

## **An Analysis of Factors of Student's Difficulties in Listening Comprehension**

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### **Abstract**

Listening comprehension in the learning process greatly helps increase students' performance in mastering English listening skills students and to understand the topic or lesson being studied. The purpose of this research to find out students' difficulties in listening comprehension. Based on what the researchers observed when doing preliminary with some students, it seems they have difficulties when doing an exercise in listening comprehension. In this research mixed method were used. The researchers took 34 participants of the students and for the interview sections, the researchers took 6 students from 34 students in the class of XI IPA 1 at the year eleventh of SMA Tunas Bangsa. The data were gathered by using questionnaire and interview adapted by Hamouda (2013) in the classroom. Based on the research findings, the researchers found out that the most of students at the year eleventh of Senior High School Tunas Bangsa have various difficulties in listening comprehension such as (1) unfamiliar words in listening material, (2) unfamiliar topics of linguistics, (3) unable to concentrate, (4) students' anxiety, (5) the audiences' factors, (6) the audio factors, and (7) physical environmental.

**Keywords:** Listening Comprehension, Listening Difficulties.

### **A. Introduction**

English is the primary language used to communicate and interact with other people around the world. Ghonivita (2021) asserts that listening is crucial in everyday life because it allows learners to access a variety of data and concepts. This is because hearing is how most people learn. Learning and understanding English is necessary, by learning English someone opened their eyes to international knowledge. As a global language, English played an essential role and function.

The act of listening involves focusing on the speaker and attempting to make sense of what we hear. According to Underwood in Gilakjani (2011), hearing is a process that entails comprehending the meaning of the speaker as well as their accent, pronunciation, syntax, and

vocabulary. The listener is able to perform all four tasks at once. Every time we listen, our ears pick up certain noises (pauses, rhythms, stress, letters), and our brain converts these sounds into messages that convey meaning. All types of effective communication depend on listening, when people cannot listen carefully, Communications frequently get misinterpreted.

Learning listening is one of the many abilities that are crucial to learning English. However, the study discovered that, in contrast to other abilities (such developing grammar), listening often only offers a tiny portion of learning opportunities. High school students are good at answering simple grammatical questions, but they struggle to answer listening questions they believed that it would be quite challenging. to comprehend this listening lesson. As stated by Hamouda (2013), maintaining a great speaker for hearing is essential to comprehending information, no input means that acquiring knowledge is not possible. Mohammad Reza Ahmadi and Pourhosein Gilakjani (2011) claim that listening is essential for communication.

Listening comprehension is a difficult process that requires listener involvement. Rost (2002) highlights the complexity of listening comprehension, a complex, interactive process involving listener involvement and various factors such as language, paralinguistic, and nonlinguistic clues. EFL learners in Tunas Bangsa often identify words by sight, highlighting the need for more careful consideration in listening comprehension.

Certain sources can be the cause of students' listening difficulties. There are numerous parameters that can affect a student's listening difficulties. Chao (2013) shows that the speaker aspect, the context aspect, and the listener aspect are the three factors that have the most of an impact on students' listening difficulties.

Likewise, an interview was conducted with the teacher as preliminary study at SMA Tunas Bangsa Palembang on 08 April 2023. It was showed that listening comprehension was the difficult skills to learn in learning compared to writing and reading skills according to student's experiences. Therefore, there were some previous related studies conducted by some researches in the past. The first study was conducted by Desliana (2016). The result of the study revealed that some indicators of student listening comprehension issues are as follows: Low-quality instruments, inattention, poor pronunciation, a quick speech rate, unfamiliar words and subjects, and emotional issues. Secondly, Darti & Asmawati (2017). The result of the study showed that the main issues with students' English education are accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, a lack of vocabulary, different speakers' accents, a lack of interaction, and poor recording quality.

The following questions were used to formulate the research problems in relation to the background, the research question of this study was what are student's difficulties in learning listening comprehension? And The Objective of this study was to found out what the student's difficulties in learning comprehension. Referring to description explained above, the researchers would like to investigate the study in order to discover Students' difficulties with listening comprehension.

## **B. Research Methodology**

This research employed a mixed-methods, according to Creswell (2018), this strategy includes questionnaires and interviews to gather data and focuses on comprehending the meanings that individuals or groups assign to social or human issues. The population of this study consisted of SMA Tunas Bangsa Palembang eleventh-year students. The eleventh-grade students at SMA Tunas Bangsa Palembang are the subjects of this research.

In this research, the researchers used a random sampling technique. Random sampling, according to Fraenkel et al. (2012), is the process of choosing a sample so that each member of the defined population has an equal and independent probability of being selected.

The goal of random sampling is to select people who are representative of the population being sampled. As a result, the researchers uses random selection to choose the sample, which indicates that any student could be chosen, a random sample is one in which each case population has a similar chance of being included in the sample. In this study, the research uses lottery technique to determine the sample and XI IPA 1 is selected to become the sample, with total number 34 students.

The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was adapted from Hamouda (2013) about students' listening comprehension. The researchers gave the questionnaire to the sample, which consisted of 45 closed-ended questions: listening material (9 items), linguistic problems (8 items), failure to concentrate (6 items), psychological characteristics (5 items), the listener (7 items), the speaker (7 items), and physical setting (3 items).

Interviews are the second method of data collection used in this research. The interview's goals are to record additional information acquired from the questionnaire, collect information on how the identified listening difficulties impact students' comprehension, learn more about the causes of students' listening comprehension difficulties, and ascertain whether additional listening difficulties exist that also affect students' comprehension. Additionally, by

giving students the chance to reflect in their own words, the study hopes to learn more about how they perceive and approach these challenges. It is thought that hearing the learner's voice will help us better grasp their comprehension difficulties. The data gained through the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed. The results of the instruments identified the difficulties in listening comprehension that affected the eleventh-year students.

Firstly, the researchers is addressing the difficulties the students face in listening comprehension from questionnaire sections and put them into percentage. To find out each statement in percentage in questionnaire. Secondly, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis to categorize the difficulties among students, and then the researchers conducted open ended interviews to clarify the data obtained from the questionnaire section. There were 13 items of written questions.

## C. Results and Discussion

### 1. Results

After analyzing the data from the questionnaire and interview, the researchers discovered several listening difficulties that students were having. Based on the research findings, the researchers separated the data results in the table below into percentages from the questionnaire and the number of themes and codes.

6 of the 34 students in the sample were selected for interviews by the researchers. In order to determine which students, struggle with listening comprehension in the classroom, the researchers presented the findings. A Hamouda (2013)-adapted questionnaire and interview were utilized in the study, which was conducted in classrooms.

**Table 1: Questionnaire Questions**

No	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I find it difficult to understand listening question in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms.	11,8% (4)	20,6% (7)	<b>67,6%</b> <b>(23)</b>	0,0% (0)
2	I find it difficult to understand every single word of incoming speech.	17,6% (6)	8,8% (3)	<b>64,7%</b> <b>(22)</b>	8,8% (3)
3	I find it difficult to understand reduced forms.	11,8% (4)	<b>70,6%</b> <b>(24)</b>	14,7% (5)	2,9% (1)

<b>4</b>	I lose my concentration when the spoken text is too long.	14,7% (5)	23,5% (8)	<b>52,9%</b> <b>(18)</b>	8,8% (3)
<b>5</b>	Before doing listening comprehension tasks, I fear that I cannot understand what I will hear.	8,8% (3)	17,6% (6)	<b>35,3%</b> <b>(12)</b>	<b>38,2%</b> <b>(13)</b>
<b>6</b>	I find it difficult when listening to English without transcripts.	11,8% (4)	29,4% (10)	<b>32,4%</b> <b>(11)</b>	<b>26,5%</b> <b>(9)</b>
<b>7</b>	I find it difficult to understand the natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	8,8% (3)	35,3% (12)	<b>50,0%</b> <b>(17)</b>	5,9% (2)
<b>8</b>	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	5,9% (2)	29,4% (13)	<b>38,2%</b> <b>(9)</b>	<b>26,5%</b> <b>(9)</b>
<b>9</b>	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	5,9% (2)	23,5% (8)	<b>47,1%</b> <b>(16)</b>	<b>23,5%</b> <b>(8)</b>
<b>10</b>	I find it difficult to understand the listening text when the speaker does not pause long enough.	8,8% (3)	41,2% (14)	<b>38,2%</b> <b>(13)</b>	<b>11,8%</b> <b>(4)</b>
<b>11</b>	It is difficult for me to concentrate with noise around.	5,9% (2)	26,5% (9)	<b>26,5%</b> <b>(9)</b>	<b>41,2%</b> <b>(14)</b>
<b>12</b>	Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD-Player interfere with my listening comprehension.	14,7% (5)	23,5% (8)	<b>29,4%</b> <b>(10)</b>	<b>32,4%</b> <b>(11)</b>
<b>13</b>	Unclear sounds resulting from poor equipment interfere with my listening comprehension.	2,9% (1)	41,2% (14)	<b>26,5%</b> <b>(9)</b>	<b>29,4%</b> <b>(10)</b>

**Table 2: Themes and Codes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Unfamiliar Words	<p>a. Students often face difficulties with listening materials especially in unfamiliar language like idioms and jargon</p> <p>b. Students often difficulty to comprehend each and every word being said in public. due to teachers' quick delivery, which can cause confusion.</p>
Unfamiliar topics of linguistics	Most of students face difficulties in linguistics especially in reduced forms.
Unable to concentrate	The majority of students find it difficult to focus during listening lessons, they frequently become distracted when the teacher talks for a long time.
Students' anxiety	Most students experience difficulties in studying, often losing focus and struggling to listen to audio clearly due to anxiety.
The audiences' factor	<p>a. Students usually understand written and transcribed words in form of text, but they have trouble recalling in listening sections.</p> <p>b. Students have difficulty in learning listening without a transcript.</p>
The audio factor	<p>a. Students struggled with listening due to misunderstandings with the audio because students did not hear clearly.</p> <p>b. Students find it difficult to understand listening when the audio plays too fast.</p> <p>c. Students find it incomprehensible when the speaker doesn't take a long enough break.</p>
Physical environment	Poor Environment can cause students to struggle with concentration and audio comprehension due to unclear sounds produced.

### **Unfamiliar words**

By engaging the interview, the researchers found that the students had difficulty in unfamiliar words. The difficulties explained by the teacher, there is significant issues with students which is an unknown vocabulary that is foreign to them. This statement is also supported by students' answers:

NA: Often, especially when the teacher presents the materials that i did not know, I often miss what the teacher says, and also if there are unfamiliar words that I don't know, I usually don't understand it right away. That's all.

It is in line with ANA, VD, DA, AF and AS statement:

ANA: I find unfamiliar vocabulary to be quite difficult. New words can be confusing to me, even if I understand the majority of the context, which makes it harder for me to follow the remainder of the audio.

VD: Yes, when there are new terms, I'm not familiar with, I have trouble keeping up. My focus is broken because I begin to consider the meaning of those words rather than paying attention to what is being said next.

DA: I find it difficult to follow the listening material when the teacher uses vocabulary, I'm not familiar with. I frequently overlook important details because I'm preoccupied with deciphering foreign language."

AF: Yes, I have a lot of trouble during listening lessons with new vocabulary. When I encounter unfamiliar words, it becomes overwhelming and I lose track of the entire conversation.

AS: Yes, when in class when the teacher explains a new word that I don't understand I will be confused.

### **Unfamiliar topics of linguistics**

Several students stated based on the interview results that they have problem in linguistics topics and lack in mastering vocabulary. It is supported by all by students' answers:

NA: Yes, for example, when I hear "gonna" instead of "going to," it confuses me and makes it hard to follow the lesson

It is in line with ANA, VD, DA, AF and AS statement:

ANA: Definitely. When unfamiliar phrases or reduced forms come up, like 'wanna' for 'want to,' it takes me a moment to understand. This slows me down and makes it hard to follow the lesson.

VD: When the teacher uses short forms or introduces new words, I find it difficult. They're not always familiar to me, which makes it difficult for me to follow the rest of the lesson.

DA: Yes, I have trouble with unfamiliar words or their shortened forms. I find it difficult to keep up when the teacher says something like "lemme" rather than "let me." I have to pause and consider what she means.

AF: In listening exercises, I have trouble with reduced forms and unfamiliar words. I get confused and spend too much time figuring it out instead of listening to the rest if I hear "gotta" instead of "got to."

AS: Yes, those are challenging for me. I frequently miss the meaning of new words or their abbreviations, such as "kinda" for "kind of," and I fall behind in the lesson.

### **Unable to concentrate**

From the result of the interview, some students said that they have difficulty in Focus in listening sections. The students feel distracted and disturbed when other students are noisy or when the teacher takes too long. It is supported by students' answers:

NA: Sometimes I have trouble concentrating during listening lessons, especially when the topic is unfamiliar to me. It feels like there's no point in listening if I can't connect with what's being taught. So, yes, that sometimes distracts me

It is in line with ANA, VD, DA, AF and AS statement:

ANA: Yes, I sometimes like to lose concentration, especially when the teacher explains the material for too long, and it makes me sleepy

VD: Usually, especially when the teacher explains a long-winded lesson, it makes me break my focus.

DA: Yes, when the teacher explains the material for too long, sometimes I always daydream and think about other things outside the lesson.

AF: Yes, when the teacher explains the material for too long it makes me unable to concentrate properly.

AS: Yes, I sometimes i tend to lose my focus and get bored and end up chatting with my friend next to me.

### **Students' anxiety**

From the Findings of the interviews, some students said that they have difficulty in specific conditions, many students frequently encounter these difficulties in their studies, often grappling with maintaining focus and experiencing difficulty in comprehending audio clearly, primarily stemming from feelings of anxiety. It is supported by students' answer:

NA: My anxiety is higher during listening tests because I can't control the pace of the audio."

It is in line with ANA, VD, DA, AF and AS statement:

ANA: I get really stressed out when I take listening tests. I'm afraid I won't be able to recall what I heard or that my mind will wander.

VD: I do experience anxiety when taking listening tests. I'm concerned that I might not be able to keep up with the audio's speed or miss some crucial information.

DA: I get really nervous before listening assessments. I find it difficult to concentrate and give my all because I'm afraid I won't understand everything.

AF: I'm nervous about missing important words or phrases in the test.

AS: Listening tests make me anxious since I doubt my comprehension skills.

### **The audiences factor**

From the result of the interviews, some students said that they have difficulty in audiences' factor. The students feel distracted and hard to recall to the teacher's explanation and also Students sometimes have difficulty to understanding listening sentences in audio form, but on the contrary, most of them understand in text or transcript form. It is supported by students' answer:

NA: Yes, I find it more difficult to recall information from listening sections because I can't go back and review the information like I can with written text. When reading, I can take my time to understand and remember the details

It is in line with ANA, VD, DA, AF and AS statement:

ANA: I do struggle more with listening sections. It's easier for me to remember written information since I can highlight and take notes directly on the text.

VD: Yes, I have trouble recalling information from listening sections because I am unable to review it as I would with written text. I can go back and reread what I've read to gain a better understanding.

DA: Certainly. I can take my time reading written material and go back over any passages as needed. It's difficult for me to listen when I have to take everything in at once.

AF: I do find listening sections more difficult. Because I can underline and make notes right on written material, it helps me remember it better.

AS: Yes, it is more difficult for me to remember information that I have heard. I can pace myself and take my time absorbing information when it's written down.

### **The audio factors**

From the result of the interview, Students faced difficulties in listening comprehension due to unclear audio, fast-paced delivery, and insufficient pauses. It is supported by students' answer:

NA: Yes, sometimes the audio quality is poor, which makes it difficult to hear clearly. This happens when the recording is not clear or the volume fluctuates.

It is in line with ANA, VD, DA, AF and AS statement:

ANA: Yes, sometimes the audio quality is poor, making it hard to hear clearly.

VD: The volume frequently changes, which makes it difficult for me to concentrate on the content.

DA: Background noise in the classroom or outside interferes with understanding the audio.

AF: There are moments when the speaker's voice isn't clear, it causes me to confuse.

AS: The recording speed can be too fast at times, making it challenging to keep up.

### **Physical environment**

From the results of the interviews, students encounter difficulties with the physical settings, they feel disturbed by noise outside the classroom and the quality of the audio, so they have difficulty hearing the lesson. It is supported by students' answer each students have two statements:

NA: Yes, I often have problems with background noise in the classroom. It's hard to concentrate on the listening material when there's talking or noise from outside.

NA: The most common difficulty I face is unclear audio. Sometimes the recordings are not clear, and I miss important details because I can't hear them properly.

It is in line with ANA, VD, and DA, AF, AS statement:

ANA: Yes, when there is noise from outside the classroom, I find it difficult to concentrate.

ANA: I often encounter issues with unclear audio during listening lessons. Sometimes the volume is too low

VD: Yes, sometimes if the atmosphere gets noisy, I can't hear the teacher's voice clearly.

VD: Yes, when the speaker did not get enough pause, it's difficult to keep up with their speed, and I risk missing crucial details in the exchange

DA: Often, if the class conditions are not conducive, I often miss important things that the teacher conveys.

DA: During listening lessons, I find it challenging when speakers don't take enough breaks between ideas or sentences. I find it challenging to properly process the information and make connections between the ideas being presented as a result.

AF: Yes, in my experience, if the speaker's voice is not clear, it will interfere with me listening to the lesson.

AF: During listening lessons, I have trouble with unclear audio. Occasionally, speakers speak too quickly, which makes it challenging for me to fully understand what they are saying.

AS: Yes, if there's a noise in class I can't hear the lesson clearly.

AS: There are issues with unclear audio when taking listening lessons. When speaker plays too quickly or doesn't pause long enough between sentences, I frequently have trouble understanding what they're saying.

## **2. Discussion**

Following the researchers's research and data collection from questionnaires and interviews. and after that, the researchers conducted a thorough and precise analysis of the data. The results of the data are analyzed in relation to appropriate theories regarding the causes of listening difficulties in learning.

First difficulty was the student unfamiliar words. In otherway this led that some of the students did not understand what the listening material contained. This result was in line with the research conducted by Maresta (2018). Darti and Asmawati (2017) that also mentioned that students did not comprehend listening material that teacher presented while studying.

The second difficulty was Students struggled with unfamiliar listening topics and vocabulary due to reduced forms and idioms, as well as lack of practice and memorization, leading to confusion during lessons and readings. This result was in line with the research conducted by Mulyati (2022). Lini and Rusdi (2020) that also mentioned that some of the students did not comprehend the message posed a significant barrier to their ability to listen.

The third difficulty was the unable to concentrate. From the research it was found that the students lost focus when the teacher presented the material for too long. This result was in line with the researches conducted by Maresta (2018). Mulyati (2022) that also mentioned that the students often lose concentration when there is noise from outside of class.

The fourth difficulty was students' anxiety while learning. The majority of students have trouble focusing during class and have trouble listening to audio clearly because of anxiety. According to Bloomfield et al (2011), audiences have trouble understanding what they are hearing when there is noise or distortion in the audio source.

The fifth difficulties were the audiences' factors, Students typically understand written and transcribed text well but struggle with recalling information during listening

sections and find it challenging to learn without a transcript. This interrupts the students from hearing and focusing on the task Hamouda (2013).

The sixth difficulty was the audio factors based on the results of interview, the students face some difficulties in this scenario they struggled with listening comprehension due to unclear audio, fast-paced playback, and inadequate speaker pauses. According to Hamouda (2013) in essence, audio-visual media-based learning aims to overcome students' time and space constraints, improve student motivation for learning, and make learning materials easier to convey.

The final difficulty came from interviews where there were serious issues with the physical environments. They found it difficult to focus because of the surrounding noise and that the issue was made worse by subpar cassettes or disks. Bloomfield et al. (2011) assert that audio transmission distortion or noise impairs listeners' ability to understand what they are hearing.

## **D. Conclusion and Suggestion**

### **1. Conclusion**

The researchers discovered that there were difficulties with students' listening comprehension based on the findings. Firstly, *unfamiliar vocabulary* in the listening materials made it hard for some students to understand the content. Secondly, *Unfamiliar topics in linguistics* such as reduced form and idioms. Thirdly, *unable to concentrate* when the teacher presented the lesson for too long. Fourthly, *students' anxiety*, students tend to lost focus because of anxiety. Fifthly, *the audiences' factors*, students have difficulty in learning listening without a transcript and have trouble recalling the words. Sixthly, *The audio factors*, due to unclear audio, fast-paced playback, and insufficient pauses by speakers. Lastly, *physical environments* were generally conducive, noise interference in classroom.

### **2. Suggestion**

From this research, the following suggestions from the researchers are offered in the hopes that they would be helpful:

#### **a. Suggestion for English Teachers**

Teachers must be aware of students encounter difficulties with listening comprehension. Thus, the teacher is capable of resolving the difficulties they face. For instance, by imparting

on them suitable listening comprehension techniques. Then, when teaching listening to students, teachers might be able to create an environment that would inspire them to listen.

b. Suggestion for the Students

Knowing the difficulties. The researchers hopes the students can improve their listening comprehension. It would have been easier if students knew how to deal with and solve the issues they would face.

c. The Futher Research

The researchers expected that other researchers would be able to use the findings of this study to enhance their current related research. There are many limitations in this study. Therefore, it hopes the next researcher could analyze in a large sample for questionnaires and interviews with multiple questions.

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