CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Vocabulary has been seen as a pivotal aspect of L2 development (Barcroft, 2004; Beverley, Hughes, & Hastings, 2016; Willis & Ohasi, 2012). L2 vocabulary learning has long been an area of interest in second and foreign language pedagogies. Both theoretical concepts and empirical evidences have portrayed the acquisition of L2 vocabulary by L2 learners whether incidentally (e.g., Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008; Fisher, et al., 2012; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019; Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; Teng, 2019; Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999; Van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013) or intentionally (e.g., Barcroft, 2009; Hennebry, et al., 2013; Kasahara, 2011). However, the available studies have mostly explored L2 vocabulary learning through reading which provide L2 learners with written input (e.g., Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998; Peters, et al., 2009; Roberts, 2008; Van den Berg & Klapwijk, 2020) and less attention has still been paid to explore L2 vocabulary learning through oral input receptively (e.g., Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019; Van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013; Vidal, 2003; Zhang & Graham, 2020). As said by Chang (2019), studies reporting L2 vocabulary learning through listening is relatively sparse.

Since oral receptive input has been seen as one of the key sources of L2 acquisition (Ellis, 1999; Krashen, 1996; Nation, 2007) and many consider its benefits to the learners' L2 development, exploring more on its implementation in second and foreign language classrooms is necessary. One of the ways to expose learners with the oral-aural input is through listening activities. However, in most EFL classroom settings, the limited teaching hours have been seen as a constraint for optimizing L2 learners' listening practice inside the class. As reinforcement, assigning L2 learners to do listening activities both inside and outside the class could be a fruitful alternative. Through extensive listening, learners could manage their own schedule for doing self-paced listening practice conveniently.

Extensive listening (EL) is listening to a considerable amount of easy and understandable materials pleasurably with a purpose of obtaining its general information (Renandya, 2011; Renandya & Farrell, 2011; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016; Waring, 2008). Any audio or audio-visual materials that are abundantly available in todays' internet era could be used for doing EL practice (Chang, 2018). What is important is that learners have to adjust their proficiency to the materials they are listening to (Waring, 2008). Learners do not have to express worries on comprehension testing since it is not the goal of EL. What they need first is to enjoy the listening so that it can make them addicted to listen to more and more materials, leading them to obtain a plentiful quantity of oral input. As a novel concept, usually EL follows the ten principles of ER suggested by Day & Bamford (2002).

Despite its infancy on the concepts as well as its little exploration if compared to ER, the benefits of EL in pedagogical settings are clear. Empirical evidences by Chang (2012), Chang & Millett (2014, 2016), and Chang, Millett, & Renandya (2019) showed that fluency in listening could be better enhanced through practicing EL. It is also said that EL could assist L2 learners to become more autonomous in their learning (Takaesu, 2013; Widodo & Rozak, 2016). In addition, an increase in reading speed (Antle, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2015) and an improvement in vocabulary knowledge (Chang, 2012) are the other advantages that L2 learners could get through practicing EL. In line with this, a recent study by Pamuji, Waring, & Kurniawan (2019) reported that EL could assist learners in acquiring L2 vocabulary and thus develop their L2 proficiency. It is said in the study that two participants with different L1 backgrounds have successfully grown their L2 vocabulary after practicing EL in a certain amount of time. EL could also help learners be more familiar with words delivered orally and flourish their L2 proficiency in general (Renandya, 2011; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

With the help of technology available today, EL is relatively easier to perform. Podcasts (Alm, 2013) and mobile phones (Reinders & Cho, 2010) are some of the easy-to-use tools potential for EL practice. With abundant resources such as YouTube videos (Widodo & Rozak, 2016) as well as other recommended

websites (see Ducker & Saunders, 2014; Milliner, 2017; Renandya & Farrell, 2011; Takaesu, 2013; Vo, 2013; Waring, 2008) available online today, a lack of access to listening materials is no longer a reason that hinders L2 learners from doing EL. A search for listening materials that suit to their level of proficiency and interests is no longer a burden. EL practice could thus ideally be enjoyed by L2 learners in various age levels so that its benefits could be more widely perceived.

Despite that, insights into the practice and benefits of EL are mostly garnered through studies administered in university level settings with adult learners as the participants. Meanwhile, there is still a dearth of literature on the implementation of EL in the school settings especially those involving young learners as the subjects of the study. It is necessary to conduct a research study on EL that involves learners with different levels of proficiency (Chang, 2012) especially in the EFL pedagogical settings (Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019; Rodgers, 2016). Thus, to enrich the literature on the pedagogical implementations of EL and to gain a wider perspective on its benefits in different settings, the practice of EL by young EFL learners is worth of investigation.

The exposure of aural input for young learners is necessary to their L2 development. Listening has been used for teaching young learners in second and foreign language settings from the past up to the present (e.g., Ellis, 1999; Medina, 1993; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019). Listening activities for young learners could be done through engaging various activities and materials. Two of the commonly implemented listening activities in young learners' classrooms are listening to songs (e.g., Coyle & Gracia, 2014; Davis & Fan, 2016; Medina, 1993; Mora, 2000; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019) and listening to stories (e.g., Albaladejo, Coyle, & de Larios, 2018; Leśniewska & Pichette, 2016; Tragant & Vallbona, 2018; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). Both kinds of listening activities have their own strengths as well as efficacy for young learners' L2 learning.

Stories are said to stimulate emotions and enable us to learn with the help of contexts, thus beneficial to reinforce memory (Parkin, 2010). As said by Hsiu-Chih (2008), stories help learners enhance their memory on vocabulary and

engage them to be more enthusiastic in learning. Similarly, Mason & Krashen (2020) state that engaging in the story listening (SL) could enable learners to have a longer retention of L2 vocabulary. Stories are one among the few sources that possess four necessary characteristics of optimal input "comprehensible, compelling, rich and abundant" (Krashen & Mason, 2020, p.1). In a similar vein, looking into how listening to stories and songs affected the growth of EFL learners' vocabulary at the preschool level, a recent study conducted by Albaladejo, Coyle, & de Larios (2018) indicated that the learners' vocabulary gains from listening to stories were better than listening to songs. Stories are said to provide learners with contexts comprehensible for them and help them acquire L2 vocabulary incidentally.

Notwithstanding the meaningful information provided in those available studies, listening activities for young learners are conducted mostly inside the class, with the listening materials selected by the teachers. In EFL formal settings with relatively limited time for classroom instruction, the exposure of oral-aural input only inside the class might not be sufficient (Pamuji, Waring, & Kurniawan, 2019). More space for practicing listening by young learners both inside and outside the class is necessary. Through EL, young learners could practice listening conveniently at their own pace in their daily through plugging the earphone using e.g., their smartphone devices.

Therefore, the study sought to address this lacuna by exploring further how young EFL learners learn L2 English via extensive listening, seeking its benefits as well as its practical implementations. Vocabulary learning through EL was the focus of this study. Since the majority of studies on L2 listening and vocabulary learning have addressed the learners' learning gains showcased quantitatively, the learners' perceived vocabulary gains and their process of doing EL were also qualitatively portrayed. It follows the suggestions by Vandergrift & Goh (2012) and Vandergrift (2012) which point out the importance of process in L2 listening. As said by Goh (2018), the todays' changing nature of L2 listening underlines the importance of listening process rather than the final results of listening comprehension tests.

1.2. Research Questions

This study asks the following two research questions.

1. What vocabulary learning gains are made by young EFL learners through practicing extensive listening?

2. How do young EFL learners learn L2 English oral vocabulary through practicing extensive listening?

1.3. Research Objectives

As a follow up to the research questions above, there are two research objectives in this study.

1. To investigate the extent to which extensive listening practice can help young EFL learners in developing their L2 vocabulary.

2. To delve further into how young EFL learners practice extensive listening outside the class for learning L2 English vocabulary.

1.4. Significance of the study

The results of this study will hopefully contribute to the development of an alternative program for teaching English in EYL pedagogy. Previously, extensive listening has been used mostly for teaching English to adult learners, such as university students. In this study, EL was found to have potential to be used in the EYL context. Not only providing new learning atmospheres for young EFL learners, EL could also provide language learning benefits for them, especially in the L2 oral vocabulary learning. The followings are the significance of the study addressed to specific people that are closely involved in the EYL-related area.

1. EYL stakeholders

    This study found that the use of extensive listening for teaching English to young EFL learners was feasible to implemented and also potential to assist young learners' language learning when managed carefully. Thus, promoting or, at least, piloting the implementation of EL in the young learner context at the institutional level is necessary. This findings of this study could be used as a consideration for the EYL-related stakeholders to use EL as one of the alternative programs for teaching English in the young learner context. As

well, the careful steps done by the researcher in this study could also be used as a reference for the future implementation of EL in EYL pedagogy.

2. EYL teachers

This study confirmed that EL could provide positive benefits for young learners' L2 learning especially in L2 oral vocabulary. EYL teachers could try employing the steps in this study for teaching their students using EL. However, as informed in this study, there are five pivotal aspects that need to be addressed by EYL teachers when implementing EL in the young learner context: the visual input, the textual input, the repetition of words, the students' pre-exsisting vocabulary knowledge, and the contextual clues. In order to succed in using EL for teaching young EFL learners, EYL teachers need to be concerned with those five aspects in addition to the ten principles of ER (as adopted into EL) by Day & Bamford (2002).

3. EL and EYL researchers

EL studies conducted in young learner context are still relatively limited. And still, there are not many EYL-related studies that address the use of EL for teaching English to young EFL learners. This study will hopefully inspire other researchers, especially those interested either in EL or EYL, to conduct further study that explore the implementation of EL in the EYL context. This study has focused attention on L2 oral vocabulary learning. Future studies on EL in the EYL context with different focuses are recommended. For instance, EL/EYL researchers could focus on other L2 features such as L2 pronunciation, L2 spoken phrasal verbs, or sentence structures. In addition, as a follow-up to this study, EL/EYL researchers could further explore the views of EYL-related stakeholders or parents of young learners regarding the feasibility of EL for teaching English to young EFL learners.

4. Parents of young learners

This study has provided information to the parents of young learners regarding the meaningful use of EL for assisting young learners' L2 English oral vocabulary learning. Thus, for parents of young learners who want their children to develop their L2 English oral proficiency, they could try using EL

for assisting their children's learning of English. Parents of young learners could try to provide their children with L2 English oral input at home. Thus, young learners could listen to, for instance, songs or cartoons that they like at home regularly with the assistance of their parents.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focused its attention on researching vocabulary learning by young EFL learners through EL. EL might be benefitting other language aspects, but the concerns were given mainly in young learners' L2 vocabulary learning. Although the term young learners might refer to children with the age ranging from 3-14, the participants of the study were those studying at the seventh grade of junior high school. It was expected that at that level the participants were able to practice EL independently in addition to their practice inside the class. There were many useful materials for EL practice by young learners, but in this study only stories that will be used to assist their L2 learning via EL.

1.6. Organization of the Paper

There are five chapters in this thesis. Chapter I consists of the background of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, definition of key terms, and the organization of the paper. Chapter II is the review of literature which contains the discussion of the literature relevant to the study. Chapter III consists of the design of the research, research site, participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis. Chapter IV consists of the results of the study and the discussion. And the last, Chapter V consists of conclusion, the limitation of the study, and recommendation.