Students' Perception of the Intensity on Audio Exposure in English Language Acquisition Among University

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Article Info	Abstract
	Language acquisition plays an important role in developing English proficiency, particularly in pronunciation and listening skills. In recent years, digital tools such as Google Translate have been increasingly used by students as a self-directed learning resource to support pronunciation practice through audio exposure. However, limited studies have examined how the intensity of audio exposure influences students' language acquisition in autonomous learning contexts. This study therefore investigates university students' perceptions of the intensity of audio exposure using Google Translate and its contribution to English language acquisition. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving eight third-semester students of the English Language Program at Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Samarinda. Data were collected through structured questions using Google Forms followed by in-depth interviews conducted via Zoom. The data were analyzed thematically based on four categories: motivation and context of use, usage patterns and frequency, learning reflections and difficulties, and students' recommendations. The findings indicate that intensive exposure to Google Translate audio helps students improve their pronunciation and develop independent learning strategies. Students reported that repeated listening, imitation, and self-recording activities supported their confidence and pronunciation accuracy. Despite some limitations, such as the monotone voice and rapid speed of the audio, students perceived the tool as beneficial for autonomous pronunciation practice. The study highlights the importance of integrating audio-based digital tools to support self-directed language learning in higher education.

1. Introduction

Over the past several decades, research in second language acquisition (SLA) has emphasized the importance of language input in facilitating language learning. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, language development occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence (Krashen, 1985). Among various forms of input, auditory exposure plays a fundamental role in helping learners internalize pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntactic patterns of the target language. Listening activities enable learners to recognize phonological patterns and improve their pronunciation accuracy (Field, 2008; Rost, 2011).

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, auditory input is typically provided through classroom instruction, recorded materials, and multimedia resources. With the rapid development of digital technology, learners now have greater access to self-directed listening resources outside the classroom. Self-directed learning (SDL) allows learners to take responsibility for their learning by selecting strategies, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes independently (Benson, 2011; Little, 2007). In language learning, self-directed listening practices such as podcasts, digital audio tools, and online media have been shown to support pronunciation development and listening comprehension (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

One widely accessible digital tool used by learners is Google Translate. In addition to its translation function, Google Translate provides an audio feature that allows learners to listen to the pronunciation of words and sentences repeatedly. Many students use this feature to practice pronunciation by listening to and imitating the audio output. Technology-assisted language learning tools, including machine translation systems, have been increasingly used to support language learning and pronunciation practice (Garcia & Pena, 2011; Niño, 2009). Through repeated listening and imitation, learners may increase the intensity of audio exposure, which potentially enhances language acquisition.

Despite the increasing use of digital tools in language learning, the role of audio exposure intensity in self-directed learning remains underexplored. Previous studies have highlighted the benefits of listening input for language development (Rost, 2011), yet fewer studies have investigated how frequently and consistently learners engage with audio input outside the classroom. Understanding the intensity of exposure is particularly important in higher education contexts where students are expected to develop autonomous learning strategies.

Therefore, this study investigates university students' perceptions of the intensity of audio exposure using Google Translate and its contribution to English language acquisition. Specifically, this study explores how students use audio features, how frequently they engage with them, and how they perceive their influence on pronunciation development.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore students' perceptions of audio exposure intensity in English language learning. Qualitative research is appropriate for investigating learners' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of learning processes (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants consisted of eight third-semester students enrolled in the English Language Program at Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Samarinda. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because they had experience using Google Translate audio for pronunciation practice during their English learning activities (Patton, 2015).

The learning activity involved students listening to English paragraphs through the Google Translate audio feature. Students repeatedly listened to the pronunciation and attempted to imitate it by recording their voices. Such repeated listening and imitation practices are commonly used in pronunciation learning because they help learners develop phonological awareness and pronunciation accuracy (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). The learning activity was conducted during a course consisting of 15 sessions over approximately eight months.

Data were collected in two stages. First, students completed structured questions distributed through Google Forms to obtain preliminary information about their experiences using audio exposure tools. Second, follow-up interviews were conducted through Zoom meetings to gain deeper insights into students' learning experiences. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research to explore participants' perspectives in greater depth (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Responses from Google Forms and interview transcripts were coded and categorized according to the research themes: motivation and context of use, patterns and frequency of exposure, learning reflections and difficulties, and students' recommendations.

3. Result

The analysis of the data collected from Google Forms and follow-up interviews produced four major themes related to students' perceptions of the intensity of audio exposure using Google Translate in English language learning. These themes include motivation and context of use, patterns and frequency of usage, learning reflections and difficulties, and students' recommendations.

1. Motivation and Context of Use

The first theme explores students' initial motivation and the contexts in which they began using Google Translate audio for pronunciation practice. Most participants reported that they initially used Google Translate mainly for translation purposes. However, after entering university, they gradually began to utilize its audio feature to support pronunciation learning.

Table 1. Students' Motivation and Context of Using Google Translate Audio

Category	Student Responses
First use of Google Translate audio	Most students started using it intensively after entering university
Initial purpose of use	Translation and pronunciation practice
Perceived usefulness	Helpful for learning pronunciation
First impressions	Positive but sometimes difficult due to speed or intonation

From the data, six of the eight participants stated that they began using Google Translate audio more frequently after they realized its usefulness for pronunciation practice. Students reported that the tool allowed them to repeatedly listen to the pronunciation of words and sentences, which helped them better understand English sounds. Although most students perceived the tool positively, some participants mentioned that the speed and monotone voice sometimes made the audio difficult to follow.

2. Patterns and Frequency of Audio Exposure

The second theme focuses on how frequently students used Google Translate audio and the strategies they applied during their learning practice.

Table 2. Patterns of Audio Exposure Intensity

Listening Frequency	Number of Students
3–5 repetitions	5 students
6–10 repetitions	3 students

Table 3. Duration of Audio Listening

Duration of Listening	Number of Students
15–30 minutes	5 students
30–60 minutes	3 students

The data show that most students repeated the Google Translate audio three to five times when practicing pronunciation. Some participants repeated the audio up to ten times in order to fully understand the pronunciation of specific words.

Regarding the duration of exposure, most students spent 15–30 minutes listening to the audio, while several students reported practicing for up to one hour, especially when learning longer English paragraphs. These findings indicate that the intensity of audio exposure varied depending on students' learning habits and language proficiency.

Students also reported several strategies when using Google Translate audio, including repeating difficult words multiple times, writing down unfamiliar vocabulary, and comparing their pronunciation with the audio output.

3. Learning Reflections and Difficulties

The third theme examines students' reflections on their learning experiences and the challenges they encountered when using Google Translate audio.

Table 4. Students' Learning Reflections

Learning Experience	Student Perceptions
Pronunciation improvement	Students reported improvement in pronunciation
Increased confidence	Students felt more confident speaking English
Learning motivation	Students became more motivated to practice pronunciation

The majority of participants reported positive changes in their pronunciation skills. Students stated that repeated listening and imitation helped them become more familiar with English pronunciation patterns. As a result, they felt more confident when speaking English sentences.

However, students also identified several challenges. Some participants mentioned that the Google Translate audio sounded monotone and less natural compared to native speakers. Others reported that the speed of pronunciation was sometimes too fast, making it difficult to imitate accurately. Despite these limitations, students still considered the tool helpful for independent learning.

4. Students' Recommendations

The final theme focuses on students' recommendations regarding the use of Google Translate audio as a learning strategy.

Table 5. Students' Recommendations for Using Google Translate Audio

Recommendation	Student Views
Continue using the tool	Most students recommended its continued use
Supplementary learning tool	Students suggested using it alongside other learning resources
Pronunciation practice	Considered effective for independent pronunciation practice

All participants recommended the continued use of Google Translate audio as a supplementary learning tool. Students emphasized that the ability to repeatedly listen to pronunciation allowed them to practice independently outside the classroom.

Although students acknowledged that native speaker input remains the best model for pronunciation learning, they considered Google Translate a practical and accessible alternative. The tool allows learners to practice pronunciation anytime and helps support autonomous learning strategies.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that students perceive intensive audio exposure using Google Translate as beneficial for pronunciation development and independent learning. The repeated listening strategy helped students internalize pronunciation patterns and increased their confidence in speaking English. However, the findings also highlight certain limitations of machine-generated audio, particularly in terms of naturalness and speech speed.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that intensive audio exposure through Google Translate can support students' pronunciation development and autonomous learning strategies. Repeated listening and imitation activities allow learners to internalize pronunciation patterns and become more confident in producing English sounds. These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that frequent exposure to auditory input helps learners improve their phonological awareness and pronunciation accuracy (Rost, 2011; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

The results also support the concept of self-directed learning, in which learners actively regulate their own learning process outside the classroom. According to Benson (2011), autonomous learners often employ independent learning strategies such as repeated listening and self-monitoring to improve their language skills. In this study, students reported that they repeatedly listened to

Google Translate audio and practiced pronouncing words until they felt confident with the pronunciation.

Another important finding is that the intensity of audio exposure varies among students depending on their learning habits and proficiency levels. Students who listened to the audio more frequently reported greater improvements in their pronunciation skills. This supports previous studies indicating that consistent exposure to spoken language input can significantly contribute to second language acquisition (Field, 2008).

However, the findings also highlight certain limitations of using AI-based audio tools. Although Google Translate provides accessible pronunciation models, students reported that the audio sometimes sounds monotone and less natural compared to native speakers. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies on machine translation tools, which suggest that such tools can support language learning but should be complemented with authentic language input (Garcia & Pena, 2011; Niño, 2009).

Overall, the results demonstrate that digital tools such as Google Translate can play a supportive role in language learning by facilitating repeated audio exposure. When combined with self-directed learning strategies, these tools can help students improve pronunciation and develop more independent learning habits.

5. Conclusion

This study comes to the conclusion that although audio tools of Google Translator have a great deal of promise to improve English language learning, their efficacy is closely linked to students' judgments of exposure intensity and their participation in critical thinking activities. Pedagogical practices that actively encourage students to go beyond passive reception of AI-generated content to engage in deeper analysis, evaluation, and synthesis are necessary for the successful integration of these tools (Kim et al., 2024) (Mardiana et al., 2025).

Future studies should examine the long-term consequences of this supported learning environments and look into different contexts to maximize their influence on the development of critical thinking skills and language acquisition (Rizkiani et al., 2025).

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