

## INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS AT USWATUN HASANAH SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** This article is written to describe the students' difficulties in learning to listen in class X. This study aims to reveal the difficulties of listening comprehension by students and strategies to overcome listening difficulties in English class. This research has been conducted at Senior High School, Selogudik Wetan, Pajajaran-Probolinggo. This study used descriptive and qualitative research. This research design refers to the tradition of ethnographic study research. Participants in this research were two students from 16 students. The researcher used the fill-in-the-blank strategy to evaluate and validate the data. The researcher conducted observations by collecting data through documentation and conducting interviews with English-language students. The results of this study show that students have difficulties listening and have strategies to overcome these problems. These difficulties include a lack of vocabulary, speaking speed, accent, concentration, and motivation. In addition, the strategy used is to fill in the blank, which involves listening to an audio song and completing the missing lyrics by filling in the vocabulary of the lyrics. The research concludes that difficulties in listening can hinder student success. As well as strategies that can help students overcome listening difficulties. However, this research is expected to be developed by further researchers.

**Keywords:** Student's Difficulties, Listening Comprehension, EFL Learning

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini ditulis untuk mendeskripsikan kesulitan siswa dalam belajar menyimak di kelas X. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap kesulitan pemahaman menyimak yang dialami siswa dan strategi untuk mengatasi kesulitan menyimak di kelas bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMA Negeri 1 Selogudik Wetan, Pajajaran-Probolinggo. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif dan kualitatif. Desain penelitian ini mengacu pada tradisi penelitian studi etnografi. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah dua siswa dari 16 siswa. Peneliti menggunakan strategi mengisi bagian yang kosong untuk mengevaluasi dan memvalidasi data. Peneliti melakukan observasi dengan mengumpulkan data melalui dokumentasi dan melakukan wawancara dengan mahasiswa bahasa Inggris. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam menyimak dan memiliki strategi untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut. Kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut antara lain kurangnya kosakata, kecepatan berbicara, aksen, konsentrasi, dan motivasi. Selain itu, strategi yang digunakan adalah dengan mengisi kekosongan, yaitu dengan mendengarkan lagu audio dan melengkapi lirik yang hilang dengan mengisi kosakata dari lirik tersebut. Kesimpulan dari penelitian tersebut adalah kesulitan dalam mendengarkan dapat menghambat kesuksesan siswa. Serta strategi yang dapat membantu siswa mengatasi kesulitan mendengarkan. Namun, penelitian ini diharapkan dapat dikembangkan oleh peneliti selanjutnya.

**Kata kunci:** Kesulitan Siswa, Pemahaman Menyimak, Pembelajaran EFL

## INTRODUCTION

Cite the fact that English is one of the languages spoken most widely throughout the world, especially in Indonesia (Aghaee et al., 2021). This study emphasizes that listening comprehension is the most crucial component of English language ability. Reading and listening are essential components of EFL learning since they are the two primary ways that language is inputted. Learners are exposed to language more when they read and listen more. Moreover, listening is one of the first management information that helps a person get a new vocabulary, by which one has good listening skills to get more clear and complete information. In English ability, listening becomes the first point mandatory to be mastered because before mastering English, it must be a habit to hear it first. The listening process is one of the hardest things in learning English, so improving your listening skills is by increasing your English conversations. By listening English songs and watching English films or even watching movies that use English without subtitles (Shabirah, 2023).

According to the researcher's experience, many pupils struggle to listen to the offered audio. Students face some problems, including pronunciation speed and speaker accents. The foreign language spoken and the limited vocabulary are further challenges that have a significant impact on students' ability to grasp the audio. Listening comprehension is the result that has been processed by activating various forms of listeners' knowledge and applying what the listeners know to what they are hearing. Reading, listening, and watching are all options for introducing English vocabulary. According to Makhfirah (2021) Therefore, learning English is of paramount importance because this is placed in a strong position as an international language in communication.

One of the issues with language components that are frequently present in listening comprehension abilities is limited vocabulary. Furthermore, troublesome abilities are also self-generated, or what is referred to as "internal." Examples of this include a lack of drive and focus when it comes to listening comprehension in English lessons. Understanding listening is still difficult, as students must be focused in the context of the text. Moreover, students have difficulties writing vocabulary they have never known, and listening with understanding is one of the hardest things for students. Because students must listen, store information in memory, and then integrate it.

Winingsih (2021) found the difficulties of listening comprehension were the length of listening, moreover the quality of recorded materials. And adapt their understanding through information and knowledge. Not to mention the poor quality of audio produced an indistinct sound. Sometimes class conditions can influence students when listening to audio.

According to observation at the location, researchers found that students struggle to learn English, particularly in listening. They face difficulty in identifying unfamiliar words and lack interest in the language. Factors hindering their ability to develop language skills include lack of facilities, concentration, and motivation. The research highlights that listening is a challenging skill to learn in English. In addition, Elly & Tompunu (2020) found That one of the problems is also found in student concentration. Therefore, lack of concentration is also considered as the main problem faced by students. However, the researcher has a strategy to overcome the listening difficulties faced by English class students.

After conducting observations at senior high school, the researchers discovered that students' habits in learning English were difficult in terms of listening, particularly in determining writing and vocabulary that they did not know well enough to be an obstacle to learning English. listening. Aside from that, pupils face difficulty in their motivation to study English, as a lack of excitement interferes with their listening ability. This problem demonstrates that pupils have some difficulty understanding what English speakers say. Aside from that, study shows that the researchers chose this title since it has been rarely investigated by previous studies, and listening is one of the English language learning abilities that is thought to be tough.

Strategies are required to tackle the challenges that kids face. So that students can develop effective listening abilities. Oxford further stated that strategy is one of the methods for measuring ability and promoting active learning in listening comprehension tasks. Which can help them improve their conversational skills. This is also supported by Mulyati (2023) belief that teachers should have roles beyond being sources of knowledge for students. Based on the learning experience described above, it can be concluded that the ability to listen is very important for each student in learning English because listening is the essence of the learning process of English in the understanding the students can communicate with each other and add to the vocabulary inside and

outside the classroom well. In addition, listening can develop communication skills, thinking, reading, and even writing.

Previous research conducted by Salamah (2022) talked about assessing listening comprehension and forecasting language development in preschoolers at risk. Also, research was conducted by Wardana et al. (2022) who also examined the student's difficulties in listening comprehension. Both of the previous studies have looked into listening skills. Conducted by Oktaviani (2019) Discussed The Influence of Listening to English Songs to Improve Listening Skills in Listening Class. Conducted by Hasanah (2021) discussed The relationship between listening comprehension problems and strategy usage among advanced EFL learners. And also conducted by Istiqomah (2021) Discussed Difficulties and Strategies in Listening Comprehension Among English Students of iain Tulungagung. However, the five studies differ in terms of the subjects they focused on. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are still several issues that need to be addressed regarding the development of listening skills among students.

This study aims To uncover the difficulties students face in Listening to English At Uswatun Hasanah Senior High School. And To find out the strategies students face in Listening to English at Uswatun Hasanah Senior High School. The novelty of this research is the strategy used, namely fill in the blanks. Because no previous research has used this strategy this research used subjects students ten grade at Uswatun Hasanah Senior High School, which is a level that has rarely been studied by previous researchers. The purpose of this study is to determine whether students face difficulties in listening skills and to identify effective strategies to overcome these problems. The research will focus on the student's difficulties in listening skills of senior high school. The study is expected to provide several benefits, including Providing students with information on the difficulty in listening and strategies to overcome it, Inspiring students to overcome difficulties in listening, Helping the school better understand students who face difficulties in listening, inspiring teachers to help students overcome listening difficulties The research will serve as a reference for future related studies. The researcher will investigate the topic, "Investigating Students' Difficulties in Learning Listening Comprehension Skills at Uswatun Hasanah Senior High School.

## **METHOD**

The study employed a qualitative-descriptive design. Which determines the descriptive output of the data. A case study, according to Merriam & Tisdell (2015), is a qualitative research method that investigates one person, group, or notable example to produce an interpretation of a specific instance or provide useful generalizations. The qualitative method is deemed acceptable for this study since it delves further into these issues by examining various key features. The researcher intends to study the topic through interviews and documentation, asking many questions to collect data. This study is a case study since the researcher discovered a social phenomenon while studying the listening difficulties of students in class X. As stated by Bogdan & Biklen (1998) a case study is a qualitative research technique where researchers analyze multiple cases such as events, programs, activities, processes, or even an individual in great detail. Additionally, researchers use many data-gathering techniques within a set time frame to gather specific information. However, the study's utilization was justified by the fact that it focused on a single class of participants. Thus, a case study is the type of research that is appropriate for this investigation.

### **Participant**

In this study, the researcher investigated the difficulties of two students, from six to ten students with moderate and low levels of English proficiency. The 4 aspects of difficulties they faced were: small vocabulary in English students, speech rate, native accent, and lack of concentration.

### **Instrument**

In this study, site observation, documentation, and open-ended interviews were with learning to listen in the interview specification. To learn more about students' listening challenges and coping mechanisms, researchers spoke with students who had intermediate listening skills through interviews. to learn more about the listening challenges that students face and the methods they employ to solve them. The students were questioned regarding their experience with listening, including whether they had trouble hearing, what caused them to have trouble hearing, and how they resolved the problem. Based on the questions created, the researcher also discovered the fundamental causes of their hearing impairments. In collecting the data, the following procedures were implemented: (1) Interview. Researchers conduct open-ended interviews, in which

they ask students a series of pre-compiled and given questions to obtain natural and in-depth data. And The Semi-Structured Interview consists of 5 questions. (2) Observation. In addition to determining relevant interview questions based on classroom experience, observations were done to learn about and measure the subject of the classroom scenario and conditions. This research finding is presented as a description. Student conduct and attitudes when listening were the researcher's main areas of interest during many observations. Students' perceptions of the absence of to better understand the challenges that students have when listening, the researcher additionally focused on any statements and answers from the students. comments and student replies that may be made about the challenges that pupils face when listening. Finding additional actions and attitude shifts that children may make is the goal of this recurrent monitoring, and any modifications in students' attitudes that may occur while they listen. Furthermore, the views of students on the absence of the researcher also observed what the students said and answered when they expressed any concerns about the difficulties they were having listening. Statements and answers that could be made about the problems pupils have when listening. Identifying additional actions and attitude shifts that children might exhibit while listening is the goal of this recurrent observation. Assess potential shifts in pupils' attitudes while they listen. (3) Documentation. Is a method used by researchers to informants to obtain information or data through taking pictures, writing, or documents in the form of reports and information that can strengthen research.

### **Data analysis**

The researcher started the process by reading, taking notes, and reviewing the entire data. Then, the researcher organized relevant data to focus on the problems of the study. The data were from the observation sheet, reflection sheet, and interview. Then was coding and reducing. It was the data selection, focusing, and simplification of data from the holistic data. The unnecessary data were set aside, and the important data were gathered and classified into more specific. The last step was interpreting and representing. The researcher interpreted the findings, analyzed them by using the researcher's knowledge and expert theory, and presented the data result.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Student's Difficulties with Listening Comprehension

As listening is a complex process, students may encounter problems with listening comprehension. The difficulties experienced by students can vary and are caused by their inability to understand speakers, which can be influenced by various factors. According to the research, students faced challenges in listening comprehension due to both internal factors and external factors. Language difficulties, such as vocabulary difficulty, speech rate, native accent, pronunciation, and the classroom setting were examples of external variables. The absence of drive and focus was attributed to internal causes.

After analyzing the responses, the researcher found out that every student had distinct issues with their listening skills. Nonetheless, the majority of them shared the same challenges and reasons behind their difficulties. At the start of the interview, the researcher attempted to gauge how the students evaluated their listening proficiency. Two students expressed their feelings on the matter. The researcher concluded from the students' responses that they all had various listening difficulties. Nonetheless, the majority of them shared the same issues and reasons. Early in the interview, the researcher made an effort to find out how the students evaluated their listening skills. They both expressed the same emotion.

**Table 1. Interview with an English Student of Uswatun Hasanah Senior High School**

No.	Question interview	Student a	Student b
1.	What is your opinion about listening difficulties?	"If I think listening is normal but not too difficult either".	"I find listening very difficult. My difficulty level is at 50%".
2.	How do you get the vocabulary you hear??	Listen carefully and when I don't know the vocabulary, I open the dictionary.	"Listening with repetition, because I don't know much vocabulary".
3.	Besides that, what are the difficulties in listening?	"I find it difficult to follow in listening class because of the fast speech".	"em, speaking English is too fast"
4.	What problems do you face besides vocabulary difficulties?	"The difficult-to-understand accent is one of the issues"	The accent was too fast and I couldn't repeat it.



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5.	Do you have trouble concentrating during listening lessons?	"I think yeah, inadequate facilities that make us less concentrated in listening".	"Sometimes the audio and also the place does not support our concentration".
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Based on the information provided, it appears that the majority of the students had difficulties with their listening skills. While some students claimed that they found listening to be challenging, others had a different opinion. As a result, The researchers concluded that the kids may struggle to identify the root cause of the issue since their listening abilities were not yet perfect.

Some sixteen students were interviewed by the researcher. The students were given 5 questions which were related to the difficulties in mastering listening skills and factors that affect listening difficulties. The first question was about students' difficulties related to listening material. Students feel unfamiliar with listening learning, and some students are not familiar with listening skills. Mastering listening skills. The second question about student difficulties related to vocabulary is known in the questions they get. The third question is about student difficulties related to listening. The fourth question was about student difficulties related to any problems other than difficulties in accent and vocabulary. And the last statement regarding obstacles in terms of concentration on listening learning.

According to the interview conducted, the students encountered difficulties specifically while listening. Through the interview, 4 major problems were identified, which included speech rate, native accent, small vocabulary in English, and lack of focus. It was also found by the researcher that unclear pronunciation caused the problems, although it was not the main difficulty faced by the students.

## **Discussion**

### **Small vocabulary in English students**

During the interview, all of the respondents expressed that they were facing difficulties in their English language skills, specifically their vocabulary. They stated that there were still many unfamiliar words for them to learn. Additionally, the reflection results also showed that some students were struggling with their vocabulary mastery. Rianti (2019) Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. The students admitted that their problems in learning English came from their limited



vocabulary. Therefore, they needed to consult an English dictionary help them to understand the meanings of the words. This was supported by the reflection data, which showed that some students had fewer vocabularies than others.

According to some students, one of the difficulties they faced when listening to English speakers was encountering unfamiliar words. Many times, they were unfamiliar with the words and had no idea what they meant. Alimudin (2020) observed that limited English vocabulary could impede listeners' comprehension, as unfamiliar and restricted vocabulary could be problematic. Astiana et al. (2023) for some people who have experience in learning a foreign language know that vocabulary is always one of the major problems in language learning no matter one is at the beginning or the end of language learning.

After reflecting on their research, the researchers discovered that the students had difficulty understanding the speaker's message if they were unfamiliar with certain words. Additionally, Frima (2019) revealed that knowing a word's meaning can help listeners become more interested and motivated, which ultimately results in improved listening comprehension ability.

While listening to an English speaker, the students experienced some consequences from the aforementioned difficulties. It took some of them time to figure out what the word meant. referenced in Istiqomah (2021), claimed that they were unable to understand a word and hence missed the next section of the speech. The word could abruptly stop them from considering its meaning. These issues hindered their ability to comprehend the speaker's content.

They therefore failed to pay attention to what the speaker stated. listeners were too preoccupied with deciphering one piece of information at a time to keep up and miss the rest. Periods of flawless hearing and comprehension of the speaker were required by the listeners. To increase vocabulary, some pupils realized that their problems needed to be resolved. The statement suggested that comprehending the meaning requires mastery of terminology.

### **Speech rate**

According to most of the students, the primary reason behind the problem of listening was the speed at which the speaker spoke. Some students mentioned in their feedback that the speaker spoke too fast, which made it difficult for them to

comprehend. The students also highlighted that the first and foremost issue was the speaker's fast-paced speech. Most students felt the speaker's fast-paced speech was the main cause of the listening problem.

The researcher discovered that the students were finding it difficult to understand due to the speech rate. Native speakers who spoke quickly were causing the students to have trouble comprehending the conversation. According to Arsini et al. (2019), listeners require time to assimilate the information they are presented with. According to Sardi (2023), listeners have less time to ponder when a speaker speaks more quickly. Speaking more quickly can be detrimental since it makes it harder for listeners to understand what is being said.

### **Native Accent**

A native speaker's accent can influence the comprehension process. Students are unknowingly accustomed to hearing an Indonesian accent. As a result, some issues may develop due to the difference in accent. Although not all students suffer from this challenge, an accent might make it difficult for them to understand a native speaker.

According to the interview, several students experienced difficulty in listening due to the accent of the native speaker. Some of them also mentioned that their accent was a significant factor in their listening problem. As a result, they were unable to comprehend what the speaker was saying.

After performing an interview, it was discovered that some students struggled owing to their local dialect, notably the British accent. Students who were not used to hearing the British accent struggled to adjust to the strange dialect. Consequently, these students faced difficulty in understanding what was being said.

### **Lack of Concentration**

The researcher discovered another fundamental difficulty that some students faced, which was an internal factor. Some of them found it hard to concentrate in certain circumstances, particularly when they were hungry or low on energy. This led to a lack of focus while listening, which is a crucial aspect of learning that requires consistent concentration. Therefore, the ability to concentrate continuously becomes paramount for effective listening and learning. The students mentioned that their lack of concentration was due to hunger. Additionally, they suspected that the timing of their study also played a role in their inability to focus while listening. This indicates that a student's physical state and study schedule can have a significant impact on their ability to listen

attentively.

After analyzing all the findings, it was concluded that the lack of motivation among students was influenced by a combination of factors and was inextricably linked to internal problems. Other obstacles faced by the pupils contributed to their lack of enthusiasm. Additionally, psychological factors and the student's interests also played a role in their ability to comprehend the listening material, further constraining their motivation. Based on the data, the researcher was unable to identify any ways to address the class's issues with motivation and lack of focus. Future studies, the researcher thinks, will be able to pinpoint these problems and offer workable solutions. This, in turn, can help students improve their listening skills.

### **Strategies to Overcome Difficulties**

Strategies to Overcome this problem are very important because they aim to improve students' listening skills. The strategies obtained are used to overcome listening difficulties and the strategies come from the students themselves. A strategy that can be done is to use the media as a learning tool. Students' issues with vocabulary growth, practice listening to fast-talking people, and becoming accustomed to English accents are all intended to be addressed by this. Furthermore, the implementation of this technique allows pupils to gradually comprehend the vocabulary that they have learned.

This method is expected to aid students who are experiencing these issues. Strategies and methods for addressing this challenge are critical since they attempt to increase pupils' listening abilities. The solutions developed are utilized to overcome hearing challenges and are created by the students themselves.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that senior high school class X has difficulty listening to English language learning. From the results of the investigation, researchers found four difficulties experienced by students. The difficulties consist of internal and external factors. The problems experienced by students are mostly due to external factors, namely limited vocabulary in English, speech rate, and lack of concentration. Most students argued that these problems prevented them from understanding what the native speakers said.

They added that it required a considerable amount of time to comprehend each word that the native speaker spoke. The students also stated that the problem faced by them was when the speaker had an accent that they were not familiar with, followed by

speaking at a high speed. In addition, the students also stated that the difficulties were internal. They mentioned that lack of concentration had a big influence on disrupting their comprehension. Most of the time at the end of class students felt tired, bored and sleepy. Therefore, the students felt that success in listening would be delayed if these difficulties were not overcome. And they have to overcome these difficulties to have the ability to listen.

Strategies to overcome difficulties, used to help students with difficulties and improve listening skills are, researchers use the fill-in-the-blank strategy, where students listen to songs through audio by filling in the empty song lyrics in the form of questions, which have been presented. This makes it a viable alternative that is seen as a pleasant and successful method of overcoming the challenges they face. Furthermore, they claim that each student should be permitted to choose the best strategy to overcome their issues with listening comprehension. However, this research is expected to be developed further.

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