

## **Exploring the Role of Technology in EFL Listening: Learning Tools and Classroom Practices**

**Jen Priska Natania<sup>1)</sup>, Nunun Indrasari<sup>2)</sup>, Septa Aryanika<sup>3)</sup>**

<sup>1)</sup>UIN Raden Intan Lampung, <sup>2)</sup>UIN Raden Intan Lampung, <sup>3)</sup>UIN Raden Intan Lampung  
Address

\*Corresponding Author, email: [nununindrasari@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:nununindrasari@radenintan.ac.id)

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### **Abstract**

The era of globalization supports the ease of human activities aided by tools known as digital technology. The presence of technology in the field of education aims to create learning tools suitable for cross-generational globally. In the EFL context, digital technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' language skills and engaging students' participation in the classroom. A phenomenological study was carried out to explore the role of digital technology used in extensive listening courses in facilitating students' learning. Interviews and observations were conducted to gain the data. The data obtained were based on the experiences of the students in using digital technology in the EFL listening class and applied thematic data analysis type. The results showed that the students used technology as learning tools and learning sources to support their listening practices including YouTube, AI, Google Sites, Canva, and WhatsApp. Canva and Google Sites are a good combination as learning tools. Canva serves as a learning tool in graphic form and Google sites facilitate the collection of task results. Students gain significant benefits such as developing communication and collaboration, promoting students' creativity, fostering independence and confidence, nurturing individual talents, being responsible with their own learning, and being able to identify their own difficulties as EFL learners.

**Keywords:** Classroom Practices, Digital Technology, EFL Classroom, Extensive Listening, Learning Tools.

### **Introduction**

Listening is a fundamental English language skill that relies on hearing, focused attention, and accurate interpretation to process information from spoken language (Nation, I.S.P., & Newton. J. 2009). As a foundational skill, it underpins the development of other language abilities; speaking, reading, and writing. However, for non-native speakers, listening often presents significant challenges, primarily due to the rapid pace of native speech, which can lead to confusion and hinder comprehension. Moreover, in Indonesia, English is learned only in schools and people don't speak English in society (Bambang S, 2020). To overcome this problem, technology has emerged in education that can facilitate access to listening practice (Syamsul, 2019).

Nowadays, students prefer to utilize their smartphones or PC in daily activities; this might help them improve their listening skills as a media exercise, such as listening to music frequently by using music platforms and podcasts (Salainti and Pratiwi, 2021) or surfing the web using the internet on their smartphone. Besides that, technology also facilitated listening activities in the teaching and learning process as media resources and tools. There are several digital technologies which are good for

practicing listening, such as beginning with classic or long-established digital audio output media such as CD (audio and music), DVD (video and audio), tape recorders (audio), radio (audio), and computers for text, audio, and video (Smaldino, 2009). Moreover, Maulina, et.al found out that listening could increase the potential of learning English by hearing it through devices played by technology. The paper highlights five media for listening skills that are operating through technology, encompassing mobile-based media, multimedia technology, radio news, podcast application, and mobile-based audiobooks (Maulina et.al., 2022).

Audio and video formats in today's digital era are very easy to access because digital audio and video are available in presentation applications such as PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Site, and Canva. Besides that, it can be uploaded and downloaded via the web and YouTube. These media are supported by utilizing the presence of a web network and hardware devices, along with gadgets and computers, also by supporting a good internet connection (Bekkering, 2021). Integrating technology into education provides students with an engaging learning experience, allowing them to remain more interested in the subject without being distracted. The utilization of technologies in the classroom may make studying fascinating and entertaining for students (Chhabra, 2012). In other words, technology has greatly contributed to the success of EFL learning by investing in better support systems, infrastructure, and training. The university can further enhance the effectiveness of technology in fostering English language proficiency among students (Sari, N., 2024).

Regarding the utilization of digital technology in EFL classrooms, this study explores how digital technology contributes to facilitating students' learning in the EFL listening context. This study is conducted in the English Education Department in one state university in Bandar Lampung in which the integration of digital technology is implemented in the Extensive Listening course. The digital technology is used in this class as a learning source in which the students can find the meaningful listening materials that fit with their listening comprehension, and as a learning tool where the students have to do weekly tasks and projects of extensive listening.

Many pieces of research have been conducted focusing on the role of technology in the EFL context (Arigusman, 2018; Haleem et.al, 2022; Sari, 2024; Salainti, 2021), but little is known about the role of digital technologies in facilitating learning in EFL Listening class. Therefore, this study would like to explore how the integration of technology in extensive listening classes can facilitate students' learning.

## Methods

Descriptive-qualitative research with a phenomenological approach was employed in this study. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, for example, behaviour, motivation, perceptions, and actions, thoroughly by describing them in the form of words and language using natural methods (Moleong, 2014). Therefore, phenomenology is an approach to managing emotional assessment that focuses on the overall quality of a live encounter inside a specific social event. The primary purpose of the method is to appear as a depiction of a specific attribute (Cresswell, 2013).

The authors represented that the phenomenon of the technology's role in supporting the teaching and learning process to engage students in an EFL listening classroom is holistic, complex, and dynamic. Thus, the type of phenomenological approach was used in this study to know the phenomenon of technology integration used by the EFL students to facilitate learning in listening class. Apart from that, this study explores the conditions that were observed in the field in a more specific, transparent, and in-depth manner (Sugiyono, 2016).

The first-year students of the English Education Department who enrolled in an extensive listening course participated in this study. The qualitative data were collected by using semi-structured interviews. Ten students were selected by convenience sampling as the interviewees. The interview was conducted after the students experienced the use of several digital technologies for their learning sources and learning tools. Besides that, observation was also conducted to gain the additional data and supporting data taken from the interview. The author used Observation checklist form and non-participant observation types in which the observer acts as an independent observer or without some

interaction with the research subject (Marguerite, 2006). The data was collected from some notes when the lecturer was doing the teaching practices in the extensive listening class.

## Result and Discussion

Technology plays a crucial part because most activities in extensive listening classrooms use technology. Extensive listening is two-way listening involving group work, interpretation, and presentations, whether in or out of class, technology hopefully making it easier for students to arrange their duties effectively. Furthermore, they can take charge of their own learning in the listening classroom.

To meet the criteria for whether technology can be used as a learning resource and learning tool as well. The theory of the results adopted from Pelgrum (1997), it includes:

1. Encourages pupils to collaborate with one another and take responsibility for their own learning.
2. Helps to nurture individual talent, independence, and a strong sense of self-worth and confidence.
3. Encourages pupils to use their imaginations and promotes creativity; develops inquiry and communication skills; and
4. Develops inquiry and communication skills and creates appropriate contexts for critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving activities.

### *Independence and confidence in a strong sense of self-worth*

In today's modern era, it seems like we can do anything ourselves, independent learning is one way to increase students' listening skills. Independent learning can add to their knowledge outside of class hours. In addition, self-confidence can also be a benchmark for enhancing the students' listening skills, as having self-confidence allows someone to be active in a group or in expressing opinions. Based on the results of the observational data, the students have a higher level of confidence in a discussion activity when they have good ideas and material.

Students feel prepared when they have well-developed material; usually, they take notes on important points obtained from specific learning content on YouTube, and AI then they down key points. It is supports by students' experience below:

*“Based on my experience with technology I can learn independently with various learning resources such as applications and websites. I usually use Youtube and the website for listening such as AI to play audio based on our level from beginner to advanced”.*

*“Using technology makes it easier for me to find accurate references, complete information, and valid argumentative material for presentation and discussion sessions in extensive listening courses, so I feel confident in presenting the information I get from listening. audio on YouTube and being able to answer questions from other groups, as well as giving clear reasons when other groups provide responses to the material explained by my group”*

There are several digital technologies used by EFL students in extensive listening class. Firstly, the students prefer using AI Chatgpt for help them to search material, generally with the address <https://chatgpt.com> or simply download it through the Play Store and App Store. In addition, AI also has a translation feature. Some students said that this technology is very helpful for them in studying and completing assignments, and it also motivates them to do their tasks well.

Next, YouTube is a favorite platform for students to find materials that they will present during discussion sessions. In the extensive listening class, almost 80% of the activities involve discussions. Students always engage in this way because the lecturer frequently asks them questions related to the previous material and the upcoming topics, concluding with feedback and reflection. Due to the dominant discussion activities and the related-materials questions from the lecturer, students prepare their previous learning materials well to answer all the lecturer's questions and recall the previous materials. The students used YouTube platform to find out related listening materials and tend to find it from foreign channels such as BBC, TED Talk, and also some podcasts. Actually, local channels also provide a lot of content according to the themes they need. However, international content will be more suitable for the discussion because most of the discussions in this class revolve around international

issues, such as global warming around the world. In these activities, the students have to practice listening about global warming outside the classroom. Then, in class, they have to present and explain the video they have watched and pretend to be at a UN meeting embassy which discusses global warming. YouTube has become a highly favoured platform due to its provision of audiovisual content, comprehensive materials, and features that support students as foreign language learners. Surely, by gaining listening materials from YouTube, students can share the information with each other since they are addressing issues in different countries.

### ***Develop collaboration and communication skills***

Technology as a learning tool can help improve students' listening skills as communication and transferring media. Based on student experience, they used WhatsApp as a learning tool. WhatsApp is utilized to divide each role in the group task. WhatsApp application is more commonly used as a medium for instructions and information outside the classroom. Typically, lecturers use WhatsApp to interact with students when they want to provide information about assignments as well as the method of submission.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, WhatsApp is used for group assignment collection, where the lecturer assigns tasks in the form of group videos on a specific theme. Once the video has been created, the students were then instructed to upload it on their respective social media. After that, the next instruction is to collect the assignments in the form of links in the extensive listening class WhatsApp group. Technology also enables in online communication or communication outside the classroom.

*“With the technology used in learning such as WhatsApp, makes it easier for me, my friends and lecturer to collaborate in learning with each other, such as doing assignments anywhere and anytime, and lecturers can also provide information via WhatsApp, thereby reducing miscommunication.”*

*“At that time communication is established and usually at the end of the class session she gives a link for us to fill in, with the aim of finding out what our opinions are during the study and our feelings on that day following the learning in class. In essence, with the existence of technology, communication can still be established between friends and lecturers anywhere. In addition, if we are outside the classroom, mostly using WhatsApp to discuss the material or ask some explanation to the lecturer in extensive listening group chat.”*

From the statement above, it can be concluded that technology, especially the WhatsApp platform, has a positive impact on enhancing collaboration among students and between students and lecturers. It can be seen that technology assists lecturers in conveying information and instructions outside the classroom effectively, as well as reducing misunderstandings regarding the context of the material and schedules. Additionally, in this realm, it also helps students receive information and instructions in a good and practical manner.

In addition to supporting collaboration between students and lecturers, WhatsApp technology also facilitates peer learning among students by serving as a medium for group discussions without face-to-face interaction, for example, when they discuss and share group materials according to task themes for presentation in the next week. The results showed that by using technology as learning tools being able to enhance the student's collaboration and communication to share the opinion and group contribution. The technology helps the students easier in learning tasks and interaction. So that tasks can be completed quickly and on time.

### **Promotes student's creativity and Responsible with own learning**

Imagination and creativity are one of the benchmarks for students to improve their engagement, with good imagination and creativity making them able to keep up with every activity in each course. In the extensive listening course, in addition to the lecturer presenting audio to be listened to together in the classroom, she also gives directions for learning activities that are full of interaction, such as discussions and presentations, and also provide feedback to each other. One of the roles of technology

in supporting the students' listening skill can be seen from how they are responsible for their own learning outcomes by using technology. Based on the results of the interview and observation, researchers can conclude that most of them are able to discipline their learning and target grades by using technology.

*“With technology I feel facilitated and it proves that learning doesn't have to be monotonous like reading books all the time. Regarding imagination and creativity, in the extensive class there are lots of learning activities in the class every week such as listening to audio, discussions and presentations, then making mind map and designing posters. These assignments are collected on a website called the Google Site.”*

*“To help us be responsible for our learning outcomes, I think it depends on each of us. Sometimes with technology we are also able to make our study schedules both regular and messy because of laziness or we divert technology only for entertainment, not learning.”*

The function of Google Sites is quite similar to WhatsApp, as both serve as media for collecting assignments, but it is more focused on individual task submissions. In extensive listening class, google site is utilized as an online listening journal in which the students need to report their weekly listening activities on it. Google site enables the students to customize the display so it can promote students' creativity in personalizing their own page. The students have to fill in their personal data on the first slide, such as name, photo, hobbies, and other personal information. After that, students can continue with the slides according to the assignment given by the lecturer every week with different listening tasks, such as making mind mapping about the content of videos, making posters, videos, or summaries of videos they have watched. The tasks were collected on the Google site after students presented the material to their peers and received feedback from the lecturer. The results of the processing and editing of the page can be saved on Google Drive, allowing them to be shared via a link.

Based on the interview results, the Google Sites page can ease the students to manage their tasks so it makes the students responsible with their task results. Based on field observations, the author noted that task instructions were primarily given in the classroom at the beginning of teaching and learning.

### **Nurture individual talent**

Every student certainly has different abilities in each field of study. As in the extensive listening course, which consists of various activities such as listening to audio from the lecturer, group discussions, presentations, and making mapping and posters. While not all students can master all of these activities because they have their own passions. Based on the results of interview and observation in the field, they can do these activities with the help of technology. Although not proficient, they can balance all these activities well.

*“When the lecturer gave instruction for making mapping and posters, plus actually since high school I've been good at graphic design, with this platform and the support of technology such as Canva, Adobe Photoshop, it helped me express my design talents. graphics through individual assignments in this extensive listening class. Apart from that, there is usually a session where the results of our videos or graphic assignments are uploaded to our social media.*

*“I have just discovered Google Site, where most of our friends have a talent for composing and ...aesthetics... are very good at using it. For me personally, technology in this extensive class is a bridge to finding my passion, yes...it has not reached the stage of cultivating it yet...personal talent because I just found them all in this class”*

From the activities they mastered, technology was very helpful in deepening their talents, because there were so many video and graphic editing applications or websites that were easy to find such as Canva, Adobe Photoshop, Coreldraw, Capcup, Inshot, and Adobe Premier for high school graduates. The activities of poster creation and mapping are tasks at the end of the learning contract or the final assignment of the semester. However, on the other hand, there were students who had not

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mastered the supporting applications and websites, so they argued that the use of technology in this extensive listening course not only fostered students' personal talents but also helped students find new passions and practice in utilizing and operating technology in learning.

### **Creates appropriate contexts for critical thinking**

In enhancing students' engagement, technology is expected to support the development of critical thinking among students in an appropriate context. In this indicator, students must be able to adjust the main topics to the context of the material being studied. The context of the material referred to is the learning theme being discussed in that session. To create an appropriate context, critical thinking is necessary to reduce misunderstandings of the material they are exploring. To reduce misunderstandings of the material, appropriate learning resources are needed

*“With technology I understand more about feedback and presentation materials from friends from other groups. In giving feedback, I don't just say agree or disagree but validate it through journals or articles that I get from the Google platform, AI and other platforms. All of this technology really helps me because almost 80% of the activities in this extensive class are discussions and presentations which consist of expressing and responding to other people's opinions.”*

*“Now there is technology output from AI, so with this platform, which initially we were hesitant to ask, refute, and express our opinions in discussions. A little hesitant and gave the impression that we were anti-criticism or maybe lazy to think because we were silent a lot, because with this platform we can better express our thoughts to the audience or presenter because we feel that the opinions and answers we get have good quality and come from clear sources.”*

By using AI the students found the learning material to support their critical thinking. AI has many education features to support valid resources. From this phenomena the students feel confident to identify their friends' argumentation when the presentation and discussion begin in the class. Besides that, some students state that AI facilitates them to think and motivates them to express their opinion as well. The students validate their argumentation first before serving to other group discussion. By using AI for help them to search material. Some students say that this technology is very helpful for them in studying and completing assignments, and it also motivates them to do their tasks well.

### **Decision-making and Problem solving activities**

The decision to study is a phrase that is not unfamiliar, yet it is very difficult for students in this modern era to carry out. Based on the results of the interview data, the researcher observes that the role of technology has both negative and positive impacts, although overall, technology has a more positive effect compared to its negatives. Based on the interview data, the researcher observes that the students' problem lies in their own listening skills. Although listening is the first level that learners must master, most of them are still at a basic level. Logically, when the first level is not well mastered by foreign learners, how can they master higher levels of English.

*“It can be quite helpful for detecting learning difficulties in extensive listening and at the same time it is easy to find solutions. I usually look for material to develop through videos on youtube and using subtitle features, because as foreign speakers often don't understand what the meaning of the video is. The point is just harder to understand, and it takes more focus and effort.”*

The interview above noted several issues they encountered, particularly in listening skills, including the speaker's accent, misunderstandings, limited vocabulary, and public speaking. From the interviews with the students, the researcher also analyzed what they did to overcome their difficulties. For students who often experience misunderstandings of information, they use transcripts on the

YouTube application, so they listen while reading the subtitles. Another difficulty is the limited vocabulary they know; even though YouTube has subtitle transcripts to read, there are still some unfamiliar words. To address this, students usually note down those words and translate them using Google Translate and AI. In this way, students not only manage to overcome their difficulties but also discover and expand their vocabulary. The last aspect is public speaking, as activities in this extensive class involve almost 80% discussion and presentation sessions. Therefore, students are required to be able to participate and present their arguments based on the information they have gathered.

However, each student also has different personality traits; some of them are introverted students. To overcome these difficulties, students utilize technology to search for tips or ways to alleviate anxiety and boost their confidence through Google. They often watch public speaking events from abroad, such as TED Talks, and subsequently seek valid learning resources to feel more confident when presenting their ideas.

## Conclusion

In nowadays' era, technology plays a crucial role, especially in the field of education in the process of teaching and learning environment in achieving the intended learning goals by using the appropriate technology as learning tools and learning sources in the teaching and learning process. Using technology as learning tools and sources in the teaching and learning process in listening skills is an important thing that brings interactive learning experiences to students. The studies discussed classroom practice using digital learning tools and sources in facilitating students to learn by using mobile devices and some applications as supporting media in teaching listening skills. Technology as learning tools and learning sources used and presented in the studies has many features to offer several activities in extensive listening class in order to promote students' listening skills. The features will enable students to not get bored of the teaching of listening skills that lead them to understand, develop communication and collaboration, learn the discussion of lessons, detect the students' problem and find out the solving, making decision learning the students' creativity and critical thinking, fostering their talent in extensive skills.

Through practicing digital technology in the classroom there will be an organized flow of learning discussion, which gives both teachers and students a practical learning experience that gives them benefits and opportunities to use to practice their listening skills productively.

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