

## PERSPECTIVES OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS TOWARDS LISTENING SKILL

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### Abstract

Listening ability can be interpreted as the ability to understand information when the activity takes place. However, according to students who have studied English for several years, listening is considered one of the most difficult skills for them. This study aims to learn about students' difficulties with listening activities, their perceptions of their ability to listen, and contributing factors to their ability to listen well. After that, a questionnaire and a set of listening tests were given out. The challenges, main factors that prevent students from listening, and learning experiences were investigated using both quantitative and qualitative data. This study's findings revealed that students' listening skills were lacking because they were still unable to finish the fundamental listening skills test. Also, the majority of them thought that the classes in listening were hard for them because they had trouble with certain teaching and learning activities. The students knew about the significance of the listening activities, but they still required assistance from the lecturer and other students for the activities for instruction and learning. In conclusion, being able to listen well remained a challenge during the first semester of the 2022/23 academic year at the English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu Lampung.

**Keywords:** *Students' Perspectives, Listening Skill, English Department*

### INTRODUCTION

Listening ability can be interpreted as the ability to understand information when the activity takes place. However, according to students who have studied English for several years, listening is considered one of the most difficult skills for them. A lecturer's ability to instruct students in listening is crucial. A

lecturer should be able to teach listening in a way that meets the curriculum's goals. A speaker ought to do different sorts of procedures to expand understudies' accomplishment in tuning in. So, the showing listening process in the study hall ought to be founded on fitting techniques, methods, methodologies and methodology. According to Vandergrift (2002), listening is a complex and active interpretation

processes in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. Listening is an active process in which people connect what they hear with other information they already know. Understanding a speaker's accent, grammatical usage, pronunciation, and meaning are all aspects of this ability.

Listening exercises don't just need the students' capacity in dominating fundamental language information and knowing different issues, however they additionally need to get ready listening procedures to assist them in sorting out certain issues that they with willing face during the time spent tuning in, for instance; Students may employ a strategy that can assist them in completing certain listening tasks that are related to their listening comprehension skill when they experience difficulty doing so. One of the important factors in students' ability to improve their listening comprehension is their listening practice. They need to practice a lot to get better at it, especially when it comes to understanding monologues or dialogues spoken by speakers. Ordinarily, the understudies get troubles when they are in that. They claim that the speaker's style of communication leads them into a lot of confusion, even though the instructor has listened to the audio twice or three times.

The language student who incapable to handle data rapidly can be an unpleasant action to figure out what is said (Goh and Taib, 2006). When the method used to teach listening is inappropriate, it can be especially challenging. Some lecturers only give students the materials and ask questions to test their knowledge. They do not provide a more in-depth explanation about how to effectively comprehend the information. The fact that it is merely a student test As a result, the concept to utilize the laboratory emerged.

For some students ESL or EFL, listening is what they feel generally baffled with. On the one hand, they have trouble controlling their speech and decoding sounds that aren't in their mother tongue. Diminished English sounds or lazy speech and constrictions are the models. Other than that, they habitually have issues of understanding because of an absence of jargon in any event, when they hear sounds accurately. The trouble of translation was brought about by English shoptalk

The students have a good listening skill, which means they are able to transfer information from written or oral communication or comprehend it during listening activities. It has to do with being able to comprehend, communicate, and respond to native speaker speech. Nation and Jonathan (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) assert that learning a new language involves listening. Among the most essential abilities for language learners to master is listening, which has a direct connection to the communication process. Students who are good at listening are the ones who will succeed. According to Harmer (English & Edition, 2008) students can benefit from listening to facilitate effective communication. The students' successful communicative competence is correlated with their excellent listening skills. According to Flowerdew (Wolvin, n.d.), listening is the most common form of daily communication (40%), after that, speaking (35%), reading (16%), and writing (9%). To put it another way, communication won't work as well if people don't listen well.

Listeners must enrich themselves with fundamental language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, among other aspects of the language, in order to have good English listening skills. Buck (Buck, n.d.) identifies two types of knowledge utilized in listening; knowledge of both linguistics

and non-linguistics Students' comprehension of phonology, syntax, lexis, semantics, and discourse structure is influenced by their linguistics knowledge of listening comprehension. The knowledge of topic, context, and general knowledge constitute the non-linguistics knowledge. Since listening is a difficult process that requires students to put their knowledge into action in order for them to achieve their listening goals, both of them are absolutely necessary for the act of understanding auditory information. Listeners' ability to absorb information will be hampered if they are unfamiliar with the words used in a monologue or conversation. This is especially true for English language learners, who typically lack extensive vocabulary knowledge and will have significant trouble conveying the information.. The students' listening activities, for instance, can also be impacted by having a solid understanding of word structure; Recognizing the tense of the sentences may make it easier in order for the students to determine the time sequences of the oral information they heard. The learners' ability to correctly pronounce each and every word is another factor that could affect their ability to listen is the fact that pronouncing words, phrases, and sentences is an activity that cannot be separated from the communication process.. Because of they studied online when they were in senior high school. This indicates that they lose interest in listening. Therefore, in order to assist them in listening activities, the students must continue to improve their fundamental language skills.

According (Ghaderpanahi, 2012), a number of factors, including the volume, speed, intonation, listening strategies, and pronunciation of native speakers, can lead students into confusion during listening activities. Then, Buck (Buck, n.d.) also stated that the construction of a listening comprehension test must take into account a few aspects; the discourse's structure,

phonology, accents, prosodic characteristics, speech rate, and hesitation. Put another way,, listeners will deal with those parts during the listening comprehension process. Learners must also expand their general knowledge of current issues, history, scientific research, and other topics due to the fact that the main information that is presented will be influenced by the goals of each communication process. Examples of these goals include: When a student is familiar with a topic or has read about it before the teacher presents it to the class, she typically has an easier time understanding the material than other students. It occurs because someone's prior knowledge may affect their listening comprehension. As a result, students need to keep updating and improving their general knowledge in order to benefit from listening activities that use some form of application to improve listening.

Not only do listening activities necessitate students' mastery of fundamental language skills and knowledge of a variety of topics, but they also require them to prepare strategies for listening to assist them in identifying some issues they may encounter while listening, such as Students may employ a strategy that can assist them in completing certain listening tasks that are related to their listening comprehension skill when they encounter difficulties. In this instance, the students can take notes using a method to note important parts of the audio. of some conversation on YouTube, a podcast, singing a song, or simple dialog. After that, they can use their notes to answer all of the questions. Students can also use strategies to assist them from the bottom up or the top down understand the material. Before beginning the listening activities, using the bottom up approach, students can use their prior knowledge of a topic covered in the audio to help them understand it. The top down strategy allows students to begin listening activities

by listening to specific audio information and making connections between it and their prior knowledge.

In the words of Hsueh-Jui (*ARECLS*, 2008, Vol.5, 84-104., 2008) states that students' listening strategies, styles, and proficiency levels are significantly related. In a nutshell, students should be able to use listening techniques activities involving listening. Nevertheless, each of those points won't really help if you don't practice. One of the important factors in students' ability to improve their listening comprehension is their listening practice. They need to put in a lot of practice to get better at it, especially when it comes to understanding monologues or dialogues spoken by native speakers. When that happens, students frequently encounter difficulties. Even after the lecture audio has been played two or three times, they assert that the speaker's communication style leads them into a myriad of connotations. It is one of the reasons why students have trouble listening. In point of fact, it is not a big issue; They simply lack familiarity with native speakers' communication styles. To put it succinctly, students must practice their listening skills because they must face language learning experiences to make improvements their ability to listen. The lecturer and the students should then collaborate in this step. Students' success in completing listening activities will also be influenced by the lectures' roles in the class's teaching and learning activities.

Lecture can make some efforts, like presenting and running engaging activities for the class to listen to. English language instruction must be able to supply students by listening intently classes that help them overcome all listening challenges. In-person observation, students rarely participate in listening practice during lectures in some universities. While the students learn how to improve their reading, writing, and

speaking skills, they struggle more with listening due to a lack of exposure. In this instance, lectures in the classroom are responsible for providing students with a variety of activities, resources, and information that will assist them in improving their other skills as well as their listening abilities. From the time they were in elementary school to senior high school, the students had received training. Unfortunately, many English Language Classrooms continue to hear from students about their difficulties with listening.

Since listening is the first skill that people acquire when communicating, it is a significant cycle which plays crucial part in the everyday movement. The researcher chose listening ability for this study because of this.

## **METHOD**

The descriptive qualitative research framework was used in this study as the research method. The challenges, main factors that prevent students from listening, and learning experiences were investigated using both quantitative and qualitative data. From listening, a set-listening test was adapted basic levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as from Zootopia, which contains multiple-choice questions on simple words, basic vocabulary, and note-taking skills for simple information like names, dates, and days. This study can examine the basic listening skills of first-year English Department students at the Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu Lampung thanks to the test's design. Because the information could not be represented individually by the test data, a questionnaire was created after the initial test data had been collected to gather additional information about the students' skills. The facilities, possible factors from the outside and a learning strategy were the information to be gathered with this tool. The purpose of the data was to connect with the outcome and look into

any pertinent data regarding the research participant's skill. The study looked at students' first semester listening skills at the English Department at the Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu – Lampung.

The first semester served as the setting for the study at the English Department of the Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu - Lampung, with 31 students. The test will take place in December 2022, beginning in the first week of September. The listening test and evaluation of the results took place in the first and second weeks. A questionnaire was distributed in week three to obtain additional information regarding the conclusion of the test. In the most recent week, open-ended questions took precedence. The sample was chosen using purposeful sampling. Gay (Scott & Usher, n.d.), it is one way to select a sample that the researcher believes to represent a specific group of people.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the listening test and questionnaire, as previously stated,

was to collect data on; the first semester's perspective on students' listening skills at the English Department of the Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu - Lampung. Activities for listening, their perspective on the subject, and influential factors that influence their ability to listen are the obstacles.

### *The Challenges of Students' Listening Activities*

Even though the students had been studying English for a number of years when they were in elementary to senior high school, they still encountered difficulties with listening activities. Based on the basic listening exam that the students took, the test showed that the students had trouble to finish it. The majority of students were unable to successfully complete some basic information on the test, particularly when it came to taking notes about names, dates, simple vocabularies, and comprehending simple conversation from a native speaker. This revealed the students' weaknesses. The chart below shows the percentage of students who are proficient:

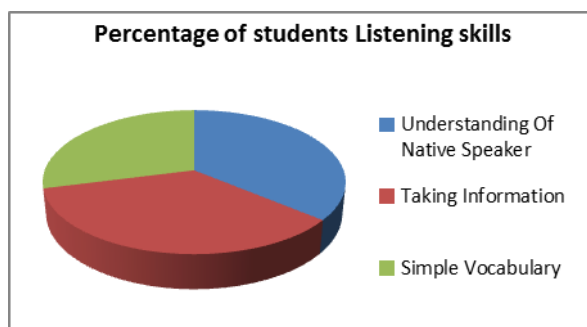


Figure 1: Percentage of Students' Listening Skills

According to the chart above, students had a difficult time taking notes based on the audio materials they were required to listen to. It was obvious that all they were asked to do was fill in information about numbers, word spelling, and vocabulary in context, comprehension

of what the native speaker said, and audio information.

Only 36% of students passed the test with sufficient knowledge of appropriate simple vocabulary. Although it is the highest, it only represents a small fraction of percentage of students, or less

than half, who struggled to complete the tasks. It appeared as though the students were having difficulty mastering simple vocabulary.

The students incorrectly wrote a lot of the appropriate vocabulary portion. In this instance, vocabulary mastery remained one of the students' obstacles that needed to be overcome in order to help them overcome additional obstacles activities involving listening. The students also had to write down some of the numbers spoken by the recorder's speakers, and only 35% of them were able to complete the test. This finding is also surprising because many students still had trouble transferring the information they heard into written text. In point of fact, students who have been studying English from elementary school through senior high school for approximately six to nine years should no longer find this issue to be a challenge. Sadly, the data illustrate the students' poor numbers transfer abilities from simple vocabulary-focused audio materials. Last but not least, the students' ability to correctly spell words from the audio materials appeared to be their most significant obstacle. It was in the lowest level, and only 29 percent of the students were successful. The students had already learned how to pronounce the alphabets of English when they began by learning English, so this finding demonstrated that they did not have very good spelling skills. This is a fundamental issue that must be resolved in order to improve students' English proficiency, particularly in listening. To put it another way, the data presented above made it abundantly clear that, as a result of their difficulties completing some fundamental listening tasks, the students faced significant difficulties in listening. It could be

interpreted that when students have to complete more advanced listening comprehension tests, they will face more challenges.

The researcher looked into more details about the students' perspectives on their listening skills after identifying some obstacles they faced. Based on their language learning experiences, the students were expected to discuss listening activities. The results were looked at to see if there was a significant factor that contributed to the students' success with their listening skills.

### *Perspectives of Students on the Subject of Listening*

The researchers gave out a few questionnaires to the students at the English Department of the Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu - Lampung to learn more about their perspectives on listening skills for the first semester. After taking the listening test, the students completed the questionnaires. A few statements were made in order to learn more about the perspectives of the students on the listening topic. They were developed based on certain phenomena that are frequently discussed in listening classes.

The students must respond to one to five score ranges to convey their perspectives on the subject of the listening. A particular meaning will be assigned to each number, such as "1" for a strong disagreement, "2" for a weak disagreement, "3" for a lack of emotion, "4" for an agreement, and "5" for an agreement that is strongly agreed with. The table below displays the students' responses to the statements:

**Table 1.** The Learning Experiences of Students in Listening Classes

No	Statement	Score Range
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	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. The audio is hard to understand.	3	6	17	3	2
2. The monotonous activities in listening class make it not very interesting.	4	12	3	9	3
3. I find it hard to listen in class.	11	13	3	2	2
4. I get anxious when I have to participate in class listening activities.	7	7	12	3	2
5. Reading, speaking, and writing activities in the classroom are easier than listening activities.	8	6	13	2	2

The students' responses to the first question suggest that the majority of them did not encounter any particularly significant issues with the audio they typically follow along with their activities related to listening. It clarifies that qualified educational technology has been provided to the students to facilitate instruction and learning. Then, 12 students out of 31 claimed that their classroom listening activities were monotonous, which affected their interest in the activities for education and learning. In addition, the majority of students still found the listening class activities to be challenging. However, even if some

unanticipated events cannot be avoided, the students can still enjoy their listening classes. Because they gave favorable responses to five statements that were posed to them, the researcher came to the conclusion that, as a whole, the majority of students had positive perspectives and listening class experiences. Because they still had issues during the activities for teaching and learning, they believed that the listening classes were difficult for them. For example, they were nervous about starting the activities and worried about whether or not they could understand what was being said.



***Factors Influencing the Students' Listening Success***

In order to learn more about the factors that influence the students' listening activities, eight statements were



presented. There were two categories of statements: Students' listening strategies

and activities may have been influenced by a variety of potential factors.

**Table 2.** The Listening Skills of Students Are Influenced by Several Factors.

No	Statement	Range of Score				
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	I struggle with my ability to listen because I rarely practice it.	3	1	6	3	2
2.	My ability to comprehend listening activities is affected by my lack of vocabulary mastery.	4	1	3	9	3
3.	For me, listening to audio has a very rapid speech rate.	1	3	1	2	2
4.	The speaker has a very difficult accent.	7	1	8	2	2
5.	I have trouble understanding the speaker's words, phrases, and sentences because of the way they are pronounced.	8	6	1	2	2
6.	Facilities for listening are poor.	4	2	5	9	
7.	I can successfully complete my listening activities with the help of my grammar knowledge.	6	1	4	5	5
8.	The class's listening materials are interesting.	9	1	9	2	1

The students' difficulties with listening were influenced by five factors, as shown in the table above: lack of practice, inadequate vocabulary mastery, comprehension of the accent and pronunciation of native speakers, and uninteresting learning materials. However, they were able to identify some challenges in listening activities thanks to their comprehension of English structure and the excellent listening class facilities. English teachers must be capable of identifying the students' difficulties with listening activities in this instance.

Additionally, some statements were addressed to investigate the students' listening strategies. It was expected of the students to discuss the significance of employing certain strategies during listening activities and to list some of the strategies they use. The three main findings of this study are as follows: More than a quarter of students had difficulty listening to numbers, according to simple vocabulary, spelling, and numbers. Despite having extensive English education experience; in the classroom where English is taught, this insignificant issue

appears to be overlooked. This aspect was not the subject of any additional investigation; however, a number of other

responses point to specific driving factors in some way. In the meantime, spelling was an issue for less than a third of the students. Even though this isn't a big problem, it's interesting that most of the students didn't know how to differentiate between the letters i, e, a, j, and g. When they were asked to spell the English alphabet, they all did it right, but when it was put into words, it didn't work right. Because there was no other factor that was associated with high scores on the questionnaire, the findings suggest that this was brought on by a lack of practice. The spelling section strongly suggests that the practices of listening classes in this province may not pay a lot of attention to spelling, and that the recent intensive and complex curriculum has ignored simple aspects of teaching listening skills.

This data suggests that half of other than number n spelling, the students practiced individually, despite the fact that they did little practice with numbers and spelling. This data indicated a less



structured material arrangement in listening. It is essential to re-evaluate the curriculum of any educational establishment with regard to this listening skill as separate subject. Tests of skill diagnosis or initial placement are the primary means of establishing additional listening that meets the requirements and capabilities of students. Since Covid-19 was last used two years ago, the participants in this study came from a variety of Pringsewu districts and schools. As a result, their backgrounds had an impact on their scores. However, the accessibility of this data is not the focus of this study, so there is no data on how this difference exists.

In point of fact, a strong argument can be made that students do not perceive the language lab and other facilities as their primary obstacle. The main points of this discussion are that, based on the responses, students' perspectives on listening play a major role in their difficulty developing good listening skills. Even though facilities and assistance are provided during the learning process, this finding should prompt educators to investigate their students' perspectives on the subject first. Then, in order to help students succeed in learning to listen, a syllabus that is tailored to their needs should be developed and modified.

## CONCLUSION

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Some inferences can be made from the students' perspectives and the findings discussed regarding listening skill during the first semester at the English department at the Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu - Lampung: Due to difficulties in completing basic listening comprehension tests and comprehension-related note-taking activities of Native Speaker (36%), simple vocabulary (29%), and Taking Information From the Audio (35%), the students continued to encounter difficulties in listening activities. Despite the fact that listening class is difficult for students, they remain learn well and have a positive outlook. Audio and video learning materials of high quality had been provided to the students.

The lecture can then instruct them in a variety of interesting ways or strategies for mastering listening skills, making the teaching and learning activities fascinating. To put it another way, the students enjoyed their listening class because it offered a variety of lecture-based learning opportunities. However, there are additional influences on the students' capacity for listening: a lack of practice and a poor understanding of basic vocabulary, a comprehension of the accent and pronunciation of native speakers, and uninteresting learning materials.

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