

# Students Difficulties in Understanding Listening Lessons (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)

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## ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the essential skills that need to be mastered by students who want to learn English. This study concerns students' difficulties in understanding listening lessons. This research aims to describe the students' difficulties in learning to listen. The method used in this research is Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. This method is a process of searching the literature, while the source of portal searching literature is OJS-based journals, whether or not Sinta accredits them. The data taken are articles relating to students' difficulties in listening lessons, while the number of articles used as a reference for systematic review or meta-analysis is primarily the result of research. The articles used were 12 articles over the last two years. The results of the study show that difficulties in listening comprehension can be caused by various factors, including the knowledge and background of the listener, the clarity and quality of the spoken language, the level of attention and motivation of the listener, limited vocabulary, cognitive and language abilities, cultural and social differences, and emotional state.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is understanding spoken language (Rost, 2002; Hamouda, 2013). It is crucial in many situations, including professional, social, and especially educational contexts. Listening is part of an effort to pay attention to spoken language by listening to something. It differs from hearing, which is simply a physiological process in which the ear absorbs sound waves and transmits them to brain areas via the nervous system. There are five steps to listening, including arriving at, understanding, interpreting, responding to, and retaining information (DeVito, J. A., 2000). To be an effective and active process requires the use of a variety of attitudes and tools.

In fact, in learning listening at school, students have difficulty capturing and understanding English sentences. It is based on a lack of concentration in listening, understanding English accents, and vocabulary skills. Learning strategies to overcome this also slow the learning process of listening to students. The teacher's actions in carrying out language teaching plans and language learning strategies are also seen as imperfect, even though this is the art of designing actions during the learning process, especially in

listening skill learning strategies, which aim to enable students to re-inform their understanding through speaking or writing skills.

On this occasion, the author will discuss students' difficulties in mastering listening from various previous studies over the past two years, which have been published in online network-based scientific journals so that the conclusions obtained are used as evaluation material to be applied in improving listening learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Listening

One of the most critical aspects of learning English is mastering basic listening skills. Referring to Underwood (1989), listening refers to the act of paying attention to what is said and trying to decipher its meaning. As defined by (Hornby, 1990), listening is a complex problem-solving skill and is more than just the perception of sound. According to Howat and Dakin (1974), listening is recognizing and understanding what others say. Rivers in (Hasyuni, 2006) understands that the speaker's vocabulary, grammar, accent, and pronunciation are part of this process. According to Mee (1990), listening is a complex process where many things happen simultaneously in mind. The brain can understand language and derive meaning from the sounds it hears in this complex procedure. According to the definition above, students must be able to process what they hear and try to interpret it. Therefore, mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation, and the meaning of words and sentences significantly affects listening skills.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. This method is a process of searching the literature, while the source of portal searching literature is OJS-based journals, whether Sinta accredits or not. The data taken were articles relating to students' difficulties in listening lessons, while the number of articles used as a reference for systematic review or meta-analysis was mainly research results, while the articles used were 12 over the last two years.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Research Results

The results of the research in the table below are student difficulties in listening comprehension according to previous studies.

Table 4. Student difficulties in listening comprehension, according to previous studies

No	Author	Year	Article Title	Findings In Listening Learning Difficulties
1	Lini Diora & Rusdi Noor Rosa	2020	An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Listening Comprehension: A Descriptive Study at English	The results of this study showed that the student's difficulties in listening comprehension were related to three categories: the listening material, the listener, and the physical setting. Besides, the factors which cause students' difficulties in listening

			Language and Literature Department FBS UNP	comprehension were depending on others, the shame of asking the lecturer about the material, having emotional disturbances, the lecturer explaining the material too quickly, lack of reward and reinforcement, and being unfocused.
2	Syifa Nadhira & Silih Warni	2020	Students Listening Difficulties in English as A Foreign Language Learning at Secondary Schools in Indonesian Context	The findings of the research show that the difficulties in listening skills faced by students include unfamiliar words, speech rate, unfamiliar accent, unclear pronunciation, recording quality, and inadequate facility. Those difficulties involved the students' background knowledge, lack of practices, and environmental noise.
3	Agustina Ramadhianti & Sugianti Somba	2021	Listening Comprehension Difficulties in Indonesian EFL Students	Based on the results of the study, the most common listening problems faced by students were the speed of the speaker's speech, the various accents used by the speaker, and long descriptions in the listening text.
4	Dikdik Ferdiat et all	2021	Learners' Difficulties & Strategies in Listening Comprehension	The listener cannot control the speech rate; Listeners do not have high vocabulary knowledge; Listeners lack contextual knowledge.
5	Ari Saputra et all	2021	Student's Difficulties in Interpreting Messages Of Listening Comprehension	The factors influencing their listening are listening material, listening factors, and the physical environment. Therefore, accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, short vocabulary, different speaker accents, and lack of concentration are the main problems encountered.
6	Tran Thi Ai Huong et all	2021	English-Majored Students' Listening Difficulties And Use of Strategies at Mien Dong University of Technology,	The findings reveal that students majoring in English have many difficulties in listening, such as difficulties related to listeners, dialogue content, speakers, physical settings, and linguistic factors. In terms of listening strategies, the findings show that cognitive listening strategies are used

			Vietnam	more frequently than metacognitive and socio-affective strategies.
7	Dede Purwanto et al	2021	Listening Comprehension Study: Difficulties and Strategies Used by College Students	Listening comprehension barriers that selected students to confront; Accent; Lack of vocabulary; Speed; Listening comprehension strategies that selected students to employ; Reading; Focus; Finding the keywords; Predicting.
8	Risa Arroyani	2021	Mapping Students' listening Problems and Strategies	The findings of this study are: (1) students are at a moderate level in the problem of listening to perception (M=2.91), parsing (M=3.18), and the stage of utilization (M=2.95), (2) students are classified as high. Strategy-level users in cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategies, (3) students mostly have difficulty parsing phases compared to the other two problems and applying cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies rather than socio-affective strategies.
9	Rodesa Nauli Harianja et al	2022	The Students' Listening Problems for Senior High School in Pematangsiantar	The findings show that (1) the problems they face in listening to English are related to speaking speed, (2) limited vocabulary, (3) concentration level, and established language habits.
10	Lieyana Teo Mohd Zulkifli Teo et al	2022	Listening Difficulties and Strategies In Preparing for Ielts Listening Test Using Online Learning: A Case Study of Intensive English Learners	Problems Related to The Content of the Listening Text; Problems Caused by Failure to Concentrate; Problems related to the Listener; Problems related to the Speaker; Problems related to the Environment; Person knowledge; Task knowledge; Strategy knowledge.
11	Shagufta Kanwal et al	2022	An Investigation of Factors of Listening Comprehension Difficulties	Making predictions about what the speaker talks about; Guessing unknown words while listening; Unfamiliar topics; Lacking background knowledge; Speed of speech; Recognizing main points;

			Encountered by L2 Learners in Tertiary Level Classrooms of a Private University	Linking words; Authentic material; Ungrammatical sentences; Different accents; Colloquial words; Hesitation; Long listening text; Noises; Poor tape quality; The poor equipment.
12	Muhammad Khoerul Hadist et al	2022	An Analysis of Efl Students' Difficulties in Listening Comprehension at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor	The results reveal several factors that affect EFL learners' listening comprehension, such as listening material, listener attitudes and background knowledge, speakers, and physical settings. However, the most common difficulty students face in the listening material variable is that the conversation material is too long, with around 60% and 80% foreign vocabulary. As for students' attitudes and background knowledge, at least two difficulties were encountered, including catching one word combined with the pronunciation of another word by 54% and difficulty capturing the sound of the appropriate word by 44%. And for the last and the most significant difficulty faced is the category of speakers, places, and equipment, including poor sound recording results caused by cassettes or CDs with a total of 93% and for poor quality recordings and poor quality of supporting equipment both have the same percentage, namely 90%.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Drawn from the findings above, the student's difficulties in learning to listen include; (A1) Listening material, audience, and physical setting. In addition, the factors that cause students to have difficulty in listening comprehension are depending on other people, being embarrassed to ask the lecturer about the material, experiencing emotional disturbances, the lecturer explaining the material too fast, lack of appreciation and reinforcement, and not focusing. (A2) The study's findings show that students' difficulties in listening skills include unfamiliar words, speech speed, unfamiliar accents, unclear pronunciation, recording quality, and inadequate facilities. The difficulty factors include background knowledge of students, lack of practice, and environmental noise. (A3) Based on the results of the study, the most common listening problems faced by students were the speed

of the speaker's speech, the various accents used by the speaker, and long descriptions in the listening text.

In (A4), The listener cannot control the speech rate. Listeners do not have high vocabulary knowledge. Listeners lack contextual knowledge. (A5) The factors influencing their listening are listening material, listening factors, and the physical environment. Therefore, accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, short vocabulary, different speaker accents, and lack of concentration are the main problems encountered. (A6) Findings reveal that students majoring in English have many difficulties in listening, such as difficulties related to listeners, dialogue content, speakers, physical settings, and linguistic factors. In terms of listening strategies, the findings show that cognitive listening strategies are used more frequently than metacognitive and socio-affective strategies. (A7) Listening comprehension barriers faced by selected students; Accent; Lack of vocabulary; Speed; Listening comprehension strategies used by selected students; Read; Focus; Find keywords; predict. (A8) The findings of this study are: (1) students are at a moderate level in the problem of listening to perception (M=2.91), parsing (M=3.18), and the stage of utilization (M=2.95), (2) students are classified as high. Strategy users -level in cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategies, (3) students mostly have difficulty in the parsing phase compared to the other two problems and applying cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies rather than socio-affective strategies.

In (A9), the findings show (1) the problems they face in listening to English are related to the speed of speaking, (2) limited vocabulary, and (3) the level of concentration and established language habits. (A10) Issues Regarding Listening Text Content; Problems Caused by Failure to Concentrate; Issues related to Listeners; Issues related to Speakers; Issues related to the Environment; People knowledge; task knowledge; Strategy knowledge. (A11) Make predictions about what the speaker is talking about; Guess unknown words while listening; foreign topic; Lack of background knowledge; Speech speed; Recognize the main points; Connecting words; Authentic ingredients; Sentences are not grammatical; Different accents; everyday words; Doubt; Long listening text; Noise; Tape quality is poor; Bad equipment. (A12) The results reveal that several factors affect EFL learners listening comprehension, such as listening material, listener attitudes and knowledge background, speakers, and physical settings. However, the most common difficulty students face in listening to material variables is that the conversation material is too long. 60%, and 80% foreign vocabulary. As for students' attitudes and background knowledge, there are at least two difficulties encountered, including catching one word combined with the pronunciation of another word as much as 54% and difficulty capturing the sound of the appropriate word as much as 44%. And for the last and the most significant difficulty faced is the category of speakers, places, and equipment, including poor sound recording results caused by cassettes or CDs with a total of 93% and for poor recording quality and poor quality of supporting equipment both have the same percentage, namely 90 %.

Drawn from the conclusions of the findings above in line with the findings of Underwood (1990:15), students face a number of challenges when listening, including; (1) the inability to control the pace of the speaker's speech and the perception that the message has been lost before the listener can comprehend its content. When they can understand

one message, another message is lost. 2) In contrast to listening to the radio or watching television, listeners cannot ask the speaker to repeat or clarify their message; consequently, the person listening must understand what is being said. 3) The listeners' limited vocabulary indicates that the text's contents are unclear to them. 4) Misinterpretation of the contents of the message by the listener as a result of failure to recognize and understand the speaker's "signs", 5) Misunderstanding, which causes the listener to receive or interpret the contents of the message incorrectly; and 6) Inability of listeners to concentrate due to various factors, including boring topics, physical fatigue, noisy environment, etcetera. 7) Concerns about how the instructor's teaching methods and content differ from those taught by audio devices or native English speakers.

Ur (1984) identified a number of problems that students face when learning to listen: 1) They cannot understand certain English pronunciations, 2) They cannot deal with repetition, 3) They are Unable to anticipate the meaning of the language because they are not familiar with word patterns, 4) Cannot understand everyday vocabulary, 5) Cannot adjust their listening speed, 6) they have difficulty understanding other accents, and 7) are unable to utilize basic knowledge about the environment to understand the meaning to be conveyed. Students' difficulties with listening comprehension can hinder their ability to master other English skills. Students will lack the speaking skills needed to respond to what is said if they do not understand what is being said.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Various factors can cause difficulties in listening comprehension, including the knowledge and background of the listener, the clarity and quality of spoken language, the listener's level of attention and motivation, cognitive and language skills, cultural and social differences, and emotional state. In order to reduce students' difficulties in listening lessons, it is important to identify the factors that might influence the listener's ability to understand spoken language. It can be done using various strategies, such as predicting message content, actively processing information, asking questions for clarification, and understanding the speaker's context and nonverbal signature. Practice and improving language skills can also help listeners understand the spoken language better. Overall, many factors can lead to difficulty in listening comprehension, and it is vital to identify and overcome each challenge to improve this critical communication skill.

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