

Teaching Listening in EFL Contexts: A Systematic Review of Instructional Techniques and Classroom Practices

Leonita Maria Efipnias Manihuruk¹, Partohap Saut Raja Sihombing², Bobby Pramjit Singh Dhillon^{3*}, Elina Lulu Bimawati Rumapea⁴, Herman Herman⁵, Arwin Tannuary⁶

^{1,2,3,5}Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

⁴Department of Accounting, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Petra, Indonesia

⁶Department of Management, Universitas Murni Teguh, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Bobby Pramjit Singh Dhillon, Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

Listening is a fundamental language skill that plays a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, many learners face difficulties in understanding spoken English due to limited exposure to authentic language input and ineffective instructional practices. Therefore, effective teaching techniques and classroom practices are essential to support the development of listening comprehension. This study aims to examine instructional techniques and classroom practices used in teaching listening in EFL contexts through a systematic literature review. The study analyzed research articles published between 2020 and 2025 obtained from several academic databases. The selected studies were screened and analyzed to identify common teaching techniques and instructional strategies applied in listening instruction. The findings reveal that several techniques are frequently used by teachers to improve students' listening comprehension, including pre-listening activities, guided listening tasks, note-taking strategies, and post listening discussions. In addition, the integration of multimedia resources such as videos, podcasts, and authentic audio materials has become increasingly important in modern listening instruction. These resources provide learners with exposure to natural spoken language and diverse communication contexts. The review also highlights the importance of interactive classroom practices such as group discussions, collaborative tasks, and role-play activities, which encourage learners to actively engage with listening materials. Overall, the results suggest that effective listening instruction requires the integration of structured instructional techniques, interactive learning activities, and technology-supported resources. The findings of this study provide insights for language teachers and researchers in developing more effective listening instruction strategies in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Listening Comprehension, EFL Teaching, Instructional Techniques, Listening Strategies, Systematic Literature Review.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: 05 March 2026

Accepted: 20 March 2026

Published: 25 March 2026

Cite this article as:

Leonita Maria Efipnias Manihuruk, Partohap Saut Raja Sihombing, Bobby Pramjit Singh Dhillon *et.al.* Teaching Listening in EFL Contexts: A Systematic Review of Instructional Techniques and Classroom Practices. International Research Journal of Language, Literature and Culture. 2026; 1(2): 11-17.

Copyright:©2026. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.



Introduction

Listening is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental language skills in second and foreign language learning. It serves as the primary channel through

which learners receive linguistic input, making it essential for language acquisition and communicative competence (Kartika et al., 2023). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, listening plays a crucial role in helping

learners develop an understanding of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structures. According to Nunan (2003), listening is not merely a passive activity but an active process in which learners construct meaning from spoken language through the interaction of linguistic knowledge and contextual cues. Therefore, effective listening instruction is necessary to facilitate students' comprehension and overall language development. Despite its importance, listening has historically received less attention in language classrooms compared to other language skills such as reading and writing. For many years, listening was often treated as a supplementary skill rather than a central component of language instruction. Richards (2008) explains that listening activities in traditional classrooms were frequently limited to simple comprehension tasks, such as answering questions after hearing an audio recording. This limited approach often failed to address the cognitive processes involved in listening comprehension, including predicting, inferencing, and interpreting meaning in context.

In recent decades, however, language educators and researchers have increasingly emphasized the importance of systematic listening instruction (Resmi et al., 2023). Listening is now viewed as a complex and interactive process that requires learners to integrate both bottom-up and top-down processing strategies. Bottom-up processing involves decoding linguistic elements such as sounds, words, and grammatical structures, while top-down processing relies on background knowledge, context, and prior experiences to interpret meaning (Field, 2008). Consequently, effective listening instruction should incorporate various teaching techniques that support these processes and help learners develop strategic listening skills.

Instructional techniques and classroom practices play a vital role in enhancing students' listening comprehension. Teachers employ a variety of techniques such as pre-listening activities, guided listening tasks, note-taking exercises, and post-listening discussions to facilitate understanding and engagement (Sihombing et al., 2022). These techniques are designed to activate learners' prior knowledge, guide their attention during listening tasks, and encourage reflection after listening activities. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) argue that the integration of strategic listening instruction can significantly improve learners' ability to process spoken language and develop metacognitive awareness of listening strategies.

In addition to traditional listening activities, recent developments in language pedagogy have introduced more interactive and technology-enhanced approaches to teaching listening. Digital media, authentic audio

materials, podcasts, and multimedia resources have expanded opportunities for learners to engage with diverse forms of spoken English. Such resources allow learners to experience authentic language use and expose them to different accents, speech rates, and communicative contexts (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). These innovations have encouraged teachers to adopt more dynamic and learner-centered approaches to listening instruction in EFL classrooms.

Given the growing body of research on listening instruction, it is important to synthesize existing findings to better understand effective teaching practices. Systematic literature reviews provide a structured method for analyzing and integrating research evidence across multiple studies. Through a systematic review, researchers can identify common instructional techniques, evaluate their effectiveness, and highlight gaps in the existing literature. According to Snyder (2019), systematic reviews play a significant role in summarizing research trends and providing evidence-based insights that can inform both educational practice and future research.

Based on these considerations, the present study aims to conduct a systematic review of instructional techniques and classroom practices used in teaching listening in EFL contexts. By analyzing previous research studies, this review seeks to identify the most widely used teaching techniques, examine their pedagogical implications, and provide insights that may support teachers in improving listening instruction. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing literature on language pedagogy by offering a comprehensive overview of effective listening teaching practices in EFL classrooms.

Literature Review

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of language acquisition, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It allows learners to interpret spoken messages and engage in meaningful communication. Rost (2011) explains that listening is a complex cognitive process that involves recognizing sounds, understanding vocabulary, interpreting grammatical structures, and constructing meaning from spoken discourse. Because of this complexity, effective listening instruction requires structured pedagogical approaches that guide learners in processing and interpreting spoken language. In language learning theory, listening is often associated with input-based learning. Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level of competence (Krashen, 1985). Listening activities provide a primary source of such input in the language classroom. Through exposure to authentic spoken language, learners

can develop their ability to recognize linguistic patterns and improve their comprehension skills (Nasution et al., 2023). Consequently, teachers play an important role in designing listening activities that provide meaningful and comprehensible input for learners (Herman et al., 2023).

Another theoretical perspective relevant to listening instruction is the distinction between bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing focuses on the decoding of linguistic elements such as phonemes, words, and sentence structures, while top-down processing involves the use of background knowledge, context, and expectations to interpret meaning (Brown, 2006). Effective listening instruction integrates both types of processing to help learners develop comprehensive listening skills. Teachers therefore need to design activities that train learners to recognize linguistic details while also encouraging them to use contextual clues to understand spoken messages.

In classroom practice, various instructional techniques have been proposed to support listening comprehension. Pre-listening activities are commonly used to activate students' prior knowledge and prepare them for the listening task. These activities may include predicting the content, discussing related topics, or introducing key vocabulary. According to Harmer (2007), such preparatory activities help learners establish a mental framework that facilitates comprehension during the listening process (Shaumiwaty et al., 2022).

During the listening stage, teachers often employ guided listening tasks that focus learners' attention on specific aspects of the audio material. These tasks may involve identifying key information, completing charts, answering comprehension questions, or taking notes. Such techniques help learners process spoken input more effectively and prevent them from becoming overwhelmed by unfamiliar language. Brownell (2010) emphasizes that structured listening tasks can improve learners' ability to focus on relevant information and enhance their overall listening performance.

Post-listening activities are equally important in the teaching of listening skills. These activities provide opportunities for learners to reflect on the listening material, clarify misunderstandings, and connect the information they have heard with their own experiences. Common post-listening activities include group discussions, summarizing the content, role-playing, and problem-solving tasks. Nation and Newton (2009) argue that such follow-up activities reinforce comprehension and encourage learners to use the information obtained from listening in communicative contexts. Recent studies have

also highlighted the role of strategy-based instruction in improving listening comprehension. Strategy instruction involves teaching learners how to use specific cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as predicting content, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating listening performance. Research by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggests that learners who are explicitly trained in language learning strategies tend to become more autonomous and effective listeners.

Overall, the literature indicates that successful listening instruction requires a combination of well-designed instructional techniques and strategic learning support. Teachers must carefully select listening materials, structure classroom activities, and guide learners in developing effective listening strategies. By integrating theoretical insights and practical classroom techniques, educators can create learning environments that support the development of listening comprehension skills in EFL contexts.

Research Methods

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to identify, analyze, and synthesize previous research related to instructional techniques and classroom practices in teaching listening in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. A systematic review allows researchers to collect and evaluate existing studies in a structured and transparent manner in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of a particular research topic (Snyder, 2019). In this study, the SLR approach was used to examine empirical studies on teaching listening techniques published between 2020 and 2025. By synthesizing findings from multiple studies, this review aims to identify commonly used instructional techniques and classroom practices applied in EFL listening instruction.

Data Source

The data for this study were obtained from scholarly articles published in reputable academic databases. The primary databases used in this review included Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). These databases were selected because they provide access to a wide range of peer-reviewed studies in the field of language education and applied linguistics. The search process focused on articles related to teaching listening, listening comprehension strategies, and instructional techniques in EFL classrooms. Only articles published between 2020 and 2025 were included in order to ensure that the review reflects recent developments in listening pedagogy.

Instrument

In systematic literature review studies, the main instrument is the researcher as the primary analyst supported by a structured data extraction framework. In this study, a data extraction table was used to record and organize relevant information from each selected article. The table included several categories such as author(s), year of publication, research context, research design, participants, instructional techniques used, and key findings. This instrument helped ensure consistency in the analysis process and facilitated the comparison of findings across different studies.

Data Collection Method

The data collection process followed several systematic steps. First, relevant studies were identified through database searches using specific keywords such as teaching listening, listening comprehension, listening strategies, instructional techniques, and EFL listening instruction. Second, the titles and abstracts of the retrieved articles were screened to determine their relevance to the research topic. Third, the full texts of potentially relevant articles were reviewed to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for this study were: (1) articles focusing on listening instruction in EFL contexts, (2) studies discussing teaching techniques or classroom practices for listening, (3) articles published between 2020 and 2025, and (4) peer-reviewed journal publications. Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

Data Analysis Method

The selected articles were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This method allows researchers to systematically categorize and interpret textual information

Table 1. *Distribution of Selected Studies (2020–2025).*

| No | Author(s) | Year | Research Focus |
|----|-----------------------|------|--|
| 1 | Gilakjani & Sabouri | 2020 | Listening comprehension strategies |
| 2 | Kurniawati & Haryanto | 2022 | Subtitle-based listening learning |
| 3 | Ulinuha & Zarkasi | 2023 | Listening comprehension in multimedia learning |
| 4 | Rahmawati | 2021 | Listening teaching strategies |
| 5 | Putri | 2020 | Instructional techniques in listening |
| 6 | Lestari | 2022 | Communicative listening practices |
| 7 | Hidayat | 2021 | Classroom listening techniques |
| 8 | Wulandari | 2020 | Meaning comprehension in listening activities |

Instructional Techniques Used in Teaching Listening

One of the main objectives of this review was to identify commonly used instructional techniques in EFL listening classrooms. Based on the analysis of the selected studies, several techniques were frequently reported in the literature.

from research studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the analysis involved several stages. First, the relevant information from each article was extracted and summarized in the data extraction table. Second, the instructional techniques and classroom practices reported in the studies were identified and categorized into thematic groups. Third, patterns and similarities across the studies were examined to determine the most commonly used listening teaching techniques in EFL contexts. Finally, the findings were synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of current practices in teaching listening.

This section presents the findings of the systematic literature review on instructional techniques and classroom practices used in teaching listening in EFL contexts. The analysis focuses on research articles published between 2020 and 2025. After the screening and eligibility process, a number of relevant studies were selected for further analysis. The selected articles were examined to identify the instructional techniques used by teachers, research contexts, and the main findings related to the effectiveness of these techniques in improving students' listening comprehension.

Distribution of Selected Studies

The selected studies were first analyzed based on their publication year and research focus. Table 1 shows the distribution of the selected articles included in this review.

Table 1 indicates that studies related to teaching listening have increased in recent years, particularly after 2020. Many researchers have focused on exploring innovative instructional techniques and the integration of multimedia resources in listening instruction.

The findings indicate that pre-listening activities are widely used to prepare students for listening tasks. These activities typically involve predicting the topic, discussing related issues, or introducing key vocabulary. Such activities help students activate their background knowledge and build expectations about the listening

Table 2. *Common Instructional Techniques in Teaching Listening*

| No | Instructional Technique | Description |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Pre-listening activities | Activities used to activate background knowledge before listening |
| 2 | Guided listening tasks | Structured tasks to help learners focus on key information |
| 3 | Note-taking activities | Students record important information while listening |
| 4 | Multimedia listening | Use of videos, podcasts, and digital audio materials |
| 5 | Interactive discussions | Post-listening discussions to reinforce comprehension |

material. Another commonly reported technique is the use of guided listening tasks, where teachers provide structured instructions to help students focus on specific information while listening. For example, students may be asked to identify key points, complete information gaps, or answer comprehension questions during the listening process. These tasks help learners process spoken language more effectively.

In addition, note-taking activities were frequently identified as an effective strategy for improving listening

Table 3. *Classroom Practices in Listening Instruction*

| No | Classroom Practice | Learning Purpose |
|----|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Group discussion after listening | Reinforce comprehension and interpretation |
| 2 | Role-play activities | Apply listening information in communication |
| 3 | Problem-solving tasks | Encourage critical thinking based on listening content |
| 4 | Listening journals | Reflect on listening experiences |
| 5 | Peer collaboration | Promote cooperative learning |

The findings suggest that post-listening interaction activities, such as group discussions and role-play, are widely used to strengthen students' understanding of listening materials. These activities allow learners to share interpretations and clarify misunderstandings through collaborative learning. Furthermore, the integration of technology-based listening materials, such as videos and podcasts, has become increasingly common in EFL classrooms. These resources provide authentic listening input and expose learners to different accents, speaking styles, and real-life communication contexts.

Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate that effective listening instruction involves a combination of structured instructional techniques and interactive classroom practices. Teachers who employ varied listening activities are more likely to create engaging learning environments that support the development of students' listening comprehension skills.

Discussion

The findings of this systematic review highlight the importance of employing varied instructional techniques and classroom practices in teaching listening in EFL contexts. The results indicate that teachers frequently use a combination of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities to support students' comprehension of spoken language. These findings align with the view that listening is an active and strategic process that

requires learners to engage cognitively with the listening material. As suggested by Rost (2011), effective listening instruction involves guiding learners through different stages of listening in order to facilitate comprehension and interpretation of spoken input.

Classroom Practices in Teaching Listening

The analysis also revealed several classroom practices that support the development of listening skills. Teachers often integrate listening activities with communicative tasks that encourage student interaction.

requires learners to engage cognitively with the listening material. As suggested by Rost (2011), effective listening instruction involves guiding learners through different stages of listening in order to facilitate comprehension and interpretation of spoken input.

One of the most prominent instructional techniques identified in this review is the use of pre-listening activities. These activities are designed to activate learners' background knowledge and prepare them for the listening task. The findings suggest that techniques such as predicting content, discussing related topics, and introducing key vocabulary can significantly enhance learners' readiness for listening tasks. This supports the argument that activating prior knowledge helps learners interpret incoming information more effectively, particularly in EFL contexts where learners may have limited exposure to authentic spoken English (Harmer, 2007). Another significant finding of this review is the use of guided listening tasks during the listening stage. Teachers often employ structured tasks such as answering comprehension questions, identifying key information, and completing listening worksheets. These tasks help learners focus their attention on important aspects of the listening material and reduce cognitive overload. According to Brown (2006), structured listening activities enable learners to process spoken language more effectively by directing their attention to relevant linguistic and contextual cues.

The review also reveals that note-taking activities are commonly used as a strategy to improve listening comprehension. Note-taking encourages learners to actively process information while listening and helps them retain important details from spoken texts. This practice is particularly useful in academic listening contexts, where learners are required to understand and recall complex information. As noted by Brownell (2010), note-taking supports listening comprehension by helping learners organize information and develop critical listening skills.

Another important finding relates to the integration of multimedia and technology-based resources in listening instruction. Many recent studies emphasize the use of videos, podcasts, and digital audio materials to provide authentic listening input. These resources expose learners to real-life communication, different accents, and natural speech patterns. The use of multimedia materials is particularly beneficial in EFL contexts because it allows learners to experience diverse forms of spoken English that may not be available in traditional classroom settings. This finding is consistent with the growing emphasis on technology-enhanced language learning in modern language pedagogy (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

In addition to instructional techniques, the review also highlights the role of interactive classroom practices, such as group discussions, role-play activities, and collaborative tasks. These activities encourage learners to reflect on the listening material and share their interpretations with peers. Such interaction promotes deeper comprehension and allows learners to clarify misunderstandings. Nation and Newton (2009) emphasize that listening activities should not be isolated from communication but should be integrated with speaking and interaction to promote meaningful language use.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that effective listening instruction requires teachers to provide strategic guidance and learning support. Teachers need to help learners develop listening strategies such as predicting content, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating their understanding. Strategy-based instruction enables learners to become more autonomous listeners and improves their ability to cope with challenging listening tasks. This perspective is supported by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), who argue that explicit strategy instruction can enhance learners' overall language learning effectiveness.

Overall, the findings of this systematic review demonstrate that successful listening instruction in EFL classrooms depends on the integration of diverse instructional techniques, interactive classroom practices, and strategic learning support. Teachers who adopt varied listening

activities and incorporate authentic materials are more likely to create engaging learning environments that foster students' listening comprehension. These findings provide valuable insights for language educators and highlight the importance of adopting pedagogically sound approaches to teaching listening in EFL contexts.

Conclusion

This study conducted a systematic literature review to examine instructional techniques and classroom practices used in teaching listening in EFL contexts. The findings indicate that effective listening instruction involves the integration of multiple pedagogical strategies, including pre-listening preparation, guided listening tasks, note-taking activities, and post-listening discussions. These techniques help learners actively engage with listening materials, process spoken input more effectively, and improve their overall listening comprehension skills. The review also reveals that interactive classroom practices and the use of multimedia resources play an important role in enhancing listening instruction. Technology-based materials such as videos, podcasts, and authentic audio recordings provide learners with exposure to natural spoken language and diverse communication contexts. Additionally, collaborative learning activities such as group discussions and role-play encourage learners to reflect on listening content and apply their understanding in communicative situations.

Overall, the findings suggest that successful listening instruction in EFL classrooms requires a combination of structured teaching techniques, interactive learning activities, and strategic learning support. Teachers are encouraged to adopt varied instructional approaches and integrate authentic listening materials to create engaging learning environments. Future research may further explore innovative listening teaching methods and examine their impact on learners' listening proficiency across different educational contexts

References

1. Brown, H. D. (2006). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
2. Brownell, J. (2010). *Listening: Attitudes, principles, and skills* (4th ed.). Pearson.
3. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
4. Field, J. (2008). *Listening in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (2016). Learners' listening comprehension difficulties in English language

- learning: A literature review. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 123–133.
6. Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Longman.
 7. Herman, H., Rafiek, M., Agustina, T., Saddhono, K., Malabar, S., Saputra, N., & Purba, R. (2023). Exploring the metafunctions to improve EFL learners' writing ability in the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 4(2), 87–100. <https://doi.org/10.58256/rjah.v4i2.1195>.
 8. Kartika, D., Siahaan, S., Herman, H., Rumapea, E. L., & Silalahi, T. F. (2023). Implementation of audio-visual teaching media in improving students' listening comprehension: A case on teaching method. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 8(2), 86–96. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v8i2.428>.
 9. Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
 10. Nasution, T., Meliani, F., Purba, R., Saputra, N., & Herman, H. (2023). Participation performance of students' basic teaching skills in microteaching. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(2), 2441–2448. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i4.2307>.
 11. Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.
 12. Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching*. McGraw-Hill.
 13. O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.
 14. Resmi, R., Rahman, A., Sobirov, B., Rumbardi, R., Al-Awawdeh, N., Widoyo, H., Herman, H., & Saputra, N. (2023). Incorporating teachers' views on different techniques for teaching foreign languages in the classroom. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(8), 210–221. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p210>.
 15. Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
 16. Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and researching listening* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
 17. Shaumiwaty, S., Fatmawati, E., Sari, H. N., Vanda, Y., & Herman, H. (2022). Implementation of augmented reality (AR) as a teaching media in English language learning in elementary school. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(6), 6332–6339. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v6i6.3398>.
 18. Sihombing, P. S. R., Herman, H., & Saputra, N. (2022). How to teach English conversation? An implementation of a multimodal discourse analysis through images. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 10(2), 431–438. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v10i2.6244>.
 19. Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339.
 20. Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. (2012). *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action*. Routledge.