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From Listening to Learning: How Journals Shape the Comprehension of EFL Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the perceptions of students about listening journals and the influence on their comprehension. A qualitative design was adopted and participants included were 43 fourth-semester students enrolled in listening course. This was in the form of interviews conducted to collect in-depth insights as the primary source of data. Moreover, the question related to the perceptions of students was answered through a survey conducted using a Likert-scale questionnaire to provide quantitative data in support of the interviews. The results showed that listening journals were implemented in 12 sessions, and students submitted weekly reflections after completing the assignments. The journals included prompts that focused on comprehension challenges, new vocabulary, and listening strategies. It was also observed that students participated in a variety of materials including lectures, podcasts, and videos with flexibility in content selection to ensure increased engagement. Furthermore, lecturers provided general feedback on the journals

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to motivate deeper reflection and self-assessment. Students reported that the journals assisted in focusing listening practice, tracking progress, and identifying areas for improvement. These results provide a useful perspective on the application of listening journals in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context and suggest educational implications to improve listening comprehension and autonomy of students.

Keywords: Extensive Listening; Listening Journals; Perceptions Of Students

1. Introduction

Listening is a fundamental skill in language learning which is important for developing speaking, reading, and writing abilities. It assists students to understand pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and grammar considered critical for effective communication ^[1]. However, several students believe listening activities are challenging due to the anxiety and frustration often experienced because of the limited control over the process ^[2-4]. This difficulty shows the need for effective strategies to improve listening skills.

Extensive listening (EL) directly addresses the challenges by providing students with plentiful and comprehensible listening material. The exposure of students to diverse spoken languages allows EL to support the development of key skills such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and accent recognition ^[5,6]. The concept has long been a cornerstone of language learning but has received less attention partly due to the lack of suitable materials ^[7]. EL activities in the form of teacher-led dictations, reading aloud, or self-directed listening for pleasure offer flexible opportunities for students to enhance listening skills. These activities are also in line with the increasing role of information and communication technology ^[8,9].

The incorporation of listening journals can further enhance the benefits of EL. Listening journals are a continuous process that requires students to document participation in out-of-class listening activities and reflect on the contribution of the experiences to their improvement ^[10]. The activities promote metacognitive awareness, personalized learning, and the development of listening strategies. The process allows students to engage in self-reflection, track progress, and identify areas for improvement. This is because the recording of thoughts on authentic listening experiences by students as observed in the following real-world events and the reflection on their understanding allows the active enhancement of listening skills ^[10,11].

Listening journals offer several benefits but are associated with some challenges such as time management, consistency, and the subjective nature of reflections. However, the integration of the activities into EL leads to the provision of a valuable tool for reinforcing listening practice, fostering greater student autonomy, and enhancing metacognitive skills.

Previous studies have successfully shown the ability of journals in assisting students to engage with listening tasks more effectively and develop the skills over time to identify the key aspects of usage in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting ^[12,13]. However, limited attention was placed on specific challenges faced by students and teachers when implementing listening journals in EL programs. Some of the challenges include difficulties with understanding different accents, managing unfamiliar vocabulary, the need for repeated listening, and the additional task of writing reflective entries which limits the effectiveness of the method.

This study aims to address the gaps identified by examining the implementation of listening journals in EL framework with a focus on the perceptions of students and the challenges encountered. The purpose is to offer context-specific, practical insights to enhance listening instruction, foster student autonomy, and inform pedagogical strategies in similar settings. Moreover, this study also explores the possibilities and constraints of listening journals in real-world classroom applications compared to previous scholars who focus primarily on the advantages. Deeper insights are provided into the role of listening journals in actual classroom environments by emphasizing the interaction of students with listening resources and exploration of different learning methods. The aim is to assist EFL practitioners in providing more impactful listening activities to subsequently increase autonomy, engagement, and reflective learning. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on EL by offering a localized perspective from an Indonesian EFL context to enrich the discussion

with context-sensitive results. The inquiry was guided by proposing the following study questions:

Study Questions:

- 1) How are listening journals structured and utilized in extensive listening activities?
- 2) How do students perceive implementing listening journals based on extensive listening activities?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Extensive Listening

Listening is very important in language acquisition and serves as part of the critical skills for students striving to achieve proficiency. It is an active process that requires understanding and interpreting the meaning of spoken words as well as engaging with the complexities of language in real-time unlike passive hearing. The process includes several cognitive aspects such as comprehension, discrimination, retention, prediction, analysis, and note-taking which are all required by students to be attentive and responsive^[6,14-16].

A powerful method to enhance listening skills is EL which offers students an abundance of authentic, enjoyable audio input outside the classroom. EL is useful for improving vocabulary acquisition and strengthening speaking and writing abilities^[16], focused and structured listening tasks, this method motivates students to actively engage with a variety of content such as podcasts, audiobooks, television programs, or even casual conversations.

EL varies widely and reflects the different needs and interests of students. Teachers can guide students through dictations and read-aloud sessions while self-directed listening allows students to explore preferred content which further increases motivation and deeper engagement^[16,17]. The activities allow students to listen for meaning, strengthen ability to recollect and apply new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and enhance overall speaking skills.

Several studies have reported the significant benefits of EL in language learning. For example, the combination of podcasts and personal blogs allowed students to track their listening progress and refine the strategies implemented^[18,19]. This method empowered students to be

more reflective during learning while improving listening comprehension. A similar study on EL^[20,21] suggested that the integration of listening and reading tasks produced superior learning outcomes compared to focusing on only one skill. These integrated methods motivated students to perceive language as a cohesive system, where listening, reading, and speaking reinforce each other.

Innovative strategies such as the application of audiobooks and television programs provided valuable second-language auditory input which allowed students to experience authentic spoken language in context. These resources supported EL goals by presenting language in natural settings through storytelling, dialogue, or narrative. Moreover, media such as television episodes introduced students to different accents and vocabulary as well as ensured exposure to a variety of speech patterns required in improving listening skills in a realistic and enjoyable manner^[22].

Previous studies report the benefits of EL but information on its structured implementation in EFL classroom settings is lacking. There is also a rare focus on how students actively engage and reflect on EL through structured tasks such as listening journals. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by exploring the role of listening journals as a bridge between EL and reflective learning in order to enhance the metacognitive engagement and listening skills of students.

2.2. Extensive Listening

Listening journals are a series of tasks where students record experiences garnered through the activities designed to improve listening comprehension^[10]. Previous studies consistently showed that listening to journals significantly improved listening skills^[12,13,23], expanded vocabulary^[23], as well as increased confidence and motivation^[12,24]. Listening journals also assisted students to improve pronunciation^[25] despite the constraints related to the need for a longer time during the implementation process^[12,13]. The tasks allow students to engage in real-life audio materials, take notes, and reflect on their understanding^[10].

The active process fosters deeper comprehension and development of listening skills. A typical listening journal has four key components which include summarizing con-

tent, reacting, reflecting on listening progress, and describing the strategies used^[10].

Studies have not been conducted to thoroughly examine the specific difficulties students face when keeping listening journals, particularly in balancing structured reflection with extensive listening freedom despite the advantages identified. The role of feedback provided in shaping student engagement with journals also remains understudied. Previous studies suggested that listening journals enhanced metacognitive awareness but there was a need for further assessment to determine how students understood and navigated the difficulties encountered in EL framework activities.

2.3. Perceptions of Students

Perceptions refer to how students interpret and make sense of learning experiences with a focus on the classroom activities, teacher guidance, learning materials, and peer interactions. The concept covers their beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and emotions about the learning environment. These perceptions significantly influence engagement, motivation, and academic performance^[26–28]. The understanding of the perceptions owned by students provides educators with valuable insights to improve teaching strategies, foster supportive environments, and address diverse learning needs^[29].

In the context of EL and listening journals, the perceptions of students reflect their attitudes toward the activities conducted. This can be related to the usefulness of journals to track listening progress, the impact on improving skills, and overall satisfaction with the task. Moreover, EL students can share their feelings about engaging with tasks such as listening to podcasts, audiobooks, or videos for extended periods. These perceptions are capable of showing the benefits of EL for enhancing listening comprehension, vocabulary, and overall language proficiency, as well as the preferences for types of materials and the challenges encountered.

Previous studies discussed the role of listening journals in language learning but minimal information was provided on how students perceived the effectiveness, specifically EL framework. The focus was mostly on EL or listening journals separately with limited attention on the role of combining both in language learning. There are also

fewer studies on the specific challenges students face when reflecting on activities in listening journals. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the attitudes of students, difficulties, and strategies in integrating listening journals into extensive listening activities. The aim is to deeply understand the engagement of students in reflective listening tasks and how teachers can optimize the activities for language learning development.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

A qualitative design was adopted to examine the implementation of listening journals in EL activities and to explore the perceptions of students about the usage. This was in the form of a descriptive qualitative method which allowed an in-depth exploration of the experiences, attitudes, and reflections of participants. The qualitative component served as the primary focus because it provided rich, contextualized insights into how students engaged with reflective listening practices. Moreover, the quantitative component was obtained from the questionnaire to solely serve as supportive evidence. This was achieved by offering numerical trends to complement and reinforce the qualitative results from interviews. The supportive quantitative data assisted in confirming the patterns and showed the areas of convergence between narrative accounts and statistical results.

This study primarily discusses an understudied gap in EFL teaching by assessing the specific challenges faced by students when integrating listening journals into EL activities. The comprehensive evaluation provides context-sensitive insights to guide teachers in designing and implementing listening journals more effectively. This is expected to improve the engagement and learning outcomes for students.

3.2. Participants

Participants consisted of 43 fourth-semester students enrolled in a compulsory listening course in a university-level EFL program. All students had prior experience of listening journal activities as part of their coursework and this was necessary to ensure familiarity with the practice

and provision of informed responses. The participation offered authentic insights into how listening journals were implemented and perceived in EL activities.

3.3. Study Instruments

This study used two instruments which were a Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to obtain comprehensive data. The structured 13-item questionnaire was distributed to all 43 participants to assess the perceptions of listening journals with a focus on the perceived usefulness, challenges encountered, and overall impact on listening comprehension development.

The 13 items were categorized into three key aspects based on the concepts of meaningfulness, competence, and listening strategies. Moreover, each item was measured using a four-point Likert scale which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The examples of items from the meaningfulness aspect include statements such as “I enjoy doing extensive listening activities” and “Extensive listening activities help me realize that learning to listen in English is meaningful.” Those related to the competence aspect that focus on self-perceived development include vocabulary gains and communicative confidence. Listening strategies aspect includes items that show the habits of students such as “I regularly evaluate my own progress in listening,” “Writing down important keywords helps me organize my understanding,” and “To improve my listening skills, I also listen to English songs, stories, or read-aloud materials outside class.” The items assisted students in measuring their engagement with listening journal activity from the cognitive, affective, and behavioral perspectives. This instrument was subjected to a validation process to ensure clarity, content relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Moreover, responses were collected anonymously to ensure honest feedback.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants based on the diverse responses provided in the questionnaire. The aim was to explore deeper insights related to the experiences of students with listening journals, the perceived benefits of the activity, and the difficulties faced. The interview protocol included open-ended questions that motivated participants to provide more information on their experiences in order to retrieve rich qualitative data to complement the questionnaire results.

A carefully selected subgroup of students participat-

ed in the semi-structured interviews to provide deeper information on their experiences. The selection was based on the diversity of questionnaire responses in order to capture a variety of viewpoints. The interviews were conducted personally with a total of 10 students including 3 males and 7 females. The opinions of students about the benefits and drawbacks of listening journals, interactions with learning resources, and the development of listening methods were the main topics. The interviews were recorded with the permission of participants and each session lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. Moreover, the open-ended questions use motivated elaboration and allow participants to provide in-depth explanations and examples.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how listening journals were implemented and perceived by students. Qualitative data served as the primary basis for analysis while those obtained quantitatively were supportive evidence to strengthen and validate the results.

3.4.1. Questionnaire data analysis

The questionnaire was designed with a Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as the mean scores and frequency distributions measured to summarize the perceptions of listening journals. The results were used to identify common trends and overall perceptions related to the effectiveness of listening journals in improving comprehension and engagement.

3.4.2. Interview data analysis

The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically using NVivo 12 Plus. This process included coding the responses to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits of using listening journals by students. The adoption of NVivo allowed for systematic data organization and visualization. It also provided a better understanding of how listening journals influenced the metacognitive awareness, listening strategies, and self-assessment skills of students.

3.4.3. Data Triangulation

The credibility and trustworthiness of the results were enhanced by cross-checking the data from interviews and questionnaires to identify points of convergence and divergence. This triangulation ensured the themes from qualitative analysis were supported by quantitative trends. The process also allowed the examination of inconsistencies to provide a more balanced interpretation of the results. The combination of supportive quantitative results with rich qualitative insights through triangulation allowed this study to provide a comprehensive and credible account of the implementation and impact of listening journals within EL activities in an EFL context.

4. Results

4.1. Listening Journals Are Structured and Utilized as Part of EL Activities

The activities related to listening journals were conducted in 12 meetings with students required to collect weekly reflections after listening assignment was provided in class. The journals were compiled with specific instructions that aimed to guide students to focus on sev-

eral aspects of listening experience. These included the challenges experienced during the learning process, new vocabulary learned, and strategies used to understand the material. Moreover, the journals also motivated students to reflect on the learning process in order to increase meta-cognitive awareness which was very important for improving listening practice. Students were also supported to reflect on listening practices, identify areas of improvement, and track progress over time ^[30,31]. The structure of listening journal activities implemented during the 12-week extensive listening project is summarized in **Table 1**.

In terms of content, students engaged with a variety of listening materials including recorded lectures, podcasts, and video clips. Some others were allowed to select preferred listening materials with most exercises designed to ensure a variety of language exposure. This flexibility in content selection increased student engagement and emphasized the importance of providing diverse and interesting materials to maintain student motivation in EL activities ^[32]. Several participants reported enjoying the freedom to select topics in line with their interests during the interview. The trend supported the claim ^[10] that personalized learning increased engagement and general learning satisfaction.

Table 1. Structure and Implementation of Listening Journals Activities.

Task Component	Description/Instruction	Example
Source of Listening	Students select an authentic English audio/video (e.g., podcast, YouTube video, news).	BBC Learning English podcast episode. Open.spotify.com
Summary	Write a short summary (3–5 sentences) of the content to check comprehension.	“The podcast explained how climate change affects...”
Vocabulary Notes	Identify at least 5 new/difficult words/phrases and provide meanings (in English/Indonesian).	Word: sustainable (Meaning: <i>dapat dipertahankan</i>)
Reflection	Write personal reflections on listening experience: challenges, strategies, and insights.	“I don’t know some of the vocabulary or the meanings. Then, I search for the meaning and continue the audio.”
Evaluation	Rate the usefulness of the material for language learning (1–5) and justify briefly.	“Useful because it had natural expressions.”

Teacher provided regular feedback on listening journals with an emphasis on the activities to motivate deeper reflection and provide suggestions on strategies to improve understanding. Most feedback was general and focused on the importance of consistency in reflection and self-assessment. For example, teachers often wrote short guiding comments such as “Consider listening again and noting the

key transitions in the speaker’s argument” or “Think about what strategies helped you with unfamiliar vocabulary in this task.” The feedback motivated students to re-examine listening processes rather than focus solely on correctness. Another common comment was “Great progress in noting main ideas—next time, try adding two or three details you remember without replaying the clip” which motivated

deeper engagement with listening strategies. However, the lack of personalized feedback on personal listening strategies was identified as an area of improvement. This was considered important to significantly improve listening skills of students^[33].

The analysis showed consistent reports from students that the journals assisted in becoming more focused on listening practice and identifying specific areas for improvement. The trend was in line with the observation of previous study^[13], which emphasize that journal writing could assist students in identifying and developing strategies to overcome difficulties in listening practice. Several students believed that reflecting on listening tasks allowed proper tracking of progress and the gaining of a deeper understanding of strengths and weaknesses. This showed that the

implementation of listening journals generally increased the self-awareness of students about listening skills. The concept was also considered a useful tool for improving listening comprehension^[34].

4.2. The Perceptions of Students about the Implementation of Listening Journals Based on EL Activities

Table 2 shows the perceptions of students about the implementation of listening journals in EL activities based on survey data. A total of 43 students completed the 13-item questionnaire designed to explore three key areas, including the meaningfulness of listening journals, perceived competence of students, and the use of listening strategies.

Table 2. Students' Perception on Extensive Listening and Listening Journal.

Dimension	Item	N	Mean	Agreement (%)
Meaningfulness of listening journal based on extensive listening activities	I enjoy doing extensive listening activities.	43	3.33	95.35
	I like doing listening activities by writing the activity or the content of the listening topics in my journal.	43	2.88	81.40
	Listening with a journal is an excellent activity to develop my listening ability.	43	3.37	95.35
	Extensive listening activities help me realize that learning listening is meaningful.	43	3.79	100
	Listening activities and writing them in the journal make me more confident when I communicate with other people in English.	43	2.98	79.07
Students' competence	Doing listening activities once a week is not enough for me.	43	3.05	86.05
	I want to learn more by having extensive listening activities and listening to various accents.	43	3.51	100
	I can increase my English vocabulary through extensive listening activities.	43	3.60	100
	Concerning listening, I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a learner.	43	3.65	100
Students' listening strategies	I evaluate myself regularly concerning my listening progress.	43	3.19	95.35
	After finishing the task in the listening class, I check my understanding.	43	3.23	95.35
	To improve my listening skills, outside the classroom I also listen to English songs, stories, and read-aloud materials.	43	3.70	100
	Writing down the important keywords from what I listen to makes my listening organized on purpose.	43	3.33	81.40

Agreement includes "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses.

The results showed that the mean scores ranged from 2.88 to 3.79 on a 1-4-point Likert scale and this generally reflected positive perceptions. Several items received

a 100% agreement rate which was a reflection of strong support. For example, all students agreed that listening journals assisted in becoming aware of their strengths

and weaknesses as students. Listening skills were also improved by listening to English songs or reading materials aloud outside the classroom. The process led to an improvement in vocabulary. The other items also reflected high levels of support specifically because 81.40% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that “writing down the important keywords from what I listen to makes my listening organized”. Another 81% reported checking their understanding after finishing tasks in listening class.

A solid mean score of 3.27 was provided for the meaningfulness aspect and this showed that students enjoyed engaging in listening journals and valued the process such as recording experiences. The condition subsequently increased confidence in communicating in English.

The average score for student competency was 3.45 which was part of the highest values in the table. Students reported an increase in vocabulary and familiarity with different English accents through EL activities. Moreover, the awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in learn-

ing also increased.

Listening strategies aspect was provided with an average score of 3.36. This showed that students actively monitored comprehension, tracked progress, and found the process helpful to organize listening activities with keywords.

Both quantitative and qualitative results generally showed that students responded positively to the use of listening journals in EL activities. This was confirmed by the interviews conducted with 10 participants and analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus software.

NVivo 12 Plus software was used to analyze the perceptions of students through the data obtained from the interviews. The focus was on seven categories which were satisfaction with listening class grade, efforts to improve listening skills, meaningfulness of listening activities with the journal, challenges encountered, overcoming challenges, preference for content duration, and the effectiveness of listening journals as presented in **Figure 1**.

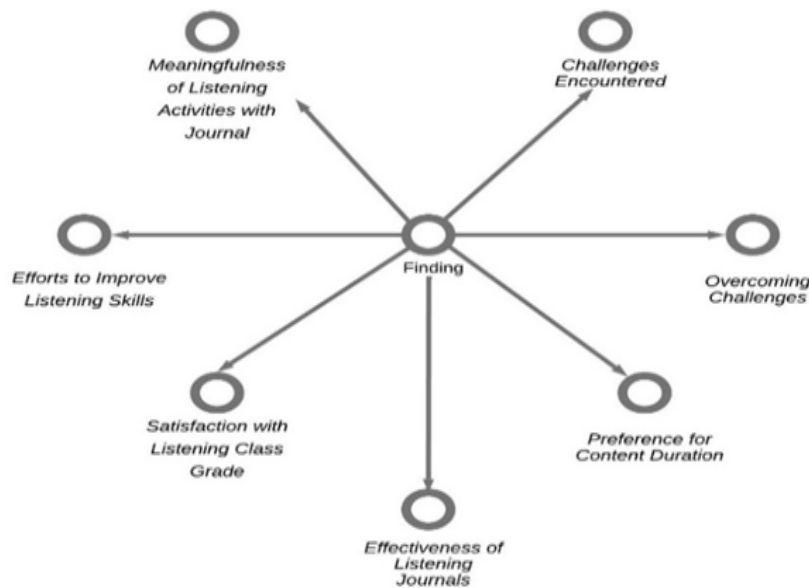


Figure 1. Seven categories of students' perception.

Different levels of responses were provided regarding satisfaction with listening grades. The participants with high grades were generally satisfied while those with lower grades showed dissatisfaction and wanted improvement. Moreover, the levels of satisfaction affected motivation and perceptions. This led to the implementation of strategies such as listening to music, watching movies, podcasts

and YouTube, and engaging in listening journal activities to improve listening skills. The strategies were adapted to personal interests and considered useful for enhancing listening skills.

Students believed that listening journals were rewarding activities for improving language skills, tracking progress, gaining confidence, and being familiar with

regular listening practice. The activities also assisted in enhancing vocabulary and comprehension. However, students encounter challenges such as understanding different accents especially British, unfamiliar vocabulary, the need for repeated listening, and difficulty writing reflections. This led to the development of some strategies such as listening repeatedly, using extra study materials, learning more vocabulary, and seeking assistance through discussions and collaborations to overcome the challenges.

Most students preferred shorter listening content under 5 minutes to stay engaged. Meanwhile, some accepted up to 10 minutes when the content was compelling and appropriately paced. The flexibility in duration was accepted as long as the content remained relevant.

5. Discussion

The factors affecting the perceptions of students about listening journals include the diversity of materials and the relevance of topics. Students engaged in different content such as podcasts, interviews, conversations, news, and videos. Moreover, online resources such as podcasts, ELLLO, VOA Learning English, and BBC Learning English were commonly used ^[35]. The videos improved the understanding by contributing visual assistance ^[36]. The results were consistent with the report of earlier studies that showed the importance of authentic and varied listening resources in learning a second language ^[37,38].

Teachers are required to comprehensively understand the perceptions of students regarding listening journals in relation to the comprehension aspect. This is necessary because engagement, motivation, and academic achievement are all affected by the perceptions ^[26,28,39]. Therefore, teachers can improve teaching strategies to provide suitable learning environments based on the perceptions ^[40,41]. The trend is associated with the fact that the attitudes and behaviors toward learning are shaped by perceptions ^[42]. These results can provide valuable insights into the role of listening journals as a teaching tool and their influence on the learning experiences of students.

The quantitative data showed positive responses of students to listening journals to reinforce previous studies on EL and student autonomy ^[16]. This study identified seven key aspects related to the perceptions of students and

each was considered to have significant implications for language instruction.

5.1. Satisfaction with Listening Class Grades

Students express varying levels of satisfaction with their grades, which in turn affects their motivation and perceptions of achievement. Higher grades indicate higher satisfaction, while lower grades indicate moderate or negative responses. According to self-determination theory, satisfaction with learning outcomes enhances intrinsic motivation and psychological needs such as competence and autonomy ^[43]. In addition, achievement goal theory suggests that students' satisfaction influences their goal orientation and engagement in learning tasks ^[27]. These findings highlight the role of assessment in shaping students' motivation. Apart from that, teachers are advised to provide constructive feedback and opportunities to increase students' engagement.

5.2. Efforts to Improve Listening Skills

Students showed varying levels of satisfaction with their grades and this subsequently affected the motivation and perceptions of achievement. Higher grades led to higher satisfaction while lower grades reflected moderate or negative responses. Furthermore, the theory of multisensory learning emphasizes the advantages of employing multiple modalities to enhance comprehension ^[44]. Achievement goal theory also suggests that the satisfaction of students influences goal orientation and engagement in learning tasks ^[27]. The results showed the role of assessment in shaping the motivation of students. Moreover, teachers are advised to provide constructive feedback and opportunities to increase the engagement of students.

5.3. Meaningfulness of Listening Activities with Journals

Listening journals were observed to be meaningful for students in recording progress, improving comprehension, and enriching vocabulary. This is in line with the emphasis of reflective learning theory on the active role of reflection in learning ^[45]. Listening journals motivate students to analyze and document learning experiences ^[13,46]. Similar studies reported the effectiveness of metacogni-

tive strategies in improving listening comprehension ^[47–50]. Therefore, integrating structured reflection into listening journals can further enhance the ability of students to monitor progress and adapt strategies accordingly.

5.4. Challenges Encountered

Students experienced difficulty with accents especially British, unfamiliar vocabulary, and writing reflections. Meanwhile, the second language theory emphasizes that exposure to diverse linguistic input increases adaptability ^[51]. The interaction hypothesis also shows the importance of negotiating meaning in overcoming listening challenges ^[14,52]. The process of writing reflections can be a demanding task because of the cognitive effort required. This is in line with Swain's output theory which emphasizes the role of production in language learning ^[53,54]. The process requires producing a final product and engaging in the discovery process ^[55] and covers the arrangement of elements in the correct order which is a challenging nature of writing skills ^[56]. These challenges require scaffolding methods such as guided reflection prompts, explicit vocabulary instruction, and exposure to a range of accents through carefully selected materials. Adaptive learning methods such as personalized listening tasks also need to be adopted to assist students in overcoming personal challenges more effectively.

5.5. Overcoming Challenges

Difficulties were addressed through repeated listening, supplementary materials, vocabulary expansion, and peer collaboration. The repeated listening process was used to enhance comprehension through cognitive reinforcement. This is in line with the multimedia learning theory that supports the use of multimodal inputs for better retention ^[57–59]. Vocabulary acquisition theory also shows the connection between comprehension and vocabulary development ^[60]. Peer discussions reinforce the social elements of learning by facilitating understanding. This is supported by the position of Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective that interacting with peers and more experienced people improves learning ^[61]. Therefore, the inclusion of peer listening exercises assists students in gaining self-confidence and refining problem-solving abilities, both of which

are critical for language learning.

5.6. Preference for Content Duration

Duration preferences in EL were influenced by personal characteristics such as age and proficiency level. This was observed from the fact that older adults tended to prefer slower speech rates specifically for complex material due to a decline in cognitive processing ability with age ^[62]. Moreover, proficiency levels such as musical expertise affected the ability to process auditory information at different tempos. This was because people with higher expertise showed better accuracy in recognizing fast melodies ^[63]. Cognitive style and working memory capacity also influenced engagement in listening activities ^[64,65], which reinforced the importance of a personalized method. Furthermore, students with different English proficiency levels experienced the advantages of listening journals in a different way. The trend was because highly proficient students focused on refining different listening strategies while those with lower proficiency retrieved more in terms of comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The diversity has implications for designing tasks and feedback that cater to the personal needs of students. In the context of EFL, students reported that EL programs assisted in improving fluency and confidence which showed the effectiveness of student needs-based method ^[66]. The trend shows the need to customize the duration of listening content to the age, proficiency, and cognitive profile of students. This is necessary to optimize comprehension in language learning.

5.7. Effectiveness of Listening Journals in Developing Listening Skills

Listening journals contributed to an improvement in listening skills, vocabulary, and confidence. This can be related to the emphasis of constructivist theories on the active role of students in processing and applying knowledge ^[67]. Several studies also reported that repeated exposure and reflection improved listening proficiency ^[21,68–71]. Self-efficacy theory suggests that increased confidence in listening fosters greater motivation and engagement ^[72]. The results strengthened previous studies by showing that the engagement of students in self-reflective listening practices led to the development of stronger listening skills and

greater autonomy^[73,74]. Therefore, the promotion of setting personal learning goals and monitoring of progress through listening journals can further improve the motivation and long-term language development of students.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

In summary, listening journals served as a valuable resource for language acquisition, motivating reflection, self-management, and strategic learning. This is in line with the recognized theory of language acquisition, and provides teachers with guidance for providing stimulating and efficient learning experiences adjusted to the needs of students. The context shows the ability of listening journals to assist students in developing greater awareness of listening methods in order to identify particular challenges and implement appropriate overcoming strategies.

Further studies need to investigate the long-term effects of listening journals on learning ability and analyze the influence of learning methods on the engagement of students. There is also the need to explore the benefits of listening journals for students at different proficiency levels and the impact on motivation and persistence.

Teachers need to consider using digital tools to integrate listening journals and increase accessibility and engagement among students. This can be achieved by using mobile applications, blogs, or audio recording tools to facilitate multimodal reflection and provide immediate feedback from educators. The design and implementation of listening journals can allow teachers to enhance the development of critical listening skills, independence, and confidence in acquiring a second language. Moreover, listening journals prove to be an economical and flexible learning resource that is effectively in line with student-centered learning and reflective teaching methods. Teachers need to consider integrating listening journals into digital learning platforms to enhance accessibility and interaction for students. The adjustment of the design and implementation of listening journals can assist educators in motivating students to develop critical listening skills, autonomy, and confidence in second language acquisition.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, listening journals were implemented in 12 meetings through activities such as the collection of

weekly reflections from students and the application of different materials in the form of podcasts, videos, and breaking news. Listening journals were equipped with guides to assist students in focusing on understanding, challenges, new vocabulary, and listening strategies. Students were able to select preferred materials and several activities were provided to ensure varied exposure. Listening journals generally fostered greater self-awareness in listening skills of students, assisted in tracking progress, and improved comprehension through reflective practice.

The difficulties in understanding accents and unfamiliar vocabulary in listening material could hinder the practical application of self-regulation skills. Meanwhile, writing reflections in listening journals increases metacognitive awareness and critical thinking skills.

The perceptions of students about listening journals implemented based on EL activities were observed to be positive. This was identified through the useful responses provided by students concerning the satisfaction with listening class grades, efforts to improve listening skills, the meaningfulness of listening activities with the journal, challenges encountered, overcoming challenges, preference for content duration, and the effectiveness of listening journals in developing listening skills due to the combination.

The results emphasized the importance of combining relevant and student-focused learning methods, specifically in improving listening comprehension. This study contributed to the expansion of knowledge by providing practical insights into how reflective resources such as listening journals could enhance the metacognitive development and engagement of students during the learning process. The proactive participation of students in selecting materials and understanding the learning activities was also emphasized and this was in line with the principles of student autonomy.

Future curriculum development and teaching methods in listening instruction, specifically in EFL settings could be developed through the results. This was because listening journals were identified as valuable resources for improving listening abilities and student confidence. The concept could also serve as a flexible and affordable method to promote reflection, the use of appropriate strategies,

and self-directed learning. Moreover, the interaction with diverse, authentic materials, and the recording of learning journeys were capable of ensuring students gained greater insight into their strengths and difficulties in listening.

The use of listening journals assisted students in developing consistent listening habits, critical thinking, and problem-solving strategies. The flexibility in selecting materials and reflecting on learning experiences also ensured more motivation and control of the learning process. Therefore, listening journals were significant in fostering independent, reflective, and effective listening practices in EFL classrooms.

The results should be interpreted with due consideration for certain limitations. For example, the participant size was relatively small with 43 students selected from a single institutional context and this could limit the generalizability of the results. This study was also conducted over a single semester which showed the possibility of not considering long-term retention and transfer effects. Therefore, future studies should use larger and more diverse samples across multiple institutions and incorporate longitudinal designs to investigate the positive impacts of listening journals persist over extended periods of language learning. The studies could also examine how different forms of teacher feedback and varying journal formats influenced outcomes across proficiency levels.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.P., B.Y.C., M.A., and N.S.; methodology, S.P.; software, S.P.; validation, B.Y.C., M.A., N.S., and Y.A.; formal analysis, S.P.; investigation, S.P.; resources, S.P.; data curation, S.P.; writing—original draft preparation, S.P.; writing—review and editing, B.Y.C., M.A., N.S., and Y.A.; visualization, S.P.; supervision, B.Y.C., M.A., N.S.; project administration, S.P.; funding acquisition, S.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board (or Ethics Committee) Universitas Negeri Malang (25.7.5/UN32.14/PB/2025) for studies involving humans.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data can be accessed by contacting the first author at santi.prastiyowati.2002219@students.um.ac.id or prastiyowati@umm.ac.id.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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