyei (2007) explains that eliciting such descriptions helps prompt organic and unobtrusive accounts whereby learners can reflect on and evaluate their listening. Such accounts can help educators understand learners' approaches, difficulties, and problem-solving in second language listening.

Research shows that second language learners experience many difficulties when listening. Previous empirical studies have reported speed, accent, vocabulary, and topic knowledge as noticeable distractors for learners when listening to a range of resources (see Chen, 2016; Ivone & Renandya, 2022; Lee & Cha, 2020, Roe, 2013). Many of these difficulties result from the learners' resource selection, lack of interest in the topic, or unfamiliar speaking features, such as non-American accents. However, helping learners to increase their exposure towards a range of listening resources and to reflect on their real-time listening can help them to address their difficulties.

An approach to both increase exposure and promote further reflection is the usage of listening journals with guided prompts in extensive listening. Setting these as a homework task encourages learners to listen outside the classroom, choose their own resources, increase their listening practice, and improve their listening confidence. Guided prompts help learners reflect on their listening and raise their metacognitive awareness. Metacognition, or specifically metacognitive knowledge which is most frequently understood through the work of Flavell (1979), elicits learners' person, task, and strategy knowledge:

- Person knowledge helps learners reflect on the knowledge they have about themselves as learners.
- Task knowledge helps learners to consider the task aims and demands they have to complete.

- Strategy knowledge helps learners to consciously think about the skills they need to improve to complete an aim or goal.

Thus, using prompts that encourages learners to unlock their metacognitive knowledge can help them to utilize their abilities appropriately. By setting an extensive listening component, learners can better understand their approaches to listening, the difficulties they encounter, and how best to problem-solve these difficulties. The following offers a suggested framework on how to implement extensive listening journals as a course component.

Using an Extensive Listening Journal Component

Teaching: reflective listening, metacognitive strategies, extensive listening

Student level: all

Teacher experience: To monitor and give feedback on reflective journals

Task time: 20-40 minutes homework time

Prep list: Journal template, feedback sheet

Overview

For the extensive listening component, ask learners to complete weekly listening practices and subsequent journal entries for five weeks. Outline the assignment to the learners in class in Week 1 and then post to their online learner management system (e.g., Google Classroom) so that they can access the guidelines and journal templates anytime (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for sample guidelines and a journal template respectively).

Method

1. Develop a listening journal template. Adapt the journal for different teaching contexts by changing the prompts to help the learners reflect on their experience, listening, and difficulties from their practice.
2. Provide journal guidelines which offer step-by-step instruction for your learners to follow. Ensure that there is a list of suitable resources, a word count, suggested length for the running time of the chosen resource, and directions for making any notes while listening.
3. After learners have finished listening to their chosen resources, have them complete a journal entry. The prompts can be adapted to focus on the learners' person (e.g., their own experience of the listening), task (e.g., their reflection of completing the task), and strategy (e.g., the problem-solving approaches they used when listening) knowledge based on their extensive listening experience. Ask the learners to write or type their entries for submission.

4. Provide the learners with individual or group feedback. This can be given by adding bullet points to a table to categorize their responses by prompts. Anonymize the responses to protect the learners' identity. Display the feedback in class for the group to view.
5. Give learners the opportunity to look at their feedback and ask questions in the next class. Answer questions and prepare learners for the next extensive listening practice. Review and repeat for the number of journals for which you have planned.

Prepare the journal worksheet to include a list of resources that learners can choose from and develop guidelines so learners can follow instructions while listening (i.e., listen once/twice, take notes, make a vocabulary list). Resources can be adapted for your class by considering the length and/or text difficulty. Using foundational resources that help learners practice general listening (www.breakingnewsenglish.com; www.eslnews.co.nz) or more academic listening (www.ted.com; www.sciencedaily.com) can help learners to focus on using more appropriate resources for their practices. Encouraging students to take notes as they listen can also be useful before they complete their journal entries. Once each journal entry is complete, consider offering learners either individual or group feedback before their next practice to improve their listening skills and journal entries.

Results

From the 160 journal entries which 32 learners submitted over the five weeks, the following results were found. In person knowledge, the learners reported an interest in using academic resources such as www.ted.com and listening to familiar news stories on www.breakingnewsenglish.com. In task knowledge, learners used new vocabulary from the resource to aid their comprehension, but they thought predictions were not useful while listening. In strategy knowledge, the learners focused on using key words to understand specific ideas while listening and using their notes to summarize and give opinions after listening. These results suggest that learners should choose and practice listening with topics that have secondary goals (i.e., study-related, hobby-related) to help guide their listening text selections to be more useful and engaging. Further, supporting learners with basic frameworks (i.e., take notes while listening, write down key words) can help them to direct their attention and focus on the listening which can help to manage real-time cognitive processes. Ultimately, learners should be given the autonomy to choose and direct their own listening to encourage accessible and flexible practices in extensive listening.

Conclusion

Understanding how learners listen, the approaches they use, and how they manage their listening difficulties can aid understanding of how learners can listen better. Using listening journals for extensive listening practice can give both teachers and learners a personal and organic insight into learners' L2 listening practices. Further, learners can be encouraged to develop their listening confidence when using an accessible and flexible extensive listening component.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Example listening journal guidelines

1. Write five entries this term.
    Each entry is worth 3% of your final grade.
    You need to write a detailed account for each entry.

2. Please write your journal entry in English.

3. Please write your entry as soon as you finish the listening activity. For each entry, write
    The time and date
    The title/speaker/website
    Note your understood percentage/enjoyment rating
    Answer the questions on the journal

4. You should make your listening experience not only enjoyable but also educational. The following are some suggested websites:
    TED Talks – https://www.ted.com/
    Breaking News English - https://breakingnewsenglish.com/
    Six Minute English - https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english
    CNN – https://edition.cnn.com/
    BBC Learning English - https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/
    Voice of America - https://www.voanews.com/
    NHK World - https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/
    Any website of your choice

Appendix 2

Journal Prompt examples

1. Describe how you listened to the material you chose. What did you do to listen?

2. Which part of the listening activity was easy (vocab/speed/accent/background noise/interest in the topic/the speaker/visuals/other)? Why was it easy?

3. Which part of the listening activity was difficult (vocab/speed/accent/background noise/your interest in the topic/the speaker/visuals/other)? Why was it difficult?

4. What did you do when you found the listening and/or activity difficult? Why?

5. Did you enjoy your chosen listening? Why? Why not?

6. What will you do next time to help you/improve your listening? (set yourself some goals using the strategy list for next time ☺)

7. Any other comments? Messages for the teacher?

Book Review

Reed, M., & Jones, T. (2021). *Listening in the Classroom: Teaching Students How to Listen*. TESOL Press. Available from: TESOL International Association. 1925 Ballenger Avenue Suite 550, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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In *Listening in the Classroom: Teaching Students How to Listen* (2021), professionals from a range of teaching backgrounds draw on their personal and classroom experience to offer advice and exercises on bringing effective and engaging practices to the listening classroom. Compiled by Marnie Reed and Tamara Jones, the book features a foreword by Christine Goh and twelve chapters on topics crossing a wide range of listening micro-disciplines.

Each chapter begins with a personal anecdote where the writer discusses their listening experiences as a language learner or teacher. From there, the authors discuss the theoretical underpinnings behind the listening issue they will address and how the approaches used have found success in their classroom contexts. These often include references to different levels of listening ability and different circumstances for teaching contexts such as immersion programs, high school English classes, and listening-specific classes. Additionally, different aspects of listening are addressed, ranging from metacognitive approaches (Chapter 1), the position of lexical bundles in academic listening texts (Chapter 4), and the value of extensive listening opportunities at a comprehensible level for learners (Chapter 11). The 12 different chapters offer a range of techniques and approaches that can be tailored to our listening classrooms.

Tamara Jones' introduction, titled 'Why Do We Need To Teach Listening?' discusses potential reasons why listening has remained on the periphery of teaching courses. She summarizes the range of listening challenges to be addressed through the text, such as top-down and bottom-up skills, parsing, and metacognition. She finishes by grouping the chapters according to such skills and outlines the goal of the book: that it seeks to offer practical teaching tips addressing a range of listening difficulties applicable to different classroom contexts.

Chapter 1 sees *Matthew Wallace* discuss how metacognitive practices help students develop listening skills through better planning, monitoring, and evaluation of how they listen. He outlines how activities like prediction can aid listener expectations while verification opportunities can help learners become more effective evaluators of their own listening skills. He also discusses how

metacognition-based activities can dovetail effectively with listening activities found in commercial textbooks and how activities like questionnaires and listening diaries help to aid while-listening and post-listening reflection opportunities, thereby helping our students become more self-directed listeners.

In **Chapter 2**, co-editor *Tamara Jones* discusses the insufficiency of printed word lists when helping students become more proficient English listeners. Inconsistent English spelling, clusters, and differing vowel sounds create challenges even for learners who have ostensibly strong vocabulary knowledge. Among the problems she addresses is how missing or mishearing segments of content words (de*f*ending/de*p*ending), (p*l*aying/paying) or issues with diminishing sounds such as schwa usage (/ə/) can lead to breakdowns in understanding. Jones identifies recognition and practice techniques for the classroom, describing activities that include IPA usage, target sounds, and using texts and dictations which practice specific pronunciation and spelling patterns. She finishes by discussing how students benefit from these practices (i.e., identifying word syllables, stress patterns of multi-syllable words) in-class and as homework exercises. Jones' final point identifies that as much as 13% of listening errors are due to errors in syllable knowledge, suggesting this under-addressed aspect of listening teaching needs to be addressed more in the classroom.

Joseph Siegel looks at the importance of morphological markers to identify word boundaries in **Chapter 3**. Drawing on the growing acceptance that grammar instruction and awareness has a place in building listening skills, he suggests activities like word counting, dictation, and sentence level prediction exercises can help learners become more proficient listeners. For example, learners can identify lexical segmentation to help direct their attention and concentration when listening to faster speech. He finishes by outlining a series of in-class activities such as using word lists, implementing word counting tasks based on listening texts, and conducting dictation exercises with attention drawn to specific morphological markers such as prefix or suffix usage, to identify boundaries when listening.

In **Chapter 4**, *Valeria Bogorevich* and *Elnaz Kia* start with their experiences teaching academic preparation courses. They describe their students' struggles with correctly parsing lexical bundles (e.g., sequences of three or more words) in academic listening texts. Such bundles are far more frequent in academic settings than in normal conversation, and often contain weak forms, making these phrases more challenging for non-native English users to understand. The signposting nature of these bundles help students identify these phrases more easily when attending academic lectures in the future. The authors describe how simpler recognition activities (i.e., ordering, gap-fills), and real world and online opportunities help to support learners in their development.

Wayne Rimmer writes in **Chapter 5** about the parsing of spoken speech. He discusses different approaches to help students understand texts, such as recognizing where punctuation can help determine different tone units, and how they can overcome inaccuracies in decoding spoken

language. He presents different exercises (e.g., dictation, dictogloss, using online resources) as ways for students to improve their grammatical knowledge and their ability to parse for both predictable and unpredictable listening situations.

Chapter 6, written by co-editor *Marnie Reed*, discusses how many listening skills taught in the classroom (e.g., understanding main ideas, note-taking) can be more an approach to testing rather than teaching. She describes different situations in which students are asked to perform under pressure. For example, students may mishear known words in faster real-time speech due to listening challenges (i.e., contracted or linked words); a difficulty commonly allied to students' L1 listening habits. They may encounter different syllable structures, or a lack of inflections between their own native tongue and their L2 knowledge. Another issue identified by the author is where unfamiliar intonation might affect meaning, leading students towards misunderstandings. Reed provides some suggested strategies for using context, language, and acoustic information that help students to understand the input. Suggested ideas help to improve awareness and develop listening skills by surveying their understanding of the strategies to monitor their listening development.

Freddie Gay's **Chapter 7** looks at helping students to use weak forms when parsing meaning from speech, identifying reasons why learners struggle with these forms, and discusses how such struggles can inhibit learner listening development. This is especially evident for learners seeking to move from intermediate to higher levels of listening and spoken usage. The author offers several perception activities (i.e., targeted dictation exercises) and discusses how scaffolding such exercises with opportunities for students to share their ideas and perceptions can aid more than just listening. The author summarizes that many weak forms can have different meanings based on their function and context and offers suggestions to address this additional challenge in the language classroom.

In **Chapter 8**, *Mark McAndrews'* outlines 'Thought Groups' to compare the level of grammar and punctuation clarity offered in written communication and the often-fleeting nature of speech. He identifies subtle acoustic clues like pauses, pitch, and the elongation of words to help listeners identify boundaries in thought and help them with predicting, inferencing, and nuancing in meaning. McAndrews presents a three-step approach of Presentation, Accuracy Practice, and Fluency Practice. After presenting the relevant language, the accuracy and practice stages involve focusing on specific sentence pairs (e.g., transitive and intransitive verbs), while fluency practice is completed as homework. As students progress through these steps, the chosen stems get progressively shorter, thus increasing time pressure with each practice. McAndrews concludes the chapter by supplying detailed example descriptions and exercises for each section of the lesson.

In **Chapter 9's** focus on projection, the listener's gauge of where a conversation is heading, *Jonathon Ryan* discusses the difficulties that students encounter with listening in interactional situations. Ryan details some of the fundamental issues regarding turn-taking in conversations and the difficulties students encounter in group situations. He describes how students may be challenged

by identifying cues to show that a turn is complete. For example, Ryan describes how learners can build on their ideas using skills such as identifying and predicting expected responses. He goes on to discuss the importance of effective text selection for students to identify these cues and to help raise listener awareness and perception of both immediate and upcoming responses. The chapter finishes by outlining activities to help students develop their fluency with minimal responses such as '*Mm'*, '*Right'*, and '*Is it?'*

In **Chapter 10**, *William C. Cole-French* looks at notetaking for Academic Purposes and asks how we can help students in lectures go beyond the 'copy-regurgitate' approach and analyze their notes to improve their memory and grasp of the material. Using different TED Talks as his primary listening texts, the author offers a three-step formula that outlines understanding structure, assessing source credibility, and maintaining interest in the text. For structure, Cole-French suggests step-by-step techniques for assisting learners in identifying key points in lectures by analyzing key words and working with cues such as discourse markers and intonation. For credibility, he looks at academic and anecdotal as well as aural and visual support which help establish validity. He also offers advice on how we can help students grasp important points through analysis of pace in lectures, such as focusing on the speaker's slower speech to underline certain points. Finally, Cole-French discusses how speakers seek to engage audiences' feelings and imagination and the difficulties that different cultural contexts present. The chapter offers a three-pronged reflective structure for taking the learners' listening journey beyond the world of symbols, abbreviations, and key words, into a realm where more effective understanding and engagement is possible.

Chapter 11 sees *Francisca Maria Ivone* and *Willy Ardian Renandya* share experiences of engaging students in listening practice beyond the intensive listening structures. Interesting texts which are at an appropriate level can address students' affective factors such as stress and low confidence. The authors list potential websites for extensive listening materials and offer techniques on how learners can decide whether the level of the text is suited to them. They also outline the benefits of narrow listening (i.e., learners focus on the same topic field) and outline the advantages of listening while reading for lower levels. Reflection opportunities are also outlined, suggesting informal follow-up activities that can be written or spoken and completed on learner management systems or as in-class activities. Finally, the authors discuss how listening journals can measure learners' progress using different extensive listening tasks or resources by offering insights from their own learners' experiences.

In **Chapter 12,** *Beth Sheppard* looks at the advantages that an error-friendly classroom can bring to student listening skill development. She focuses on the process of how students can practice listening away from using the traditional product-based approach (i.e., using comprehension questions). She suggests how students can improve their listening skills through activities which focus on understanding word boundaries, practicing the sounds of words they already know, and interpreting the grammar within the text. Students can also work with prompts to aid their metacognitive

development, helping them to gain more understanding of where they make errors, and raise their awareness to gain greater learning independence. Sheppard also describes how paused transcription activities can aid teachers in understanding their students' errors, and help students build strategies which help to improve their skills.

Each chapter offers a consistent structure that aids the reading experience. The personal observances of the challenges that each author encounters in either their professional or personal circumstances leads effectively into the chapter focus, which presents the literature and then in-class, practical advice for each context. Such advice for in-class activities is often accompanied by example exercises, which educators can draw inspiration from for their own activities or use in tandem with listening activities in their textbooks. The chapters regularly refer to other sections within the book containing related observation or activities. Generally, the chapters are written with readability in mind: authors explain theories in engaging, lay terms which underpin their practices before outlining the in-class techniques used. As a primer to build teacher confidence, there is plenty of food for thought within these pages, and many educators will find inspiration here to help with both test and skills-based listening classes. Listening need not be the under-addressed or unengaging classroom element within the 21st Century language classroom. Ultimately, teachers seeking to develop beyond the traditional practices associated with teaching listening can look to these chapters for supportive and engaging ideas for their own teaching contexts.

Submission Guidelines

Feature Articles

Submissions should be clearly written, and fully-documented, research articles, in English or Japanese. Analysis and data can be quantitative, qualitative, or both. Manuscripts are reviewed and evaluated anonymously, based on reviewer expertise and interest. Papers are evaluated for degree of scholarly research, relevance, originality of conclusions, etc. Submissions should:

- be of relevance to language educators in Japan.
- be blinded (made anonymous for review purposes). See below for more information.
- be 5,000-8000 words for longer manuscripts (including references but excluding appendices)
- be 3,000-5,000 words for short manuscripts (including references but excluding appendices)
- have paragraphs separated by single carriage returns (may be indented), and subheadings (bold, bold-italic, or italic) used throughout for the convenience of readers and not have numbered headings.
- have a supplementary file, including the article's title, the author's name, affiliation, contact details, and word count at the top of the first page, submitted along with the blinded paper which will NOT be made available to reviewers.
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. included in the main file in the appropriate places, and also attached as supplementary files.
- have an English abstract of up to 150 words and also a Japanese translated version (authors are responsible for providing their own translation of abstracts) in the paper

  *Abstracts are used by reviewers to determine whether they wish to review the paper.
- be accompanied by a 100-word biographical background - NOT made available to reviewers.
- include the DOI for every reference that has a DOI. Preface the DOI with the appropriate HTML header (e.g., https://doi.org/).
- follow APA 7th Edition Guidelines. See below for more information.

We also accept student papers, teaching reports and reviews.

For more information contact listening@jalt.org or see https://jaltlistening.wordpress.com/

The Listening Conference 2024

Our next Listening SIG event will be the JALT Listening SIG Conference on Saturday 13th July. The JALT Listening SIG Conference has been organized together with the JALT Kyoto Chapter. The whole day event will showcase some of the latest listening research, teaching, and learning presentations from the field.

The conference is scheduled to run from 10am to 4pm with ten presentations and one Round Table discussion scheduled in two rooms for the entire day. This is our third SIG event which will be held face-to-face. There will be a social on Friday 12th and also one to wrap up the conference on Saturday 13th.

Eateries and lunch options are nearby and of course, you can take in the sights and sounds of Kyoto over this long weekend. We have created a registration form for those who are interested in attending. Please complete the form before the deadline so we can plan a safe conference. We look forward to seeing you in Kyoto on Saturday 13th July!

If you have any questions about the forthcoming conference, please email us at listening@jalt.org

Conference Date: **Saturday 13th July 2024**
Location: **Campus Plaza, Kyoto**
Participation fee: **Free for everyone**

To register for the event: https://forms.gle/fjtucyBRhKjrMHjn6

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