

Educaplay for Selective Listening Instruction: Students Benefits and Challenges in an EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the most challenging language skills for EFL learners, particularly in selective listening activities that require students to identify specific information from spoken texts. To address this issue, interactive digital media such as Educaplay can provide engaging learning experiences and support listening comprehension. This study aimed to explore the benefits experienced by eighth-grade students when using Educaplay in selective listening activities. A qualitative case study design was selected because it enabled an in-depth exploration of students' learning experiences, perceptions, and interactions within a real classroom context. The study involved 39 eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Kuningan Regency, West Java. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, student reflections, and field notes, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that Educaplay enhanced students' engagement, motivation, confidence, vocabulary development, and selective listening abilities. Its interactive, game-based features promoted active participation and improved students' ability to identify specific information from spoken texts while fostering time management and critical thinking. Although internet connectivity, audio comprehension, and device limitations posed challenges, students generally responded positively, indicating that Educaplay is an effective medium for supporting selective listening instruction in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *Educaplay, Interactive Learning Media, Selective Listening, EFL Learning, Junior High School*

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the fundamental language skills in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because this skill provides the language input learners need to master the language. Listening is not only about the ability to hear the sounds of a language but also involves complex cognitive processes, such as recognizing speech, understanding meaning, interpreting messages, and connecting them to context and prior knowledge. Richards (2008) emphasizes that listening is the primary foundation of language acquisition because learners must first comprehend language input before producing language orally or in writing. Therefore, the success of English language learning depends heavily on the effectiveness of listening instruction in the classroom. Meanwhile, according to Brown (2004), listening is an active process that involves identifying sounds, interpreting meaning, and understanding spoken messages. However, listening is often considered one of the most difficult language skills because learners must process spoken information in real time while dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking speed.

Among the various types of listening skills, selective listening plays a crucial role in English language instruction in secondary schools. Brown (2004) defines selective listening as the ability to identify specific information from spoken texts while ignoring irrelevant details. This skill aligns with the objectives of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, which requires students to understand specific information from everyday spoken texts such as

conversations, descriptions, and simple dialogues. Indeed, listening has many branches, each of which trains different aspects of spoken language processing. However, this study specifically focuses on selective listening – the ability to filter specific information from longer spoken texts without comprehending the entire content, such as listening to announcements or instructions to capture key points Brown & Lee (2015). The reason for choosing selective listening is its alignment with the requirements of the Merdeka Curriculum for 8th grade, specifically Chapter 3 (Love Our World). This chapter requires students to extract specific information from everyday audio conversations, such as the timing of activities, preferences, or the sequence of events, which aligns with selective listening tasks to build practical skills in real-world communication.

Although important, the teaching of listening skills in many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms remains conventional. Based on preliminary observations and brief interviews with English teachers, listening activities are often limited to playing audio recordings of poor quality, followed by simple comprehension questions. Teachers still use conventional methods where students are simply given a few audio recordings and then assigned tasks that do not encourage them to participate. Students also often feel insecure due to a lack of confidence and an incomplete understanding of the language they hear, so they are often reluctant to come to the front of the class to practice the words or sounds they have picked up during the lesson. This situation is highly relevant to selective listening instruction, where students find it difficult to filter specific information without interactive media, as evidenced by EFL studies showing that conventional methods reduce motivation and limit effective oral processing (Qasserras, 2025; Zou et al., 2025).

One alternative solution to address listening comprehension issues is the use of digital-based interactive learning media. Interactive media is defined as learning media that enables two-way interaction between learners and the material through digital technology, in the form of responses to stimuli, control over the learning process, or immediate feedback. Unlike conventional media, which is one-way, interactive media positions learners as active participants (Fiorella & Mayer, n.d.; Santika et al., 2023). This interactivity is closely related to the use of digital technology, such as web platforms that integrate audio, visual, and gamification elements for multichannel cognitive processing. One form of digital learning media with the potential to support listening comprehension is Educaplay. Educaplay is a web-based platform that facilitates the creation of interactive activities such as quizzes, matching games, and puzzles, which can incorporate audio. Educaplay was chosen as the primary solution because it is a technology-based platform that enables two-way interaction, provides feedback, and includes specific features to train students' selective listening skills, such as keyword searches from Chapter 3 of the English for Nusantara textbook. This feature addresses passivity by encouraging students to repeatedly filter specific information, boosting their confidence without the pressure of being in front of the class (Sebastián Miras, Mónica Ruiz-Bañuls & Mateo-Guillen, 2023).

Previous studies have reported the positive impact of Educaplay on students' motivation, vocabulary learning, engagement, learning experience, and collaborative student involvement (Mukni'ah et al., 2025; Wangsawan & Sudamara, 2025). Daulay (2025) and Kochkorova (2025) states that audio-visual media can enhance students' selective listening comprehension by providing visual context support and helping learners develop selective listening strategies, such as scanning for specific information, and improving their communicative competence in real-life scenarios. Despite the growing body of research highlighting the pedagogical potential of Educaplay in language learning, limited studies have explored its use in supporting selective listening instruction in EFL classrooms, particularly at the junior high school level. Furthermore, previous research has largely focused on measuring learning outcomes, such as vocabulary acquisition and academic performance, rather than examining students' classroom engagement, perceived benefits, and challenges during the learning process. Since students' experiences play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of technology-enhanced learning, it is important to investigate

how learners engage with Educaplay and how they perceive its advantages and limitations in developing selective listening skills.

Recent studies have reported that digital game-based learning platforms, including Educaplay, can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and vocabulary acquisition in English language learning. Other research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Educaplay for improving reading comprehension, grammar, and formative assessment through interactive learning activities. However, empirical evidence regarding its application in listening instruction remains limited, particularly in selective listening tasks that require learners to identify specific information from spoken texts. Existing studies have largely emphasized quantitative learning outcomes while providing little insight into how students experience the use of Educaplay during listening activities or how its interactive features influence engagement, confidence, and listening strategies. Furthermore, few studies have employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the benefits and challenges of implementing Educaplay in authentic junior high school EFL classrooms. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates students' experiences with Educaplay in selective listening activities, offering a deeper understanding of its pedagogical value and practical implications for EFL listening instruction. Therefore, this study seeks to explore students' engagement, benefits, and challenges in the implementation of Educaplay for selective listening instruction in an EFL classroom.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design. The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore a phenomenon in depth within its natural context. The study was conducted at a junior high school in Mandirancan, Kuningan Regency, West Java. The school was selected because English instruction there still relies heavily on conventional teaching methods and has limited integration of interactive digital media. The participants consisted of 39 students from class VIII G. Additionally, five students were selected for interviews using purposive sampling to represent different levels of academic achievement. The selection of students to be interviewed was based on observations made during class and their level of engagement.

Data were collected through classroom observation, student reflections, semi-structured interviews, and the researcher's field notes. Classroom observations focused on student engagement, participation, and responses during learning activities. Interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using Educaplay. Students' reflections provided additional insights into their learning experiences. The implementation of Educaplay took place from April 21 to May 20, 2026, through four classroom sessions. Several Educaplay features were integrated into selective listening activities, including the Word Search Puzzle, Froggy Jump Quiz, Crossword Puzzle, and Video Quiz.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, student reflection sheets, and field notes. Classroom observations were conducted throughout each Educaplay-assisted selective listening session using a structured observation protocol that focused on students' participation, attention, interaction with the platform, response to listening tasks, and observable difficulties encountered during the activities. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with selected students after the implementation to explore their perceptions of Educaplay, perceived benefits, challenges, engagement, and the strategies they used to identify specific information from spoken texts. Each interview followed an interview guide containing open-ended questions while allowing follow-up probing to obtain richer responses. Student reflections were completed immediately after each learning session using guided prompts that encouraged students to describe what they had learned, identify the most helpful Educaplay features, reflect on the difficulties they experienced, evaluate their listening performance, and suggest improvements for future listening activities. Field notes were used

to document classroom interactions, technical issues, and contextual factors that complemented the observation and interview data.

Data analysis in this study employed a qualitative case study approach and was conducted descriptively to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of Educaplay in teaching selective listening skills. According to Creswell John & David (2023), qualitative data analysis involves organizing, interpreting, and making sense of textual and visual in this study was conducted continuously throughout the research process. To ensure credibility, triangulation was performed by comparing data from observations, interviews, reflections, and field notes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings and discussion based on classroom observations, the results of Educaplay's implementation in the classroom, semi-structured interviews, students' reflections, and the researcher's field notes collected during Educaplay's use in selective listening activities. The data were analyzed thematically to identify the level of student engagement, the benefits and challenges experienced by students, and the researcher's reflections on the implementation process.

Students' Engagement in Selective Listening Activities

The following are the students' perceptions of the implementation of Educaplay in selective listening lessons in their classroom. The data were collected through observations and interviews.

Findings and Discussion from Classroom Observations

The observational data show a gradual increase in student engagement levels over the course of the four sessions. The students demonstrated improvements in attention, participation, enthusiasm, and interaction during the Educaplay-based activities.

Table 1. Students' Engagement During the Implementation of Educaplay

Meeting	Observation Findings	Interpretation
Meeting 1	Most students paid attention to the teacher's explanation and participated in Educaplay activities, although some students still required repeated instructions.	Students showed initial interest but were still adapting to the platform.
Meeting 2	Students showed better participation and attention compared to the first meeting.	Familiarity with Educaplay increased students' engagement.
Meeting 3	Students actively completed Educaplay activities and demonstrated enthusiasm during selective listening tasks.	Students became more confident and involved in selective listening activities.
Meeting 4	Students participated independently and maintained positive responses throughout the lesson.	Students achieved a higher level of engagement and confidence.

As presented in Table 1, students' engagement showed a gradual improvement throughout the implementation of Educaplay in selective listening activities. During the first meeting, most students paid attention to the teacher's explanation and participated in the activities, although some still required repeated instructions and guidance to use the platform effectively. This finding indicates that students were interested in the learning activities but were still adapting to a new digital learning environment. According to Mayer (2021), students need time to become familiar with multimedia learning tools before they can fully focus on learning tasks.

Students' engagement increased during the second meeting as they became more familiar with Educaplay. Observation data showed better participation and attention compared to the previous meeting. Students were more confident in completing the activities and demonstrated greater willingness to engage in selective listening tasks. This suggests that

familiarity with the platform positively influenced students' participation in the learning process.

A more noticeable improvement was observed during the third and fourth meetings. Students actively completed Educaplay activities, showed enthusiasm during listening tasks, and participated independently without requiring significant assistance from the teacher. They were able to focus on identifying specific information from the audio materials and responded positively to the learning activities. These findings indicate that Educaplay successfully promoted active participation and sustained students' attention throughout the lessons.

Overall, the findings suggest that Educaplay positively contributed to students' engagement in selective listening activities. The gradual increase in participation, attention, and confidence supports Mayer (2021) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which states that the integration of audio, visual, and interactive elements can enhance learners' engagement. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Rahmawati & Perdana (2024), who found that Educaplay creates a more interactive and student-centered learning environment that encourages active classroom participation.

Findings and Discussion from Classroom Observations

These findings are supported by interview data. The students consistently reported positive experiences related to the use of Educaplay during selective listening activities.

Table 2. Interview Findings on Students' Engagement

Participant	Interview Response	Emerging Theme
SA	"It was very enjoyable because it was different from the lesson we usually learned."	Enjoyable learning experience
SS	"It was exciting because we could learn while playing."	Learning through games
SV	"Learning became more fun and interesting."	Positive learning atmosphere
SF	"I became more enthusiastic about learning English."	Increased enthusiasm
SZ	"The activities made me interested in participating."	Active participation

The interview data revealed that students perceived Educaplay as an enjoyable and engaging learning media. SA explained that the learning activities were enjoyable because they were different from the conventional lessons usually conducted in the classroom. Similarly, SS stated that Educaplay allowed students to learn while playing, making the learning process more interesting and easier to understand. SV also reported that the activities made learning more enjoyable and reduced boredom during English lessons. Furthermore, several students mentioned that Educaplay increased their enthusiasm for participating in classroom activities. SF explained that the interactive activities encouraged him to become more active during English lessons, while SZ reported that the game-based activities motivated her to participate more actively in selective listening tasks. These responses indicate that students not only enjoyed the activities but also developed greater willingness to engage in learning.

Benefits Experienced by Students

The analysis of observation data, interviews, and students' reflections revealed several benefits experienced by students during the implementation of Educaplay in selective listening activities. Four major benefits emerged from the data, namely increased learning motivation, improvement of selective listening skills, vocabulary development, and critical thinking awareness.

Table 3. Benefits Experienced by Students During the Use of Educaplay

Theme	Observation Evidence	Interview Evidence
Increased Learning Motivation	Students actively participated and completed activities enthusiastically.	"Learning was fun because we could learn while playing."
Improved Selective Listening Skills	Students identified specific information from spoken texts more accurately.	"Educaplay helped me understand the audio more easily."
Vocabulary Development	Students successfully completed vocabulary-based activities.	"I learned many new words and their meanings."
Critical Thinking and Time Awareness	Students completed quizzes within limited time.	"It trained us to think quickly when answering questions."

As presented in Table 3, increased learning motivation was the most noticeable benefit observed during the implementation process. Throughout the four meetings, students demonstrated enthusiasm and willingness to participate in Educaplay activities. The game-based features encouraged students to engage actively with the listening materials and created a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Interview responses also revealed that students enjoyed learning through Educaplay because the activities allowed them to learn while playing. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that gamified learning environments can enhance students' motivation and engagement in language learning (Rahmawati & Perdana, 2024).

Another benefit identified was the improvement of selective listening skills. Observation data showed that students became more capable of identifying specific information from spoken texts as the implementation progressed. Students were able to focus on keywords, important details, and relevant information while completing listening tasks. This finding aligns with Brown (2004) concept of selective listening, which emphasizes the ability to extract particular information from spoken language according to a specific purpose.

The findings also revealed that Educaplay contributed to students' vocabulary development. Activities such as Word Search Puzzle and Crossword Puzzle repeatedly exposed students to target vocabulary. Several students reported learning new words, understanding their meanings, and improving pronunciation through the listening activities. According to Mayer (2021), meaningful learning occurs when learners actively process information through multiple channels, which may explain the improvement in vocabulary retention observed in this study.

Finally, students reported that Educaplay helped develop their critical thinking and time-management awareness. The time-limited quizzes encouraged students to process information quickly and make decisions efficiently. This suggests that Educaplay not only supports language learning but also promotes higher-order thinking skills that are valuable for classroom learning.

Obstacles Encountered by Students

Despite the positive outcome, several obstacles were identified during the implementation of Educaplay in selective listening activities. The analysis revealed four major challenges: internet connectivity issues, audio comprehension difficulties, device limitations, and difficulties understanding instructions.

Table 4. Obstacles Encountered by Students During the Use of Educaplay

Theme	Observation Evidence	Interview Evidence
Internet Connectivity Issues	Delays in loading activities and interrupted audio feedback.	"Sometimes the internet connection was unstable."
Audio Comprehension Difficulties	Students requested audio repetition several times.	"The speaker talked too fast."
Device Limitations	Some students experienced difficulties accessing activities.	"I had problems using my device."
Understanding Instructions	Several students needed repeated explanations.	"At first, I was confused about how to use Educaplay."

As shown in Table 4, internet connectivity emerged as the most frequently reported challenge during the implementation process. Since Educaplay is an online learning platform, stable internet access was necessary for students to participate effectively in the activities. However, several students experienced loading delays and interruptions while accessing listening materials. These technical issues occasionally affected students' concentration and slowed down the learning process.

Another challenge involved difficulties in understanding audio materials. Observation data indicated that some students requested the audio to be repeated several times before they could identify the required information. Interview responses revealed that some students found the speakers' pronunciation and speech rate difficult to understand. Such difficulties are common among EFL learners who have limited exposure to authentic spoken English (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021).

Device-related issues were also identified during the implementation. A small number of students experienced difficulties accessing activities because of limitations related to their devices. Although this issue did not affect the majority of students, it occasionally disrupted participation during classroom activities.

The final challenge involved understanding instructions, particularly during the first meeting. Because most students had never used Educaplay before, several required repeated explanations regarding how to access and complete the activities. Nevertheless, this challenge gradually decreased as students became more familiar with the platform over the course of the four meetings.

Overall, although several obstacles were encountered, the findings suggest that these challenges did not significantly hinder the effectiveness of the learning process. Most students successfully adapted to the platform and continued to participate actively in selective listening activities. The positive benefits experienced by students appeared to outweigh the difficulties encountered during the implementation of Educaplay.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Educaplay provides meaningful benefits for eighth-grade students in selective listening instruction by enhancing engagement, motivation, vocabulary development, confidence, and the ability to identify specific information from spoken texts through interactive, game-based learning activities. Although students experienced challenges related to internet connectivity, audio comprehension, and device availability, these limitations did not diminish the overall positive learning experience. The findings suggest that Educaplay is a valuable digital learning medium for creating more student-centered and engaging listening instruction in EFL classrooms. Practically, English teachers are encouraged to integrate Educaplay into selective listening activities to promote active participation, immediate feedback, and greater learner autonomy while carefully preparing appropriate technological support and scaffolding for students with different proficiency levels. For curriculum developers, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating interactive digital platforms into listening instruction to foster communicative competence and twenty-first-century learning skills. Future research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of Educaplay across different educational contexts, proficiency levels, and language skills using larger samples and mixed-methods or experimental research designs to strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

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