

**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY EFL STUDENTS
IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

THESIS

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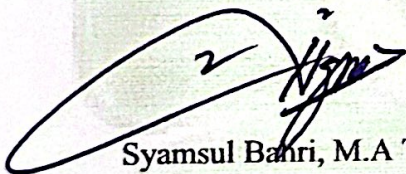
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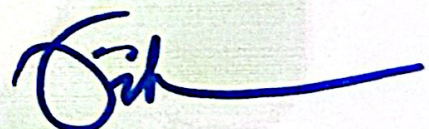
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COMPREHENSION**

adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggungjawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 23 Juli 2026

Saya yang membuat surat pernyataan



Dhea Sri Novita

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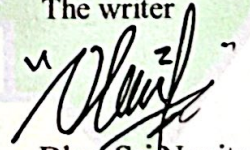
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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Tittle : Exploring The Challenges Faced By EFL Students in
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Supervisor : Rita Hermida, M.Pd

Keywords : Listening comprehension, Listening challenges, Listening strategies

This study aimed to explore the challenges faced by EFL students in listening comprehension and the strategies they used to overcome them. This qualitative descriptive study six students from the fifth and seventh semesters of the English Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed four major listening challenges: linguistic, speaker-related, listener-related, and environmental challenges. Unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation, and fast speech were identified as the most significant difficulties. To overcome these challenges, students employed various strategies, including note-taking, repeated listening, focusing on keywords, asking for clarification, and using digital tools such as subtitles and translation applications. The study concludes that listening comprehension is influenced by both internal and external factors and requires appropriate strategies and continuous practice to improve students' listening abilities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains in detail the five elements that will help us to understand the context of the topic to be discussed in this study. The related elements include the background of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and terminologies

A. Background of study

In mastering a foreign language as a second language, of course, in-depth skill training is needed. this does not only apply to English but in any language the same. which these skills cannot be honed in just a short time, one of the most important skills in mastering a second language is listening. It is supported by(Bingol et al., 2014) which stated that from the time allotment which is spent on communication, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking 25-30%, reading 11-16%, and writing about 9%. It makes listening has an important role in communication.

Listening comprehension is one of the essential skills in mastering English as a foreign language. In both daily communication and educational settings, listening plays a crucial role in language learning. Students are required to process spoken language in real time, which involves recognizing sounds, vocabulary, meaning, and context simultaneously. In higher education, listening comprehension becomes more demanding as students are exposed to various listening tasks, such as lectures, discussions, presentations, and multimedia materials delivered in English. These academic listening situations

are part of students' overall listening experience and often require higher levels of concentration, vocabulary knowledge, and strategic processing.

Susilowati (2019, p.14) argues “if students do not realize some listening difficulties they face during listening, it is possible that it can diminish their interest to learn and increase their anxiety”. In some cases in the classroom listening is often less practiced or taught because of the lack of feeling this is a crucial skill. Whereas without listening, we cannot understand the language more deeply and will also have an impact on other skills. Additionally, (Bingol et al., 2014) reveals that the speakers' accent and unfamiliar vocabulary are the causes of listening difficulties. Unlike reading or writing skills that can be done slowly and thoughtfully, listening skills require a real-time understanding process. This requires students to be able to recognize various linguistic and non-linguistic aspects quickly, such as vocabulary, sentence structure, intonation, accent, speech speed, and the context of the conversation.

These characteristics of listening can create various difficulties for foreign language learners. Ur (1996) explains that learners may experience difficulties in recognizing the actual sounds of a foreign language, understanding every word, keeping up with fast and natural speech, and maintaining concentration during listening activities. Learners may also need to hear spoken information more than once because they cannot always process all the information on the first hearing. These difficulties demonstrate that listening comprehension requires learners to process spoken information continuously and efficiently while dealing with the temporary nature of spoken language.

In addition to theoretical considerations, this study is also motivated by

the researcher's personal learning experience. During the process of learning English, listening skill was perceived as one of the least practiced and least emphasized skills compared to other language skills such as reading and writing. As a result, when encountering listening tasks, especially spoken English delivered at a natural speed, the researcher experienced significant difficulty in understanding the spoken input. This experience reflects a broader issue commonly faced by many EFL learners, where limited exposure and practice in listening lead to comprehension problems. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed several previous studies that discuss similar challenges in listening comprehension, which further strengthened the researcher's interest in conducting this study to explore EFL students' listening comprehension challenges and the strategies they use to overcome them.

From these problems, it is important to examine more deeply the challenges faced by EFL students in understanding listening material. Knowing the sources of difficulties faced by students can help teachers or lecturers design more appropriate and effective learning activities, so as to improve students' listening skills to be better and increase self-confidence. This study aims to identify challenges and how students face these challenges.

In the first journal written by (Purwanto Dede et al., 2021), the main focus of the research was to identify the difficulties faced by intermediate and upper-intermediate level students in understanding listening material in English. In addition, this study also aims to explore the strategies used by these students in overcoming the obstacles they experience during the listening process. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher tries to understand in depth the types of distractions that often arise, such as speakers' accents, speed

of speech, and limited vocabulary, and how strategies such as focus, reading, guessing context, and looking for keywords are used to aid understanding. Meanwhile, the second journal by (Hardiyanto et al., 2021) has a more specific focus on mapping listening comprehension difficulties based on four main aspects: message content, speaker, listener, and physical settings. This study aims to reveal the challenges faced by third-semester students in listening courses, and analyze how the level of English proficiency - whether low, medium, or high - affects the type and level of difficulty experienced. Using a case study approach, this research provides a comprehensive overview of the internal and external factors that influence EFL students' listening processes in a formal classroom context

Although both journals written by (Purwanto Dede et al., 2021) and (Hardiyanto et al., 2021) both discuss difficulties in listening comprehension, however, there are several significant differences with my research. First, the two journals examine listening comprehension in the general context of English language learning, while my research is specifically focused on academic listening comprehension, namely the ability to understand spoken material in academic contexts such as lectures, discussions, and scientific presentations. This academic context requires an understanding of more complex discourse structures and the use of academic terms that are not much touched upon in the two previous journals. Second, the research by Hardiyanto et al. involved third semester students, and Purwanto et al. did not explicitly mention the semester of the participants, while my research involved 5th and 7th semester students, who are at a more advanced level of learning and closer to high-level expectations.

B. Research Questions

This study examines the challenges experienced by non-native English-speaking students in understanding academic listening materials. It aims to provide a deeper understanding of the difficulties they encounter and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The inquiry is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by EFL students in comprehending listening materials?
2. What strategies do EFL students use to overcome these challenges in listening comprehension?

C. Research Aims

Based on the background of the study, this research is conducted to achieve the following aims:

1. Identify the challenges faced by EFL students in listening comprehension.
2. Explore the strategies used by EFL students to overcome these challenges

D. Research Terminology

To prevent erroneous interpretations, researcher would like to break down the terms that require more extensive explanation in this research.

1. Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension refers to the ability to understand spoken language in real time, including recognizing sounds, vocabulary, meaning, tone, and context. According to Buck (2001), listening comprehension is

an active process in which listeners construct meaning from spoken input by using their linguistic knowledge and background knowledge. In this study, listening comprehension is discussed in a general sense, covering both everyday communication and academic learning situations.

2. Challenges

In this study, the term challenges refers to various obstacles or difficulties that hinder students' ability to understand, process, or respond to spoken academic input effectively. Underwood (1989) explains that listening difficulties may arise from factors such as unfamiliar vocabulary, speech rate, pronunciation, and environmental conditions. These challenges can be both internal (such as limited vocabulary, low concentration, or listening anxiety) and external (such as fast speech, unclear pronunciation, or background noise). Challenges are not only viewed as problems, but also as learning opportunities that reveal areas where students need further development and strategic support in improving their listening comprehension.

3. EFL Students

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students refer to learners who study English in a context where it is not used as a primary language of daily communication. According to Ellis (1997), EFL learners generally have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. These students typically encounter English only in academic or classroom settings. In this study, EFL students specifically refer to non-native English-speaking university students who are enrolled in an English Education Program and are developing their listening skills to understand academic materials such as lectures, presentations, and discussions delivered in English.

E. Significant of Study

This study holds significance both theoretically and practically in the field of English language education. Theoretically, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of listening comprehension in English as a foreign language by examining the challenges faced by EFL students and the strategies they use to overcome them. By exploring students' listening experiences, this research enriches the existing literature on second language listening and highlights the complex interaction between linguistic, cognitive, and affective factors in listening comprehension development.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be valuable for teachers, students, and curriculum developers. For teachers, the results may serve as a reflection to design more effective and supportive listening activities that address students' real difficulties. For students, the study may increase their awareness of their own listening problems and help them develop appropriate strategies to overcome them. For curriculum developers, the study can provide insights into the importance of integrating listening materials that reflect authentic situations found in higher education. Overall, this research aims to contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning English listening skills in academic settings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theoretical concepts and previous studies related to listening comprehension and the challenges faced by EFL students. It also presents the concepts of listening strategies that support the understanding of the findings in this study.

A. Listening Comprehension

Several studies underline the cognitive complexity of listening comprehension. According to Rost (2011), listening involves simultaneous bottom-up processing (decoding sounds, words, and grammatical structures) and top-down processing (drawing on background knowledge, context, and expectations). When either of these processes fails—due to lack of vocabulary, unfamiliar accents, or limited knowledge of the topic—comprehension breaks down. This is particularly relevant for non-native English speakers who may struggle with academic vocabulary, rapid delivery, or different accents that deviate from those they are used to in their learning environment.

Moreover, listening comprehension in a foreign language is closely tied to psychological factors such as concentration, motivation, and anxiety. As Hamouda (2013) observed, listening comprehension is not only a linguistic challenge but also an emotional one. Students often feel anxious when they are unable to follow spoken input, especially when they cannot pause, replay, or ask for clarification—options that are available in reading but not in live

listening situations. Susilowati (2019) further emphasizes that unaddressed listening difficulties can increase students' anxiety, lower motivation, and lead to disengagement from learning activities.

In their research on Indonesian university students, Hardiyanto et al. (2021) found that academic listening comprehension difficulties were influenced by four main factors: message content, speaker, listener, and physical setting. These factors directly impact how students perceive and process spoken academic input. For example, unfamiliar vocabulary or abstract topics (message content) can hinder understanding, while fast or accented speech (speaker factor) may add an extra layer of difficulty.

Listening comprehension also requires learners to possess well-developed metacognitive skills—such as the ability to monitor their own understanding, adjust strategies during listening, and reflect on their performance afterward (Graham, 2017). These skills are essential for improving listening proficiency, especially when learners are faced with the kind of cognitively demanding tasks typical of academic listening.

B. Listening Challenges

Listening challenges refer to the various factors that hinder learners from understanding spoken English effectively. These challenges may arise from linguistic aspects, speaker characteristics, listener-related factors, the learning environment, the listening materials, or instructional practices. According to Hardiyanto et al. (2021), listening comprehension difficulties experienced by EFL learners can generally be classified into four major categories: message content (linguistic factors), speaker-related factors, listener-related factors, and physical setting (environmental factors). However,

other studies have shown that listening comprehension can also be influenced by the characteristics of listening materials and instructional practices used during the learning process. Therefore, this study discusses six categories of listening challenges: linguistic challenges, speaker-related challenges, listener-related challenges, environmental challenges, material challenges, and instructional challenges. These categories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the various difficulties experienced by EFL students in listening comprehension.

a. Linguistic Challenges

Understanding spoken English requires students to recognize words, interpret pronunciation, and process grammatical structures simultaneously. When they are unfamiliar with these language features, they may struggle to understand the speaker's intended message. These language-related obstacles are commonly referred to as linguistic challenges. Hardiyanto et al. (2021) explain that linguistic or message-content difficulties include unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, unclear pronunciation, and lengthy spoken texts, all of which can hinder the process of understanding spoken language.

Among the various linguistic factors, vocabulary knowledge plays a fundamental role in listening. Students with limited vocabulary often find it difficult to recognize key words while listening, making it harder to understand the overall meaning of a spoken message. This view is supported by Florensia et al. (2022), who found that limited vocabulary knowledge and difficulties in recognizing spoken words are among the most common linguistic problems experienced by EFL students during listening activities.

Besides vocabulary, learners also need to become familiar with the way English is naturally spoken. Connected speech, reduced forms, and different speech patterns often make individual words sound different from their written forms, which may confuse learners during listening tasks. Adia et al. (2022) explain that these language features, together with unfamiliar vocabulary, make word recognition more challenging, especially for students with limited exposure to authentic spoken English.

Grammar is another important aspect that influences listening ability. Learners are expected to understand sentence structures while processing spoken information in a limited amount of time. When sentences are long or grammatically complex, interpreting the speaker's message becomes more demanding. Ramadhana (2024) emphasizes that limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, and complex language structures remain significant barriers for EFL learners. Therefore, strengthening vocabulary knowledge, improving grammar awareness, and increasing exposure to authentic spoken English are essential for supporting better listening comprehension.

b. Speaker-Related Challenges

Besides linguistic factors, the way a speaker delivers spoken English also plays an important role in listening. During listening activities, students need to follow the speaker's pace, pronunciation, and accent simultaneously. When speech is delivered too quickly or with an unfamiliar accent, understanding the intended message becomes more challenging. These difficulties are commonly known as speaker-related challenges. Hardiyanto et al. (2021) explain that speech rate, pronunciation, accent, and voice clarity are

important speaker-related factors that influence learners' understanding of spoken English.

Among these factors, fast speech is considered one of the most common challenges experienced by EFL learners. When information is delivered at a natural speed, students may not have enough time to process what they hear, causing them to miss important details or lose the overall meaning of the message. This finding is supported by Ramadhianti and Somba (2021), who reported that fast speech is one of the major obstacles in listening because learners often struggle to keep up with the speaker's pace.

Besides speech rate, accent and pronunciation also affect students' ability to recognize spoken words. English is spoken with a variety of accents, and learners who have limited exposure to these variations may find it difficult to identify familiar words during listening activities. Florensia et al. (2022) found that unfamiliar pronunciation and different accents often prevent students from recognizing spoken words accurately. Likewise, Adia et al. (2022) explain that pronunciation differences may reduce learners' understanding because they cannot easily connect spoken forms with the vocabulary they already know.

Overall, speaker-related challenges are associated with the way spoken English is delivered rather than with learners' language knowledge. Factors such as speech rate, accent, pronunciation, and voice clarity can influence students' listening ability, particularly when they have limited exposure to authentic English. Therefore, regular practice with different speakers and various English accents can help learners become more familiar with authentic spoken language and improve their listening comprehension

c. Listener-Related Challenges

Successful listening depends not only on language knowledge but also on learners' internal conditions. During listening activities, learners need to maintain their concentration, manage their emotions, and process spoken information within a limited time. When they lose focus, feel anxious, or lack confidence, understanding the speaker's message becomes more challenging. These internal factors are commonly known as listener-related challenges. Hardiyanto et al. (2021) explain that listener-related challenges include limited concentration, anxiety, insufficient background knowledge, and ineffective listening strategies, all of which can reduce learners' understanding of spoken English.

Among these factors, concentration plays an important role in successful listening. Students who lose focus, even for a short time, may miss important information and find it difficult to follow the rest of the conversation. Florensia et al. (2022) found that many EFL students had difficulty maintaining their concentration, particularly when listening to long spoken texts or unfamiliar topics. As a result, they often failed to identify the main ideas or important details.

Besides concentration, anxiety is another challenge that may affect listening performance. Many students feel nervous or worried during listening activities because they are afraid of missing information or giving incorrect answers. These feelings may reduce their confidence and make it harder to stay focused throughout the listening process. Hamouda (2013) explains that listening anxiety is one of the psychological factors that negatively affects

listening comprehension, as anxious learners tend to lose concentration and become less confident in understanding spoken English.

Listening strategies also play an important role in helping learners understand spoken messages. Students who are unable to predict information, identify keywords, or monitor their understanding often experience greater difficulty during listening activities. Purwanto et al. (2021) reported that the use of appropriate listening strategies helps learners remain focused and process spoken information more effectively. Therefore, listener-related challenges can be understood as internal factors that influence learners' ability to understand spoken English successfully.

d. Environmental Challenges

The learning environment also plays an important role in supporting listening activities.. A supportive environment helps learners focus on spoken information, while an unfavorable one may interrupt the listening process and reduce understanding. Environmental challenges refer to external conditions that influence listening activities, such as classroom noise, poor audio quality, and inadequate learning facilities. Hardiyanto et al. (2021) explain that the physical setting is one of the major factors affecting listening comprehension because external distractions can interfere with learners' ability to hear and understand spoken messages clearly.

Among the various environmental factors, poor audio quality is one of the most common obstacles during listening activities. When recordings are unclear or contain background noise, students may struggle to recognize spoken words and understand the speaker's message. Adia et al. (2022) explain that unclear recordings and low-quality audio make it more difficult for learners

to identify important information, particularly when listening to authentic English materials.

Another environmental factor that may influence listening is the classroom atmosphere. Noise from outside the classroom, conversations among classmates, or other interruptions can reduce students' concentration and cause them to miss important parts of the listening text. Florensia et al. (2022) found that classroom noise and uncomfortable learning conditions often become barriers to successful listening. Similarly, Ramadhianti and Somba (2021) reported that external distractions during listening activities may reduce learners' focus and affect their understanding of spoken English.

Overall, environmental challenges are external factors that influence the quality of the listening process rather than learners' language ability. Conditions such as poor audio quality, classroom noise, and inadequate learning facilities may limit students' opportunities to receive clear spoken input. Therefore, creating a supportive learning environment with minimal distractions is important for helping learners improve their listening comprehension.

e. Material Challenges

Material challenges refer to difficulties that arise from the characteristics of the listening materials used in learning activities. These challenges are associated with the content, organization, and level of difficulty of listening texts, which may prevent students from understanding spoken messages effectively. Listening materials that contain unfamiliar topics, complex grammatical structures, long spoken texts, or unfamiliar vocabulary often

make it difficult for learners to understand the overall meaning of the message. In addition, the organization of the content may also become a challenge because speakers sometimes change topics without clear transitions, making it difficult for listeners to predict or follow the information being presented. These characteristics of listening materials can significantly affect students' listening comprehension, as explained by Hardiyanto et al. (2021).

The level of difficulty of listening materials may increase when students have limited background knowledge about the topic being discussed. Learners often struggle to connect new information with their prior knowledge, causing them to miss important details and have difficulty identifying the main ideas of the listening text. Similarly, Daffa Wahyu A'R et al. (2025) emphasize that unfamiliar topics, lengthy spoken texts, unfamiliar vocabulary, and complex sentence structures require greater cognitive effort, making it more challenging for students to comprehend the listening materials.

Another challenge comes from the use of authentic listening materials, such as podcasts, news reports, and other real-life audio sources. These materials frequently contain academic terms, unfamiliar vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and collocations that are rarely encountered in classroom learning. As a result, students need more effort to process the spoken information, particularly when they have limited vocabulary and insufficient prior knowledge of the topic. Kennisa Handi et al. (2025) found that these characteristics often reduce students' ability to understand the intended meaning of the listening text.

f. Instructional Challenges

Instructional challenges refer to difficulties that arise from the way listening is taught and facilitated in the classroom. These challenges are closely related to teaching methods, learning activities, teacher support, and the use of instructional media. When listening instruction does not provide sufficient guidance or opportunities for practice, students may find it difficult to develop effective listening comprehension. In addition, learning activities that lack clear instructions, feedback, or appropriate strategies may reduce students' engagement and make it harder for them to understand spoken texts. Ebadi et al. (2023) emphasize that instructional support, such as mediation, feedback, and guided learning, plays an important role in helping learners overcome listening difficulties and improve their comprehension skills.

Another instructional challenge is the limited opportunity for students to practice listening through meaningful learning activities. Effective listening instruction requires teachers to provide appropriate learning resources, encourage regular practice, and create a supportive learning environment. Waloyo et al. (2024) explain that teachers have an important role in helping students develop listening strategies and motivating them to practice consistently. Likewise, Maulida et al. (2025) point out that students may struggle when teachers provide audio-visual materials without sufficient guidance, preparation, or follow-up activities. Without adequate scaffolding, students often become passive listeners and experience difficulties in processing and understanding spoken information.

Overall, instructional challenges are influenced not only by the teaching methods used in listening classes but also by the level of support

provided throughout the learning process. Clear instructions, appropriate learning strategies, regular listening practice, constructive feedback, and adequate teacher guidance are essential to help EFL students improve their listening comprehension.

C. Listening Strategies

Listening strategies refer to the techniques that learners use to facilitate their understanding of spoken language and overcome difficulties during listening activities. The use of appropriate strategies can help EFL learners manage the challenges they encounter when processing spoken English. Firdaus (2019) found that EFL students used metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies to support their listening comprehension, particularly when dealing with difficulties related to stress, intonation, grammar, and speech rate. Similarly, Prayogi, Elfrida, and Hardiah (2019) found that university students used cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies when completing listening tasks, indicating that learners relied on different types of strategies to understand listening materials. More recently, Al-Shehri and Alhamami (2023) also identified metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies among EFL learners and reported that these strategies played an important role in supporting listening comprehension. These findings suggest that listening strategies involve different processes that help learners understand spoken input, regulate their comprehension, and manage their attitudes and emotions during listening. Therefore, listening strategies can be viewed as an important resource that enables EFL learners to deal with listening difficulties and improve their

comprehension.

Listening comprehension involves both bottom-up and top-down processing, which work together in constructing meaning from spoken input. Vandergrift (2004) explains that bottom-up processing involves the recognition and interpretation of linguistic information, such as sounds, words, and grammatical structures, while top-down processing involves the use of background knowledge, context, and expectations to understand the speaker's message. These processes are not separate during actual listening, as learners may use linguistic information from the audio while also relying on their previous knowledge and the context to interpret meaning. Therefore, successful listening comprehension requires learners to integrate information from the spoken input with their existing knowledge and expectations.

The relationship between listening strategies and these processing approaches is also important in understanding how learners deal with listening difficulties. Oh and Lee (2014) examined the role of listening strategies in bottom-up and top-down processing and found that different listening strategies were associated with the two types of processing. Their findings indicate that learners may use strategies such as focusing attention, solving comprehension problems, and using contextual information to support their understanding of spoken language. This suggests that listening strategies do not operate separately from the listening process; rather, they help learners manage and support the way they process spoken input. For example, strategies that help learners identify words and linguistic information can support bottom-up processing, while strategies that involve using context and prior knowledge can support top-down processing. Thus, bottom-up and top-down processing describe how

learners process spoken information, while listening strategies describe what learners do to support and manage that process.

The relationship between listening processes and strategies can also be understood through the broader framework of second language listening constructs. Aryadoust and Luo (2023), through a systematic review of research on second language listening, identified bottom-up processing, top-down processing, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies as important constructs in listening comprehension. Their review shows that listening involves both the processing of linguistic information and the use of strategies to regulate and facilitate comprehension. In this sense, cognitive strategies can help learners directly process listening input, while metacognitive strategies help them plan, monitor, and evaluate their comprehension. Social-affective and technology-assisted strategies can also provide additional support for learners when dealing with listening difficulties. Therefore, bottom-up and top-down processing can be viewed as processes through which learners construct meaning, while cognitive, metacognitive, social-affective, and technology-assisted strategies represent different ways learners support and manage their listening comprehension. Based on these views, this study discusses listening strategies through four main categories: cognitive, metacognitive, social-affective, and technology-assisted strategies. These strategies may support learners in using both bottom-up and top-down processing when understanding spoken English.

a. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies involve direct manipulation of the learning material. In the context of listening, these include techniques such as guessing

meaning from context, focusing on keywords, using background knowledge to infer meaning, translating mentally, and taking notes. Learners may also segment speech into chunks to facilitate understanding, especially when dealing with fast or connected speech. For example, Purwanto et al. (2021) found that intermediate and upper-intermediate students often rely on keyword recognition and prediction to catch the gist of the spoken message.

b. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's listening process. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), these strategies are critical for successful listening because they help learners manage their attention, identify when comprehension breaks down, and adjust their strategies accordingly. For instance, students may preview listening topics beforehand, set specific listening goals, or reflect on why they failed to understand certain parts. Studies by Graham (2017) and Bozorgian (2014) emphasize that more successful listeners tend to use metacognitive strategies more frequently and more consciously than less successful ones.

c. Social - Affective Strategies

Social-affective strategies help learners improve listening comprehension through interaction with others while also managing their emotions during the listening process. Learners may ask for clarification, discuss listening materials with classmates, cooperate with peers, and develop positive attitudes to reduce anxiety and increase confidence. Graham (2006) explains that interaction with teachers and peers provides opportunities for

learners to clarify information and strengthen their understanding during listening activities. Similarly, Al-shehri and Alhamami (2023) state that socio-affective strategies include asking questions, working collaboratively with classmates, managing stress, and maintaining a positive attitude, all of which support learners in overcoming listening difficulties. Therefore, social-affective strategies not only facilitate comprehension through social interaction but also help learners regulate their emotions and become more confident listeners.

d. Technology – Assisted Listenig Strategies

Technology-assisted listening strategies refer to the use of digital technologies to support students in improving their listening comprehension. According to Chapelle and Sauro (2017), technology has become an essential part of second language learning because it provides learners with access to learning materials, online interaction, and various learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, technology not only functions as a learning tool but also creates more opportunities for students to practice language skills independently.

Based on this concept, technology-assisted listening strategies involve the use of digital platforms and technological features to help students understand spoken English more effectively. Students can use YouTube, podcasts, Spotify, BBC Learning English, and other language-learning applications to access authentic listening materials. They can also take advantage of features such as subtitles, transcripts, playback speed control, and repeated listening to improve their comprehension. These technologies allow students to practice listening more flexibly according to their own

learning pace.

Recent studies also support the important role of technology in listening comprehension. Hidayah and Gunawan (2025) found that EFL students commonly use repeated listening, subtitles, transcripts, YouTube, Spotify, and BBC Learning English to overcome listening difficulties. Likewise, Selviani and Ardiana (2025) reported that students often replay difficult parts of the audio, adjust the playback speed, and take notes while listening. These technology-assisted strategies help students understand spoken English more easily, expand their vocabulary, and encourage independent learning.

In practice, EFL learners often combine these strategies depending on the listening task, context, and their own proficiency level. For example, Erza Muhammad & Idayani (2020) reported that students exposed to English through multimedia materials like songs, videos, and podcasts not only enhanced their listening skills but also developed intuitive strategies such as inferring meaning from tone, context, and visual cues. This aligns with the idea that input variety and repeated exposure play a key role in helping students internalize and apply listening strategies more effectively.

Moreover, Vandergrift (2004) argues that explicit strategy instruction in the classroom can significantly improve listening proficiency. When learners are taught how to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening systematically, they become more autonomous and strategic listeners. Goh and Taib (2006) also emphasize the role of metacognitive awareness-raising activities, such as guided reflection journals and post-listening discussions, in strengthening students' ability to self-regulate their listening process.

D. Implications for Teaching and Research

Previous studies on listening comprehension provide several important implications for English language teaching and future research in EFL contexts. They suggest that listening is an active process that requires learners to recognize spoken language, understand meaning, and apply appropriate strategies simultaneously. Therefore, teaching listening should not only focus on testing students' comprehension but also help them develop the knowledge and strategies needed to understand spoken English effectively. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) emphasize that when teachers understand the listening difficulties experienced by students, they are better able to design learning activities that support listening comprehension.

For classroom practice, teachers should provide learning activities that help students overcome common listening challenges. This includes introducing important vocabulary before listening, exposing learners to different English accents and speech rates, and encouraging the use of listening strategies such as predicting meaning, identifying keywords, and monitoring comprehension. In addition, learners should be exposed to authentic listening materials, such as conversations, podcasts, videos, interviews, and other real-life spoken English, to help them become familiar with natural language use. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) emphasize that authentic listening materials prepare learners to understand English as it is used in real communication, while Vandergrift and Goh (2012) highlight that explicit strategy instruction helps learners become more effective and independent listeners.

Another important implication is the need to encourage learner autonomy. Students should be motivated to continue practicing listening outside the classroom by using various English resources and reflecting on the strategies that work best for them. Developing this habit can increase learners' confidence and gradually improve their listening comprehension. Bozorgian (2014) explains that learners who actively monitor their own learning and regularly apply appropriate listening strategies are more likely to become successful and independent listeners.

In terms of future research, previous studies have contributed to a better understanding of listening comprehension by identifying various listening challenges and strategies used by EFL learners. However, further research is still needed to explore listening comprehension in different educational settings, involve participants with different levels of English proficiency, and employ various research methods. Such studies can provide broader insights into learners' listening experiences and contribute to the development of more effective listening instruction in EFL classrooms.

E. Previous Study

Several previous studies have investigated the challenges encountered by EFL students in listening comprehension and the strategies used to overcome them. Purwanto, Fadhly, and Rahmatunisa (2021) investigated the listening comprehension challenges experienced by intermediate and upper-intermediate EFL students and the strategies they used to overcome them. Using a qualitative

approach, the study found that students faced difficulties related to unfamiliar accents, limited vocabulary, unclear pronunciation, lack of concentration, and fast speech. To address these challenges, the participants applied strategies such as focusing on keywords, predicting meaning, and identifying the main ideas while listening. The study concluded that understanding listening difficulties helps learners choose appropriate strategies to improve comprehension. This study is relevant to the present research because both examine the challenges and strategies of EFL learners in listening comprehension. However, the present study focuses on fifth- and seventh-semester EFL students and uses a qualitative descriptive approach to provide a deeper understanding of their listening experiences.

Similarly, Sari and Fithriyana (2019) explored the listening comprehension problems experienced by second-semester EFL students and the factors contributing to those difficulties. Using observation, interviews, and documentation, the study found that students had low listening comprehension, particularly in making inferences. They also experienced low confidence and difficulty maintaining concentration during listening activities. The findings indicated that both internal and external factors influenced students' listening performance. The researchers suggested that teachers provide more appropriate learning strategies and materials to improve students' listening comprehension. The findings support the present study because both investigate the challenges experienced by EFL learners in listening comprehension. However, the present study involves more experienced students and also explores the strategies they use to overcome those challenges.

Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) reviewed previous studies to identify the common problems affecting EFL students' listening comprehension. Using a literature review approach, the study found that limited exposure to authentic listening materials, unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, and the lack of appropriate listening strategies were the main factors contributing to poor listening comprehension. The researchers emphasized the importance of teaching cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies to help students improve their listening skills. Unlike the previous studies, Gilakjani and Sabouri provided a broad overview of listening comprehension issues rather than investigating learners directly. In contrast, the present study collects first-hand data through semi-structured interviews to gain a deeper understanding of students' listening experiences.

Likewise, Ikhsan and Ismail (2022) investigated the listening comprehension problems experienced by third-semester EFL students at Universitas Islam Riau. Using a quantitative approach, the study found that poor audio quality, unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, and different English accents were the main challenges affecting students' listening comprehension, with poor recording quality identified as the most significant problem. The researchers suggested improving the quality of listening materials, increasing students' vocabulary, and exposing learners to various English accents to enhance listening comprehension. Although the findings are closely related to the present study, the researchers mainly identified students' listening problems through quantitative data. In contrast, the present study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to explore students' experiences and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges.

Florensia et al. (2022) investigated the listening comprehension challenges experienced by EFL students and the factors influencing their listening performance. Using a qualitative approach, the study found that students encountered various difficulties, including limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, lack of concentration, different English accents, and environmental distractions during listening activities. The researchers concluded that both linguistic and non-linguistic factors affected students' listening comprehension and recommended providing appropriate learning support to improve listening skills. While this study mainly focused on identifying the factors influencing listening comprehension, the present study also examines the strategies students use to overcome those challenges, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their listening experiences.

Overall, the previous studies consistently show that EFL students experience various listening comprehension challenges, including limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, fast speech, lack of concentration, different English accents, and environmental factors. These studies also indicate that learners employ various strategies to improve their listening comprehension. However, the studies differ in terms of research participants, methods, and focus.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into listening comprehension, several gaps remain. Most studies focused primarily on identifying listening challenges or examining listening strategies separately. In addition, many involved lower-semester students or relied mainly on quantitative methods. Therefore, there is still limited understanding of how more experienced EFL learners perceive listening challenges and the strategies

they use to overcome them. To address these gaps, the present study explores both the listening challenges and the strategies used by fifth- and seventh-semester EFL students through a qualitative descriptive approach, providing a deeper understanding of their listening experiences.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology used in this study. It describes the research design, participants, data collection technique, and data analysis technique. The procedures used by the researcher to conduct the study are presented in this chapter.

A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore and understand the challenges faced by EFL students in listening comprehension, along with the strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to explore the participants' subjective experiences, perceptions, and contextual realities, which could not be easily captured through quantitative methods. Creswell (2014) states that qualitative research allows researchers to gain a rich and detailed understanding of human behavior and the meanings individuals assign to particular phenomena within their natural settings.

The descriptive nature of the research aimed to provide an accurate and systematic representation of students' experiences in listening without manipulating variables or testing hypotheses. Unlike experimental or case study research, this design did not focus on interventions or an in-depth exploration of a single case. Instead, it described and interpreted patterns and themes across multiple individuals who shared similar learning contexts, namely non-native English-speaking university students engaged in academic

and non academic listening activities.

The choice to exclude a case study approach was based on the intention to examine recurring challenges and strategies among students in the fifth and seventh semesters without restricting the study to a specific class or institutional phenomenon. The research focused on identifying recurring challenges and strategies among EFL learners within an academic environment. This approach allowed for variation in participants' responses while still capturing recurring themes that reflected their shared experiences in listening comprehension.

Furthermore, the qualitative descriptive research design supported the use of semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. The interviews enabled the researcher to explore participants' thoughts and experiences in depth while allowing flexibility to pursue relevant insights that emerged during the interviews. Through this design, the researcher served as the primary instrument in interpreting the data, and the meanings were constructed inductively from the participants' responses rather than imposed through predetermined categories.

Ultimately, this research design was aligned with the purpose of the study, which was to provide a detailed and grounded understanding of the listening challenges experienced by EFL students and the strategies they used to overcome those challenges.

B. Research Participants

The participants of this study were EFL students enrolled in the fifth and seventh semesters of the English Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry. These students were selected based on their academic experiences and

exposure to English learning activities, particularly those involving listening skills. The rationale for selecting students from these two academic levels was to gain insight into the challenges and strategies experienced by students at different stages of language development and academic exposure.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) explain that purposive sampling allows researchers to intentionally select individuals who are particularly knowledgeable or experienced with the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, the participants were selected because they had experience with listening comprehension in an EFL context.

The main criteria for participant selection were:

1. The participants were non-native English speakers.
2. The participants were enrolled in the fifth or seventh semester of the English Education Study Program.
3. The participants had prior exposure to listening activities in English learning.
4. The participants were willing to participate in a semi-structured interview and provide honest reflections on their listening experiences.

A total of six participants were involved in the study. The participants were identified using codes P1 to P6 to maintain confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. The six participants provided varied perspectives based on their individual academic and learning experiences, which supported the exploration of common and different

experiences related to listening comprehension.

Ethical considerations were also addressed during the participant selection process. The participants were provided with informed consent forms that explained the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Participant codes were used instead of their real names to maintain anonymity.

By focusing on this group, the study obtained varied and authentic accounts of listening challenges and strategy use, which contributed to a deeper understanding of EFL students' listening experiences.

C. Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. This technique was chosen because it provided a balance between structure and flexibility. It enabled the researcher to follow a consistent set of guiding questions while also allowing deeper exploration of the participants' individual perspectives and experiences.

The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms, depending on the availability and preferences of the participants. This approach provided flexibility in the data collection process and allowed the participants to share their experiences in a setting that was accessible to them.

Each interview session was audio-recorded with the participants' prior consent to ensure the accuracy of the collected data. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim to facilitate a thorough and detailed analysis. The interview questions explored various aspects of the students' listening

experiences, including the challenges they encountered and the strategies they used to improve their listening comprehension. The semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to obtain both common and individual perspectives on listening challenges and strategies. The technique also provided opportunities for participants to explain their experiences in greater detail and allowed relevant insights that emerged during the interviews to be explored further.

D. Data Analysis Techniques

The qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method provided a systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. Thematic analysis was considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns related to students' listening challenges and the strategies they used to overcome them.

The analysis process began with familiarization with the data. The researcher read and re-read the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses. During the second phase, generating initial codes, meaningful segments of the data were systematically labeled to capture important information related to the research questions.

The initial codes were then organized and grouped during the searching for themes phase. At this stage, broader patterns and relationships among the codes were identified. In the reviewing themes phase, the researcher reviewed and refined the themes by checking their coherence and relevance against the coded data and the entire dataset. This process ensured that the themes accurately represented the participants' experiences. In the defining and naming

themes phase, clear definitions and concise labels were developed for each theme to represent the main ideas contained in the data. Finally, in the producing the report phase, the researcher presented the thematic findings and supported them with relevant quotations from the participants. The findings were organized according to the themes that emerged from the interview data and were presented in relation to the research objectives.

To enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the analysis, member checking was implemented. The participants were invited to review and confirm the accuracy of their transcribed responses and preliminary interpretations. This process helped verify that the data accurately reflected the participants' perspectives and reduced the possibility of misinterpretation.

In addition, researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the data analysis process. The researcher reflected on potential biases and assumptions to minimize their influence on the interpretation of the data. These procedures supported the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings and provided a more accurate representation of the participants' experiences regarding listening challenges and strategies.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study based on interviews with six EFL students. The findings describe the listening challenges experienced by the participants and the strategies they used to deal with those challenges. The results are presented based on the themes that emerged from the interview data and are then discussed by relating them to previous studies and relevant theories

A. Findings

This section presents the findings based on interviews with six participants (P1–P6). The findings are organized into four main categories: linguistic challenges, speaker-related challenges, listener-related challenges, and environmental challenges

1. Listening Challenges Faced by EFL Students.

a. Linguistic Challenges

1) Unfamiliar vocabulary

Linguistic challenges were found to significantly affect students' listening comprehension, particularly in terms of unfamiliar vocabulary. Many participants described how limited vocabulary not only creates difficulty in understanding individual words but also disrupts their ability to follow the overall message. For instance, P1 stated, *"I end up not knowing where the conversation is going."* This statement indicates that comprehension in listening is highly dependent on understanding key vocabulary. When important

words are missed, the listener loses the direction of the conversation entirely. This suggests that listening is not a word-by-word process, but a continuous flow of meaning, where missing one part can affect the whole understanding.

This situation is further explained by P2, who stated, *“If one word in the sentence is missing... it all falls apart.”* This response shows that students rely heavily on individual lexical items to construct meaning. When one word is unfamiliar, they pause to think about it, which interrupts their ability to process the next part of the speech. As a result, comprehension becomes fragmented rather than continuous.

A similar idea was expressed by P5, who said, *“I get confused and sometimes miss the meaning of the whole sentence.”* This highlights that unfamiliar vocabulary does not only affect specific parts of the sentence but can lead to misunderstanding of the entire message. This happens because students try to focus on decoding unknown words, which reduces their attention to the overall context. Supporting this, P4 explained, *“If I focus too much on unfamiliar words, I might miss the overall meaning.”* This indicates that over-focusing on vocabulary can actually hinder comprehension instead of helping it.

Together, these responses show that vocabulary limitations create a chain effect in listening comprehension. When students encounter unfamiliar words, they tend to stop and think, which causes them to miss the following information. As listening happens in real time, they cannot go back immediately, making it difficult to recover the missed meaning.

2) Pronunciation

In addition to vocabulary, pronunciation was also identified as a major linguistic challenge. P2 stated, *“Sometimes they combine two words... which sound like one word.”* This shows that students struggle with connected speech, where words are naturally linked together in spoken English. Because students are more familiar with isolated words, they find it difficult to recognize words when they are blended in fast speech.

This issue becomes more complex when combined with speech speed, as explained by P3: *“The pronunciation is affected by the speed... so we don’t know what he’s saying.”* This suggests that pronunciation in real communication is not fixed but changes depending on how fast the speaker talks. As a result, students cannot rely only on what they learned in textbooks, since real spoken English sounds different.

Similarly, P5 stated, *“Slang or idioms and the pronunciation make it difficult.”* This indicates that informal expressions add another layer of difficulty because students may not be familiar with both the vocabulary and how it is pronounced in natural contexts. Supporting this, P6 mentioned, *“Sometimes their pronunciation isn’t clear enough,”* showing that unclear articulation also contributes to misunderstanding.

These findings suggest that pronunciation challenges are not only about how words are spoken, but also about how students perceive and process sounds in real-time communication. When pronunciation, speed, and unfamiliar vocabulary occur together, they create overlapping difficulties that make listening comprehension more complex. Overall, the findings demonstrate that

linguistic challenges were the most frequently experienced difficulties among the participants. Almost all participants reported that unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation made it difficult for them to understand spoken English. This indicates that linguistic competence remains one of the key factors influencing EFL students' listening comprehension

b. Speaker-Related Challenges

Speaker-related challenges, particularly speech speed, were identified as one of the most significant barriers to listening comprehension. Many participants explained that fast speech makes it difficult not only to hear the words but also to process their meaning at the same time. For example, P1 stated, *“If the speaker talks too fast, I can’t keep up.”* This indicates that listening comprehension requires simultaneous processes such as hearing, understanding, and interpreting, which become difficult when speech is too rapid.

This is further supported by P2, who explained, *“The main challenge... is that it’s too fast.”* This response shows that speed is perceived as the primary factor that limits comprehension. When the speaker talks too quickly, students do not have enough time to process each part of the message before the next part begins.

A more detailed explanation can be seen in P5’s response: *“People speak too fast... like they’re rambling.”* This suggests that fast speech reduces clarity and makes the input feel overwhelming. In this situation, students may not only miss individual words but also fail to understand the overall message.

This difficulty becomes even more complex when fast speech interacts with other challenges such as vocabulary and pronunciation. As students try to understand one unfamiliar word, the speaker continues speaking, causing them to miss the next part of the message. This creates a chain reaction where one small difficulty leads to larger comprehension problems. Therefore, speed is not only a challenge on its own but also a factor that amplifies other listening difficulties. Overall, most participants shared similar experiences regarding speaker-related challenges. They agreed that fast speech and unfamiliar pronunciation or accents made it difficult to follow the speaker's message, suggesting that the way speakers deliver information greatly influences students' listening comprehension.

c. Listener-Related Challenges

1) Anxiety

Listener-related challenges refer to difficulties that come from the students themselves, such as anxiety, lack of concentration, and limited strategies. These factors were found to significantly influence how students process spoken English. One of the most prominent issues is anxiety. P1 explained, *"I thought, 'I can't do this,' right from the first question, I already lost confidence."* This statement shows that anxiety can appear even before the listening process begins. When students already believe that the task is difficult, they lose confidence, which reduces their ability to focus. As a result, they are more likely to miss important information during the listening activity.

This is supported by P6, who stated, *“Anxiety is always there, especially during listening tests.”* This indicates that listening tasks, particularly tests, create pressure for students. The presence of time limits and unfamiliar input increases their stress, making it harder to concentrate. Similarly, P3 mentioned, *“Sometimes it’s just worrying... when we don’t understand.”* This shows that confusion during listening can quickly turn into anxiety, which further disrupts comprehension.

2) Leak of concentration

In addition to anxiety, lack of concentration also becomes a major issue. P4 stated, *“It’s more about a lack of focus.”* This suggests that even when students have sufficient vocabulary or knowledge, they may still fail to understand the message if they cannot maintain attention. Listening requires continuous focus, and once attention is lost, it is difficult to catch up with the ongoing speech.

Furthermore, time pressure also affects students’ focus. P2 explained, *“When I’m rushed, it ruins my entire focus.”* This indicates that limited time forces students to process information quickly, which increases cognitive load. As a result, they may fail to understand even familiar words because their attention is divided between listening and managing time.

3) Limited strategies

Another important factor is the use of strategies. Some students reported having limited or inconsistent strategies when listening. For example, P3 stated, *“I don’t really have a strategy.”* This shows that without clear strategies, students rely only on their immediate understanding, which may not

be effective in difficult listening situations. In contrast, other students use strategies such as note-taking, repetition, and focusing on keywords, which help them manage comprehension more effectively.

Overall, these findings indicate that listener-related challenges are closely connected to students' internal conditions. Anxiety, lack of focus, and limited strategies interact with each other, making listening comprehension more difficult. When students feel anxious, they lose concentration, and without effective strategies, they cannot recover from missed information. The findings indicate that many participants experienced similar listener-related challenges, particularly anxiety, lack of concentration, and limited listening strategies. These internal factors affected their ability to process spoken information effectively and often reduced their overall listening performance.

d. Environmental Challenges

1) Poor Audio

Environmental challenges refer to external factors such as classroom noise, audio quality, and learning facilities that affect students' listening comprehension. One of the most frequently mentioned issues is poor audio quality. P2 explained, *"If the audio isn't clear enough, it's hard for us to hear."* This shows that unclear sound directly affects students' ability to recognize words. Even if students have sufficient vocabulary knowledge, they cannot understand the message if the input itself is unclear.

This is supported by P6, who stated, *"Sometimes the audio is really quiet... we can't even hear it from the back."* This indicates that limited classroom facilities, such as inadequate speakers, create barriers for students. In this case, the problem is not the students' ability, but the learning

environment that does not support effective listening.

2) Noise Classroom

Noise in the classroom also becomes a significant challenge. P3 mentioned, *“If it’s noisy, it’s hard for us to hear what they’re saying.”* This suggests that background noise interferes with students’ concentration and reduces the clarity of the audio. As listening requires careful attention to sound, any distraction can disrupt the comprehension process.

Similarly, P5 stated, *“Noise and poor audio quality make it hard for us to focus.”* This highlights that environmental factors do not only affect hearing but also affect attention. When students struggle to hear clearly, they need to use more effort to focus, which increases cognitive load and leads to fatigue.

However, not all participants viewed the environment as a challenge. P1 explained, *“It’s more like training.”* This suggests that frequent exposure to English in the environment can also have a positive effect. When students are used to hearing English regularly, their listening skills can improve over time. This shows that environmental factors can be both a challenge and an opportunity, depending on the context.

Overall, environmental challenges affect listening comprehension by influencing the quality of input and students’ ability to focus. Poor audio quality, noise, and limited facilities create barriers that make listening more difficult, even for students with adequate language skills. Several participants reported experiencing similar environmental challenges, especially poor audio quality, classroom noise, and inadequate listening facilities. These external

conditions made it more difficult for them to concentrate and understand the listening materials effectively.

2. Strategies to Overcome Listening Challenges

The findings also reveal that students use various strategies, categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, social, and technology-based strategies.

a. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies refer to techniques that learners use to directly process and understand spoken input. In this study, the cognitive strategies identified included note-taking, focusing on keywords and main ideas, repetition, and guessing meaning from context. These strategies supported both bottom-up and top-down processing, depending on how students used them to understand the listening material.

1) Note-taking

Note taking was widely used by several participants. Participant 1 stated, *“I always write it down, draw conclusions, and jot down the main points so I can review it later.”* This indicates that note-taking helps organize information and supports deeper processing. Similarly, Participant 6 explained, *“I often take notes and focus on keywords... just write it down first so you don’t forget.”* This shows that note-taking is also used as a memory aid, especially when students are dealing with fast speech. This strategy can support both bottom-up and top-down processing, as students may record specific words they hear while also noting the main points of the message.

2) Focusing on keywords and main ideas

Focusing on keywords and main ideas was another dominant strategy. Participant 4 mentioned, *“I try to focus on keywords and the general idea rather than trying to understand every single word.”* This suggests that students intentionally reduce cognitive load by prioritizing important information. In the same way, Participant 2 stated, *“I focus on the main words,”* which shows that students simplify complex input by selecting essential parts of the message. Focusing on keywords mainly supports bottom-up processing because students pay attention to important words in the spoken input, while focusing on the general idea involves top-down processing as students try to understand the overall meaning.

3) Repetition

Repetition was frequently used to improve comprehension. Participant 3 stated, *“I keep listening until I get what they’re saying.”* This indicates that repeated exposure helps students gradually understand pronunciation and meaning. This is supported by Participant 5, who explained, *“I try to listen again and again... sometimes I use subtitles.”* This shows that repetition is often combined with other strategies to strengthen understanding. Repetition can support bottom-up processing because listening to the material again gives students another chance to recognize words, sounds, and pronunciation that they may have missed the first time.

4) Guessing meaning from context

Guessing meaning from context was also applied by some participants.

Participant 3 explained, *“I choose guessing the meaning from the context... we can understand what they are talking about.”* This shows that students rely on contextual clues to maintain comprehension even when they do not fully understand every word. This strategy allows them to continue listening without interruption. This strategy reflects top-down processing because students use the context and the topic to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words instead of depending only on the words they hear.

b. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies refer to students’ awareness and control over their own learning process, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating their understanding during listening activities.

1) Planning the listening process

Planning the listening process was identified as one of the strategies used by participants. Participant 2 stated, *“I usually try to understand first what they’re talking about.”* This indicates that the student prepares a mental framework before fully processing the listening input. By identifying the topic in advance, the student can predict possible vocabulary and context, which makes comprehension more manageable. This shows that planning helps reduce uncertainty and guides attention during listening. In this way, planning can prepare students to use both bottom-up and top-down processing as they listen to the material.

2) Monitoring comprehension during listening

Monitoring comprehension during listening was also evident. Participant 4 mentioned, *“I try to focus on the main idea instead of getting*

stuck on difficult words.” This suggests that the student is actively aware of their comprehension process and makes adjustments when encountering difficulties. Instead of stopping at unfamiliar words, the student shifts focus to overall meaning, which helps maintain continuity in understanding. This ability to adjust strategies in real time reflects effective self-regulation. This monitoring can help students recognize when they need to focus on specific linguistic information or when they need to rely more on the overall context to understand the message.

c. Social- Affective Strategies

Social-affective strategies involve learners’ use of social interaction and emotional awareness to support their listening comprehension. These strategies allow learners to seek assistance from others, clarify their understanding, collaborate with peers, and recognize emotional factors that may affect their listening performance. In this study, the social-affective strategies identified included awareness of anxiety, asking for repetition or clarification, discussing with peers, and receiving support from teachers.

1) Awareness of Anxiety and Emotional difficulties

Awareness of emotional factors such as anxiety was also identified as an important social-affective aspect among the participants. Participant 2 explained, *“When I feel rushed, it ruins my focus.”* This indicates that the student was aware of how emotional conditions could affect concentration during listening activities. Similarly, Participant 6 stated, *“Anxiety is always there, especially during listening tests.”* These responses show that students recognized anxiety as a factor that could interfere with their listening performance. Such awareness reflects the affective dimension of listening, as

students recognized and responded to emotional difficulties that influenced their ability to concentrate and understand spoken input.

2) Asking for repetition or clarification

Asking for repetition or clarification was commonly used by participants. Participant 1 stated, *“If I don’t understand, I’ll ask the professor to repeat it.”* This shows that the student actively seeks clearer input instead of passively accepting confusion. Asking for repetition allows the student to process the information again and reduces the risk of misunderstanding. It can also provide another opportunity to process the spoken input, particularly when some words or sounds were not clearly understood during the first listening.

3) Discussing with peers

Discussing with peers was also identified as an important strategy. Participant 2 mentioned, *“I’ll ask the lecturer or my classmate.”* This indicates that students use peer interaction to confirm or compare their understanding. Similarly, Participant 1 explained that when there are different interpretations, they *“find a middle ground”* through discussion. This shows that collaborative learning helps students refine their comprehension and correct possible errors. Through discussion, students can also use the topic and different interpretations to build a clearer understanding of the listening material.

4) Indirect support from teachers

Indirect support from teachers also plays a role. Participant 1 explained, *“The lecturer tells us where we should focus.”* This suggests that

even when teachers do not explicitly teach strategies, their guidance helps students identify key points in listening tasks. This kind of support helps students develop better listening awareness over time.

d. Technology-Based Strategies

Technology-based strategies refer to the use of digital tools and media to support listening comprehension both inside and outside the classroom.

1) Using translation or speech-detection tools

Using translation or speech detection tools was one of the strategies used by participants. Participant 3 explained, *“I use a voice detector or tools like Google Translate to know what they are saying.”* This indicates that technology helps students identify unclear pronunciation and unfamiliar vocabulary. When students cannot process spoken input in real time, these tools provide additional support to clarify meaning. This strategy can mainly support bottom-up processing because the tools help students identify unclear words and connect spoken forms with their written or translated forms.

2) Using subtitles as visual support

Using subtitles as visual support was also commonly mentioned. Participant 5 stated, *“I use subtitles so I can understand what they’re talking about.”* This shows that subtitles help students connect spoken language with written forms. This strategy is particularly useful when students face difficulties with fast speech or unfamiliar accents, as it provides immediate confirmation of what is being said. subtitles can support both bottom-up and top-down processing because they help students recognize spoken words while also providing additional information that can support the overall

meaning.

3) Exposure to digital content and social media

Exposure to digital content and social media also supports listening development. Several participants mentioned listening to English through platforms such as videos, movies, and social media. This indicates that technology provides continuous exposure to authentic language input. Through repeated exposure, students become more familiar with pronunciation, vocabulary, and different accents. This exposure can support both bottom-up and top-down processing because students encounter spoken language while also using visual and contextual information to understand the message.

B. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study by comparing them with previous research presented in Chapter II. The discussion focuses on two main aspects: (1) listening challenges faced by EFL students and (2) the strategies they use to overcome those challenges. By comparing the findings with previous studies, this section aims to show whether the results support, extend, or differ from earlier research.

1. Discussion of Listening Challenges

The findings of this study show that EFL students experience various challenges in listening comprehension, including linguistic, speaker-related, listener-related, and environmental challenges. These challenges are not completely separate from one another. Instead, they can interact and make listening comprehension more difficult. For example, unfamiliar vocabulary becomes more

difficult to recognize when the speaker talks quickly, while anxiety and lack of concentration can make it harder for students to process information that they might otherwise understand. These findings are generally consistent with previous studies, which have identified language-related, speaker-related, listener-related, and environmental factors as important sources of difficulty in EFL listening.

Linguistic challenges, particularly unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation, and connected speech, were among the most frequently reported difficulties in this study. Many participants explained that when they encountered unfamiliar words, they spent too much time trying to understand them while the speaker continued talking. As a result, they often missed the following information and had difficulty understanding the overall message. Several participants also reported difficulty recognizing connected speech and natural pronunciation, especially when English was spoken at a normal speed. These findings are consistent with Hardiyanto et al. (2021), who explain that unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear pronunciation, and other language-related features can hinder learners' listening comprehension. Similarly, Florensia et al. (2022) found that limited vocabulary and difficulty recognizing pronunciation were common problems among EFL students, while Adia et al. (2022) reported that connected speech and pronunciation variations made word recognition more difficult. From the perspective of bottom-up processing, these difficulties occur because learners need to recognize sounds, words, and linguistic forms before constructing meaning from the spoken input. When this process is interrupted by unfamiliar vocabulary or unclear pronunciation, students may lose parts of the message. The findings also show that these linguistic difficulties became more serious when combined with fast speech, suggesting that several challenges can occur at the same time.

Speaker-related challenges, particularly fast speech, were also found to have an important influence on students' listening comprehension. Many participants explained that they had difficulty following the conversation when the speaker talked too quickly. This finding is consistent with Hardiyanto et al. (2021), who identified speech rate, pronunciation, accent, and voice clarity as speaker-related factors that influence listening comprehension. Similarly, Florensia et al. (2022) identified fast speech as one of the common difficulties experienced by EFL students. The present study further shows that fast speech did not always work as an independent problem. When students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or natural pronunciation while the speaker was speaking quickly, they had less time to recognize and interpret the information. This increased the possibility of missing the following words or ideas. Therefore, fast speech can place greater demands on bottom-up processing, while students may need to rely more on the topic and context to maintain their understanding. This shows that listeners do not always depend on one process; they may combine the recognition of linguistic information with their understanding of the overall context.

Listener-related challenges, including anxiety, lack of concentration, and limited use of listening strategies, were also found to affect students' listening comprehension. These findings are consistent with Hardiyanto et al. (2021), who explain that listener-related factors such as anxiety, limited concentration, background knowledge, and ineffective strategy use may reduce listening comprehension. Some participants in the present study experienced anxiety even before the listening activity began because they expected the task to be difficult. This supports Hamouda (2013), who found that listening anxiety can negatively affect learners' confidence and concentration. Several participants also reported

difficulty maintaining their concentration, particularly when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or missed important information. Florensia et al. (2022) similarly reported that EFL students may struggle to maintain concentration during listening activities. These findings suggest that successful listening does not depend only on the ability to recognize spoken language. Students also need to maintain attention and use their available knowledge to construct meaning. In this situation, top-down processing can help learners use the topic, context, and background knowledge to continue understanding even when some parts of the spoken input are unclear.

Environmental challenges, particularly classroom noise and poor audio quality, were another difficulty reported by the participants. These findings are consistent with Hardiyanto et al. (2021), who explain that external conditions such as classroom noise, audio quality, and learning facilities can affect learners' ability to understand spoken English. Adia et al. (2022) also reported that unclear recordings and low-quality audio can make it difficult for learners to recognize important information, while Florensia et al. (2022) found that classroom noise can reduce students' concentration during listening activities. However, the present study revealed different responses among the participants. While some students viewed noise and poor audio quality as barriers, others considered difficult listening conditions as opportunities to become more familiar with real-life listening situations. This difference suggests that environmental factors may not affect all learners in the same way. When the input is difficult to hear, students may need to depend more on contextual information and background knowledge through top-down processing to fill in missing information. Therefore, both the

quality of the listening environment and the learner's ability to adapt to difficult conditions can influence comprehension.

Overall, the findings suggest that listening challenges are interconnected rather than isolated. Linguistic and speaker-related difficulties can make the initial recognition of spoken input more difficult, particularly during bottom-up processing, while listener-related and environmental difficulties may affect students' ability to maintain attention and use contextual information through top-down processing. This indicates that listening comprehension involves more than simply recognizing individual words. Learners need to process linguistic information while also using context, background knowledge, and their own attention to construct meaning.

2. Discussion of Strategies to Overcome Listening Challenges

The findings also show that students used various strategies to overcome their listening difficulties. These strategies can be grouped into cognitive, metacognitive, social-affective, and technology-assisted strategies. The findings are generally consistent with previous research on listening strategies, but they also show that students often combine different strategies rather than relying on only one strategy. The strategies identified in this study can also be understood in relation to bottom-up and top-down processing, as some strategies help students process linguistic details while others help them use context and prior knowledge to understand the overall message.

Cognitive strategies, such as note-taking, repetition, focusing on keywords and main ideas, and guessing meaning from context, were commonly used by the participants. These strategies helped students process spoken information and maintain their understanding when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary, fast

speech, or unclear pronunciation. This finding supports Graham (2006), who explains that cognitive strategies allow learners to actively process and understand spoken input. Similarly, Purwanto et al. (2021) reported that replaying audio, identifying keywords, and focusing on main ideas can support listening comprehension. In the present study, these strategies can be related to both listening processes. Repetition and note-taking can support bottom-up processing by giving learners more opportunities to recognize words, pronunciation, and specific information. In contrast, focusing on the main idea and guessing meaning from context can support top-down processing because students use the context and overall meaning to understand information that they do not fully recognize. This suggests that students may move between the two processes depending on the difficulty they encounter.

Metacognitive strategies, particularly planning and monitoring comprehension, were also found to support students during listening activities. These findings are in line with Goh and Taib (2006), who emphasized the importance of metacognitive awareness in successful listening. In this study, some participants showed awareness of their listening process by preparing themselves before listening and monitoring whether they understood the information. For example, focusing on the main idea instead of becoming stuck on difficult words shows that students were able to adjust their attention when comprehension problems occurred. These strategies do not directly decode the spoken input. Instead, they help learners control how they approach the listening task. In this sense, metacognitive strategies can support both bottom-up and top-down processing because students can decide when to focus on specific linguistic details and when to rely on the overall context to maintain comprehension. However, not

all participants demonstrated the same level of awareness, suggesting that metacognitive strategies could be strengthened through classroom instruction and regular practice.

Social-affective strategies were also used by participants to overcome listening difficulties. These included awareness of anxiety, asking for clarification or repetition, discussing listening materials with classmates, and seeking support from teachers. The findings showed that students did not always try to solve listening problems independently. Instead, they sometimes asked others to repeat information, confirm their understanding, or explain difficult parts of the listening material. This finding supports Graham (2006), who explains that interaction with teachers and peers can provide learners with opportunities to clarify information and strengthen comprehension. Similarly, Al-Shehri and Alhamami (2023) found that socio-affective strategies, such as cooperation and asking for clarification, can support listening comprehension and help reduce anxiety. These strategies do not directly represent bottom-up or top-down processing. Rather, they provide learners with additional support that allows them to continue processing and understanding spoken input. This is particularly important for students who experience anxiety or lack confidence during listening activities.

Technology-assisted strategies were another important finding in this study. Participants reported using subtitles, translation or speech-detection tools, videos, movies, and social media to support their listening comprehension. These findings are consistent with Chapelle and Sauro (2017), who explain that technology provides learners with access to language resources and opportunities for independent language practice. Hidayah and Gunawan (2025) also found that EFL students used repeated listening, subtitles, transcripts, and digital platforms to

overcome listening difficulties, while Selviani and Ardiana (2025) reported the use of replaying audio, subtitles, and playback-speed adjustment as useful listening strategies. In the present study, technology supported both listening processes. For example, subtitles and speech-detection tools helped students recognize unfamiliar words and pronunciation, which supported bottom-up processing. At the same time, videos and other digital content provided contextual and visual information that could help students understand the overall message through top-down processing. Therefore, technology functioned not only as a source of additional practice but also as a support that helped students deal with different stages of listening comprehension.

Overall, the strategies used by the participants show that listening comprehension is an active and flexible process. Students did not rely on only one strategy or one type of processing. They used cognitive strategies to work directly with the listening input, metacognitive strategies to manage their learning process, social-affective strategies to obtain support and manage emotional difficulties, and technology-assisted strategies to provide additional input and learning resources. These strategies could support bottom-up or top-down processing depending on how they were used. Therefore, the findings suggest that effective listening involves the interaction between listening processes and listening strategies, rather than treating them as separate elements.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study and several suggestions based on the findings. The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by EFL students in listening comprehension and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges.

A. Conclusion

Based on the findings from six participants, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, the study found that students experience various listening challenges, which can be categorized into four main types: linguistic challenges, speaker-related challenges, listener-related challenges, and environmental challenges. Among these, linguistic challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation were the most frequently reported. Students often struggled to understand the overall meaning when they encountered unknown words or unclear pronunciation. This indicates that vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in listening comprehension, as missing key words can disrupt the understanding of the whole message.

In addition, speaker-related challenges, particularly speech speed, were found to significantly affect students' ability to process spoken English. Fast speech made it difficult for students to keep up with the information, especially when combined with unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation. This suggests that listening comprehension is not only about knowing the language but also about processing information in real time. When the speech is too

fast, students may lose important parts of the message, which leads to incomplete understanding.

Listener-related challenges, such as anxiety, lack of concentration, and limited use of strategies, also influenced students' performance. Many students reported feeling anxious, especially during listening tests, which reduced their focus and confidence. When students feel anxious, they tend to lose concentration more easily, which affects their ability to follow the listening text. In addition, some students did not have clear strategies when listening, which made it more difficult for them to deal with challenging input.

Environmental challenges, including poor audio quality and classroom noise, were also found to affect comprehension. These external factors made it harder for students to hear clearly and maintain concentration. However, some students also viewed frequent exposure to English as beneficial, suggesting that the environment can have both positive and negative effects on listening development.

Second, the study found that students use a variety of strategies to overcome their listening difficulties. These strategies can be grouped into four categories: cognitive, (Bingol et al., 2014) metacognitive, social-affective, and technology-assisted strategies. Cognitive strategies, such as note-taking, repetition, focusing on keywords, and guessing meaning from context, were commonly used by the participants. These strategies helped students process important information and deal with unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation, and fast speech.

The findings also show that these strategies supported both bottom-up and top-down processing. Strategies such as repetition, focusing on keywords, and

taking notes helped students recognize and process linguistic information from the listening input, supporting bottom-up processing. Meanwhile, focusing on the main idea and guessing meaning from context helped students use the context and their existing knowledge to understand the message, supporting top-down processing. This shows that students used different strategies to support the way they processed spoken English.

Metacognitive strategies, including planning and monitoring comprehension, were also used by some students. These strategies show that students were aware of their listening process and tried to adjust their approach when they faced difficulties. Social-affective strategies, such as asking for clarification, discussing with peers, and seeking support from teachers, helped students confirm their understanding and deal with emotional difficulties such as anxiety. In addition, technology-assisted strategies, such as using subtitles, translation tools, repeated listening, videos, and social media, provided additional support for students and allowed them to practice listening both inside and outside the classroom.

Overall, the findings show that students did not rely on a single strategy but combined different strategies depending on the difficulties they experienced. The use of these strategies also shows that listening comprehension involves both processing the linguistic information in the spoken input and using context and previous knowledge to construct meaning. Therefore, appropriate listening strategies can help students deal with listening challenges and improve their comprehension.

B. Suggestions

Based on these findings, several suggestions can be offered to improve students' listening comprehension. It is important for students to become more aware of their listening process and to actively use different strategies when facing difficulties. Instead of trying to understand every single word, students can focus on the main idea and important keywords to reduce confusion. Practicing regularly with various listening materials, including those with different accents and speaking speeds, can also help students become more familiar with real-life English. In addition, students should make use of available resources such as subtitles, repetition, and digital tools to support their understanding.

Teachers also play an important role in supporting students' listening development. Providing more listening practice in class, especially using authentic materials, can help students prepare for real communication situations. It is also important for teachers to introduce and model effective listening strategies, such as note-taking, predicting content, and focusing on key information. Furthermore, improving audio quality and creating a supportive classroom environment can help students concentrate better during listening activities.

For future research, it is recommended to involve more participants and explore listening comprehension in different contexts to gain deeper insights into students' experiences. Future studies can also focus on specific listening strategies or examine how cognitive and metacognitive strategies support

bottom-up and top-down processing. Further research could also investigate the use of technology-assisted listening activities and how different teaching methods influence students' listening comprehension.. This can provide more detailed information on how listening skills can be improved effectively.

In conclusion, improving listening comprehension requires continuous effort from students, support from teachers, and a conducive learning environment. With consistent practice, appropriate strategies, and supportive conditions, students can gradually develop their listening skills and become more confident in understanding spoken English.



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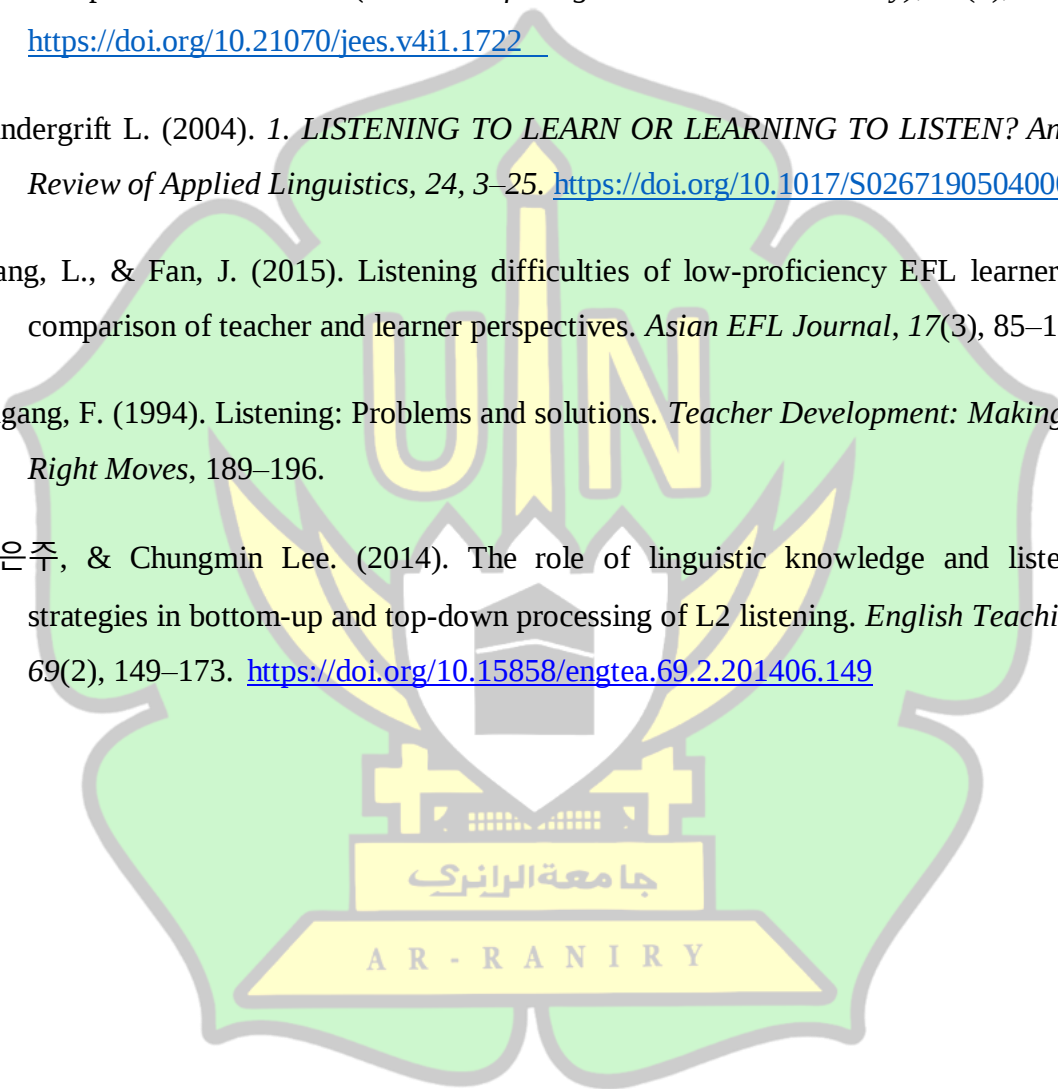
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 1708 TAHUN 2025

TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

Menimbang : a. bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
b. bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
c. bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

Mengingat : 1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
2. Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
3. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
4. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
5. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
6. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
7. Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
8. Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
9. Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
10. Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Krnk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
11. Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

MEMUTUSKAN

Menetapkan : Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.

KESATU : Menunjuk Saudara :
Rita Hermida, S.Pd. I., M. Pd.

Untuk membimbing Skripsi

Nama : Dhea Sri Novita

NIM : 220203105

Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Judul Skripsi : Exploring the Challenges Faced by EFL Students In Listening Comprehension

KEDUA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;

KETIGA : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;

KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;

KELIMA : Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh
Pada tanggal : 22 Desember 2025
Dekan,

Saiful Muluk

Tembusan

1. Salinan Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
2. Ditjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
4. Kantor Pelayanan Perpustakaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Administrasi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
7. Yang bersangkutan;
8. Arsip.



**Appendix B: Recommendation Letter from Fakultas
Tarbiyah and Keguruan to conduct the
research**



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY Banda Aceh
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN**

Jl. Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-3001/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/4/2026

Lamp : -

Hal : *Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa*

Kepada Yth,

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 220203105

Nama : DHEA SRI NOVITA

Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Alamat : Jln.tgk musa 3 Lamlagang

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul *EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY EFL STUDENTS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION*

Banda Aceh, 30 April 2026

An. Dekan

Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.

NIP. 197508152001121002

Berlaku sampai : 05 Juni 2026

جامعة الرانيري

AR - RANIRY

Appendix C: Confirmation Letter from English Education Department



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS

Jln Syeikh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh
Email : pbi.ftk@ar-raniry.ac.id. Website : <https://ar-raniry.ac.id>

SURAT KETERANGAN

Nomor: B-202/Un.08/PBI/Kp.01.2/5/2026

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh menerangkan bahwa yang nama tersebut di bawah ini:

Nama : DHEA SRI NOVITA
NIM : 220203105
Prodi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Alamat : Jl.Tgk Musa,Lr.3,Lamlagang

Benar telah melakukan pengumpulan data untuk penelitian pada Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dalam rangka penyusunan Skripsi yang berjudul:

"Exploring The Challenges Faced By EFL Students in Listening Comprehension"

Demikianlah Surat Keterangan ini kami buat agar dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.



Banda Aceh, 04 Mei 2026
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,

Syarifah Dahliana
Syarifah Dahliana

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol

Research Project Title: *Exploring The Challenges Faced By EFL Students in Listening Comprehension*

Time of Interview :

Date :

Place :

Researcher : Dhea Sri Novita

Participant :

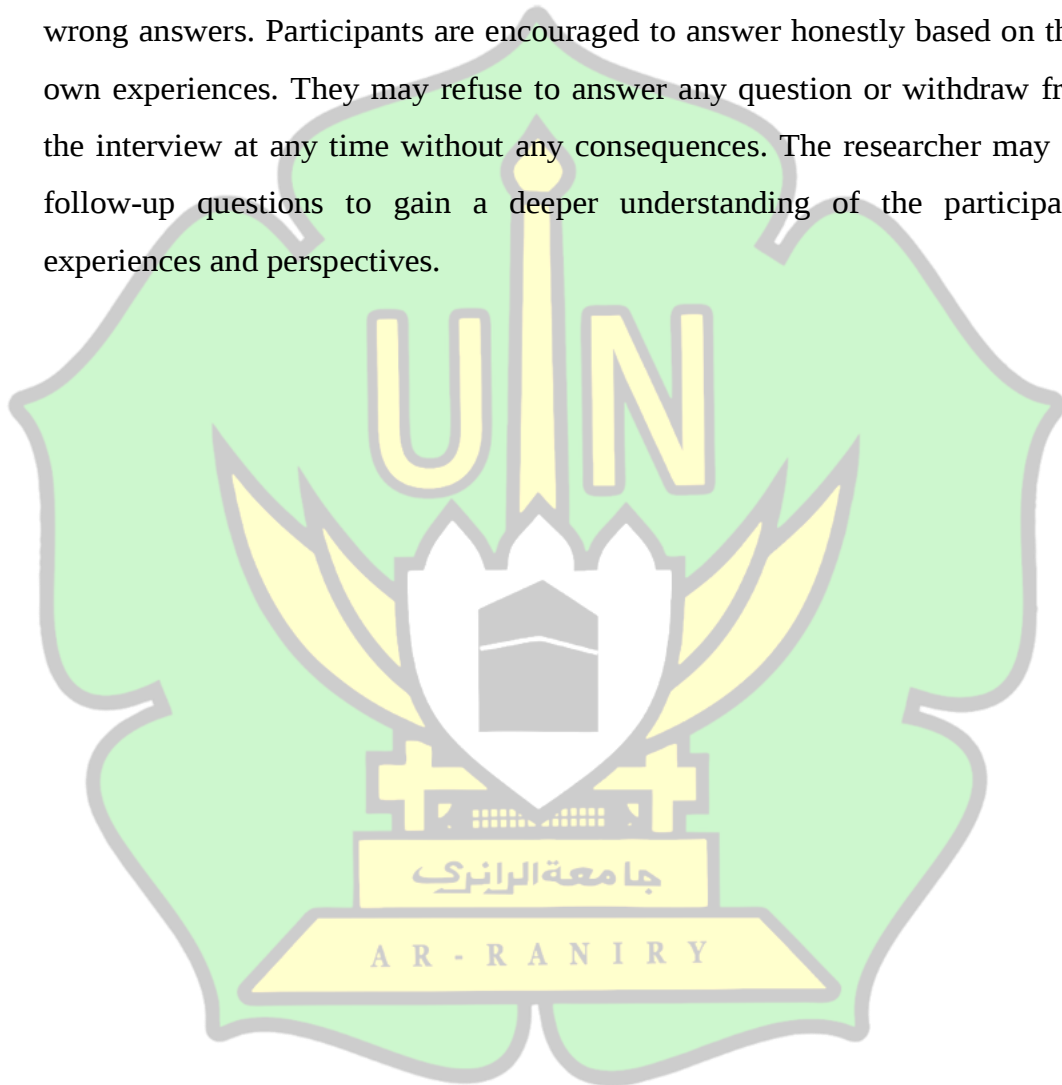
Position of Interview : English Education Department Student, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

This research aims to explore the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in listening comprehension and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the various factors that hinder students' listening comprehension, including linguistic, speaker-related, listener-related, and environmental challenges, as well as the strategies they employ to improve their listening ability.

Data will be collected through a semi-structured interview. With the participant's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of the data. All information provided by the participant will be kept confidential and used solely

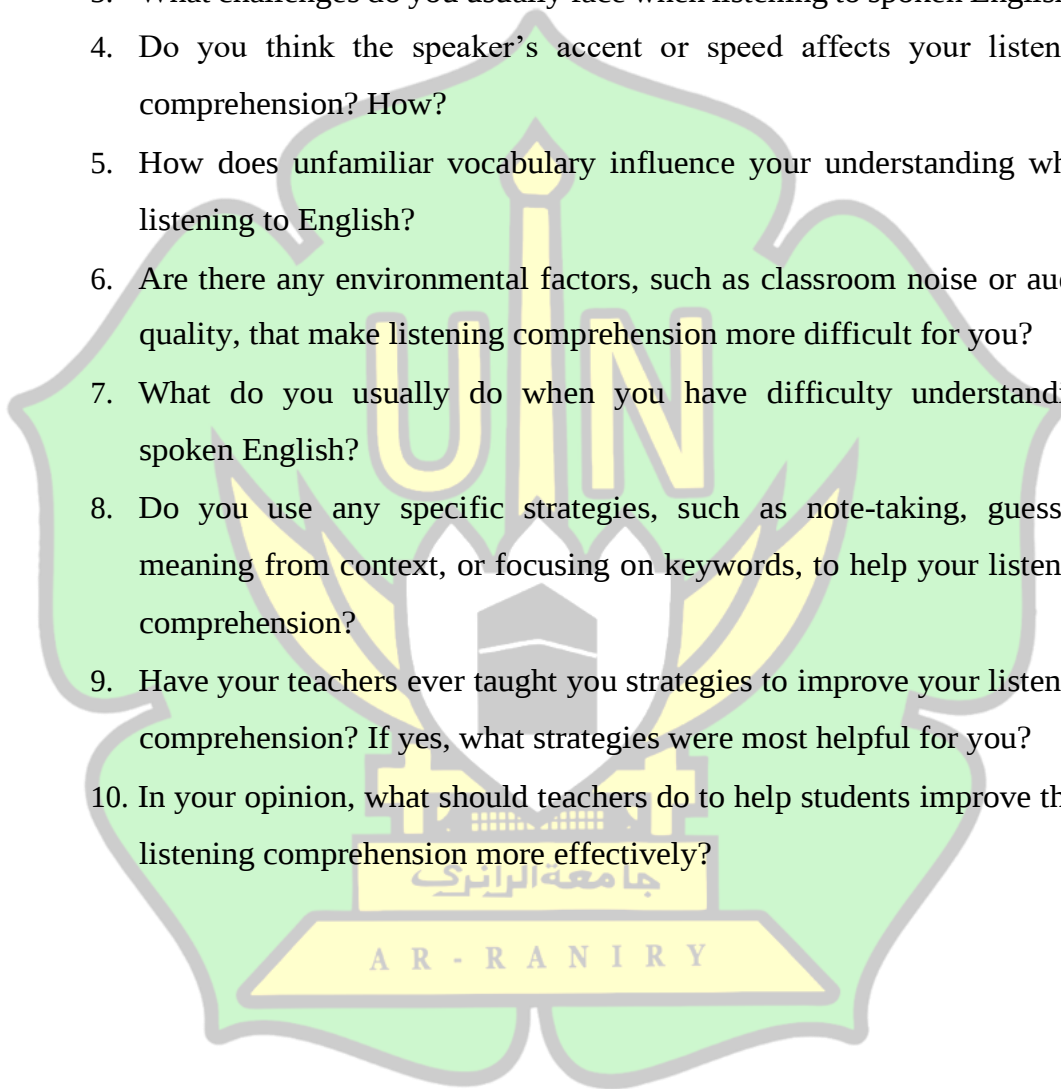
for academic research purposes. To protect the participant's identity, pseudonyms or participant codes (e.g., P1, P2, P3) will be used throughout the study.

The interview will last approximately 20–30 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. Participants are encouraged to answer honestly based on their own experiences. They may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any time without any consequences. The researcher may ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experiences and perspectives.



Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your experience in learning English listening skills at school or university?
2. How often do you listen to English listening materials, such as conversations, videos, lectures, or presentations?
3. What challenges do you usually face when listening to spoken English?
4. Do you think the speaker's accent or speed affects your listening comprehension? How?
5. How does unfamiliar vocabulary influence your understanding when listening to English?
6. Are there any environmental factors, such as classroom noise or audio quality, that make listening comprehension more difficult for you?
7. What do you usually do when you have difficulty understanding spoken English?
8. Do you use any specific strategies, such as note-taking, guessing meaning from context, or focusing on keywords, to help your listening comprehension?
9. Have your teachers ever taught you strategies to improve your listening comprehension? If yes, what strategies were most helpful for you?
10. In your opinion, what should teachers do to help students improve their listening comprehension more effectively?



Interview transcript

Interviewer: Dhea Sri Novita

Participant (Pseudonym): Alex (P1)

Semester: 8

Study Program: English Education Department

Speaker 1: Assalamualaikum, Faldira. Before I begin asking you interview questions, let me introduce myself. My name is Dhea Sri Novita, and I am currently working on my thesis for my final exam. The title is "Exploring the Challenges Faced by EFL Students in Listening Conferences." First of all, thank you, Faldira, for agreeing to participate in my thesis. Without further ado, I'll begin with the questions. Can you tell me about your experience learning English listening skills at university?

Speaker 2: I've learned listening at university. It's through lectures, and then I watch videos and movies in English. I also learn through classroom activities. And sometimes it was really difficult. But since we're majoring in this field, we have to take that risk. So that's just how it is.

Speaker 1: Okay, how often do you listen to English listening materials, such as conversations, videos, lectures, or presentations?

Speaker 2: I listen to English almost every day. Mostly from social media like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. I also use some apps. My favorite app is Stimular. It helps improve my listening and speaking skills.

Speaker 1: In the Stimular app, what kind of materials do you get?

Speaker 2: There are so many features in the app. We can talk to native speakers, and we can make calls—there's someone named Sarah in there. So we can choose her. There are several native speakers—about 7 of them. There's Sarah, Albert, and others like that. We just press a button, as if we're calling that person. So we speak directly with the native speaker.

Speaker 1: So, is that a conversation? As for the class itself, do you often listen to them?

Speaker 2: Yeah, since most of the professors at my university use English. And they mix it in too. So I'm already used to hearing professors speak in English. That also improves my listening.

Speaker 1: While practicing listening, have you faced any challenges?

Speaker 2: Yeah, there are

Speaker 1: What challenges do you usually face when listening to spoken English?

Speaker 2: What challenges? I often have trouble when people speak too fast. For example, there are native speakers who speak really fast, like they're rambling. For instance, if they want to say, "How do yo , you do?" it comes out as "Howdy." That's kind of confusing—I feel like I don't know what they're saying. Because they're speaking so fast, at a high. speed. Also, sometimes I get confused when people use difficult words. Like, for example, slang or idioms, and the pronunciation, you know. Especially since slang varies depending on the accent. So, that's what I think is my biggest challenge. When I talk to native speakers, if they use idioms or slang, it's kind of hard for me. And then speaking at a fast pace like that.

Speaker 1: Okay, so the biggest challenges you face when listening are accent or speed?

Speaker 2: Yeah, the accent.

Speaker 1: Do you think the speaker's accent or speed affects your listening comprehension? And how?

Speaker 2: Yes, it affects me. Different accents are really, how to say it, if they speak fast, it makes it hard to understand. Especially like what I mentioned earlier, like when they use slang or idioms, it's harder to understand.

Speaker 1: What kind of accents do you usually find difficult to understand?

Speaker 2: For me, since I'm learning with an American accent right now. I also often hear British accents, since I like to watch movies. So the accent that's really hard for me to get used to is the Canadian accent. There's a vlogger named Sarah Wynne—if I'm not mistaken, she lives there—and she shares aspects of Canadian culture. Well, her pronunciation is a bit hard to catch, and she speaks too fast.

Speaker 1: Is the Canadian accent the same as the British one?

Speaker 2: There are differences. For example, with British English, when we say "water," they say "wotta" instead of "water," like that. Also, another challenge for me is the British accent—specifically the slang. For example, in America we say "do you understand," but in Britain it becomes "do you know what I mean?" That's a very significant difference.

Speaker 1: How does unfamiliar vocabulary affect your understanding when listening to English? Unfamiliar vocabulary?

Speaker 2: Unfamiliar, right? When I hear a lot of new words or new vocabulary, I get confused and sometimes miss the meaning of the whole sentence; I get a bit confused about the entire sentence. That's regarding the unfamiliar vocabulary.

Speaker 1: So unfamiliar vocabulary also greatly affects Faldira's

difficulty Speaker 2: Yes, that's right

Speaker 1: Are there any environmental factors such as classroom noise or audio quality that make listening comprehension difficult?

Speaker 2: In my opinion, of course yes. Noise and poor audio quality make it hard for us to focus and understand what the native speaker is saying. Especially if there's a lot of background noise, the audio isn't clear, so it's hard to focus on what they're saying.

Speaker 1: You can't make out what

they're saying.

Speaker 2: Yess

Speaker 1: Aside from classroom noise or poor audio quality, is there anything else? For example, anxiety before starting the listening exercise. I'm afraid I won't be able to get even the minimum score.

Speaker 2: This anxiety is because the native speaker talks too fast. And when they speak, they string things together. "Then when they string things together, I hear different pronunciations," different vocabulary. So I'm afraid that when I translate the sentence, it won't make sense.

Speaker 1: While listening, for example, if Faldira doesn't understand what's being said, the listening continues. If Faldira feels like doesn't understand, are you just give up and stop listening, or keep listening until the end?

Speaker 2: I try to listen again and again. Because, for example, if I'm watching a video or a movie, I'll probably use subtitles and then turn down the volume so I can understand what they're talking about and get the context.

Speaker 1: What do you usually do when you have trouble understanding English?

Speaker 2: Like I said, I try it over and over until I understand what they're saying.

Speaker 1: Do you have any strategies such as note-taking, guessing the meaning from the context, or focusing on keywords?

Speaker 2: In class, I usually take notes. Or I focus on the main idea—for example, the core message the professor is conveying. But if I'm reading, or listening to a story, or looking at a text with a title, I focus on the main idea.

Speaker 1: Besides that, for example in class, have you ever asked the professor to repeat the listening part? Or do you ask a friend, "What does this mean?" Or discuss it with a friend?

Speaker 2: For example, when the lecturer is explaining something, I rarely ask them to repeat it. At most, I'll ask my friends what the lecturer said. Then I'll write it down late.

Speaker 1: Have your teachers ever taught you strategies to improve your listening skills? If so, which strategy has been the most helpful?

Speaker 2: There were a few professors who, when I entered the class, gave us strategies. For instance, if we don't understand something—say, when we're reading a text—we just need to focus on the keywords in that text. We don't need to read everything. If we know the main idea, that covers the whole point. Like that. Some professors gave tips like that, and I found them helpful.

Speaker 1: And that's the strategy we use most often.

Speaker 2: Yeah, yesterday we had class, and in that class we read about storytelling—for listening. Yeah, for listening. The teacher gave us a strategy like the one mentioned earlier. So when we applied it, some of us could do it, some couldn't. Some of us really had to try again.

Speaker 1: But for Faldira herself, is that enough?

Speaker 2: As for me personally, maybe just twice is enough.

Speaker 1: In your opinion, what should teachers do to help students improve their listening skills more effectively?

Speaker 2: In my opinion, teachers should provide more videos without subtitles, then facilitate proper discussions in class to improve students' listening skills. They should also provide more listening practice in class so students listen more often to improve their listening skills. But instructors have different accents. Sometimes there's an accent that's very British. There are American accents. So that's a bit of a gap. Because from middle school and high school, the accents we learn—are American. By the time we get there, the listening material might already be in a different accent. But do most of the professors Faldira encounters use an American accent? Yes, most of them use an American accent. But there are a few professors who speak English but have a different dialect. He lives in Aceh. He uses a dialect that sounds like a thick Acehnese accent. Well, it's like that.

Speaker 1: Okay, so according to Faldira, she practiced listening

more often? Speaker 2: Yes, we practiced that more often.

Speaker 1: Okay, that's all, Faldira. Thank you for your answer. Thank you very much. Assalamualaikum

Speaker 2: Waalaikumsalam.

Appendix E: Documentation of Research



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