

Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Developing English Listening Skills: A Case Study of SMA 3 Yogyakarta

Haris Dibdyaningsih¹ Mesrawati Rifai², S. Sumihatul Ummah MS³

STKIP AL Hikmah Surabaya⁽¹⁾

IAI DDI Polewali Mandar ⁽²⁾

IAIN Madura ⁽³⁾

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62872/k3d5gd27>

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the difficulties faced by 11th grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta in developing English listening skills. Listening skills are an important aspect of English language learning, especially in the context of globalization. However, students often face various challenges, such as limited vocabulary, grammatical understanding, poor audio quality, and environmental distractions, which hinder their abilities. This research used a case study approach with qualitative methods, involving 30 students selected by purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The results showed that 70% of students had difficulties in vocabulary, 60% in grammar, 50% were affected by audio quality, and 65% faced anxiety while listening. Most students preferred interactive digital media, such as video and audio, which helped reduce anxiety and improve their comprehension. Technology integration in learning was identified as a potential solution to overcome such difficulties and increase students' learning motivation.

Keywords: Learning Media; Listening Skills; Student Difficulties

Copyright (c) 2024 Haris Dibdyaningsih¹✉ Mesrawati Rifai², S. Sumihatul Ummah MS³.

✉ Corresponding author : Haris Dibdyaningsih

Email Address : harisdibyaningsih@gmail.com

Received August 4, 2024, Accepted October 10, 2024 Published October 27, 2024

Introduction

Listening skills are a crucial component of English language learning, as they enable students to understand and interact effectively in everyday communication. In the context of globalization, where English is often used as a lingua franca, these skills are becoming increasingly important for various aspects of life, including education, employment and social interaction (Iriance, 2018). Listening skills are a crucial component of English language learning, as they enable students to understand and interact effectively in everyday communication. In the context of globalization, where English is often used as a lingua franca, these skills are becoming increasingly important for various aspects of life, including education, employment and social interaction (Qowimah, 2022). Despite this, many students face various challenges when learning listening. One of the main challenges is their limited vocabulary, which makes it difficult for them to understand the meaning of what they hear (Muliana, 2020). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students often get stuck in confusion when listening to conversations or learning materials

Inadequate mastery of grammar can hinder students' ability to analyze the structure of the sentences they listen to (Visakha, 2019). This shows that understanding grammar is not only important for speaking and writing, but also for understanding nuances in oral communication. External factors, such as poor audio quality or environmental distractions, contribute to the difficulties students experience, which can worsen their learning experience (Tambunsaribu & Galingging, 2021). Anxiety and lack of confidence when listening to English material is often a significant barrier, especially when



Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

students feel pressured to understand the material quickly (Fadhilah, 2022). This creates a cycle where stress can interfere with their ability to focus and absorb information.

In this context, research by Sadeghi and Ebrahimi (2020) found that EFL students have difficulty in understanding different language nuances and accents, indicating the need for teaching that focuses on the cultural context. In addition, Zhang (2021) emphasizes that the use of digital learning tools can significantly improve students' listening skills, highlighting the importance of innovation in teaching methods. Research by Alharbi (2022) also shows that anxiety and motivation play an important role in students' listening ability, which further underscores the need for approaches that support a positive learning environment.

In this study, the problem formulation focuses on identifying specific difficulties experienced by students in listening skills. The purpose of this study is to analyze students' difficulties as well as the factors that affect their listening skills. By understanding these challenges, it is hoped that more effective strategies can be identified to help students overcome difficulties in developing their listening skills. The use of appropriate learning media, both digital and traditional, is an important variable that affects the effectiveness of listening learning, because students' preferences for certain types of media can vary (Melati, 2024). In addition, students' cultural background and native language can affect the way they understand accents and intonation in English, thus requiring a more inclusive approach to teaching. In this context, it is important to not only identify difficulties, but also explore the relationship between listening ability and other skills, such as speaking and reading. With a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, it is hoped that more appropriate and innovative solutions can be found to support students in overcoming difficulties in developing their listening skills as a whole.

Methodology

In the research entitled "Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Developing English Listening Skills," a qualitative research design with a case study approach was used. According to Robert K. Yin (2009), a case study is a series of scientific activities carried out intensively, in detail and in depth on phenomena that occur in the context of life, this research was conducted in the city of Yogyakarta. The subjects of this study were grade XI students in a high school who were learning English as a foreign language. This research selects the sample by purposive sampling, taking into account students who show variations in listening ability, ranging from low to high, to get a more diverse perspective on the difficulties they face. The number of respondents who will be involved in this study is 30 students.

Data will be collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire is designed to identify specific difficulties in listening skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and environmental factors, while the interviews provide an opportunity for students to explain their experiences in more depth. The data collection process will begin with the preparation and drafting of the questionnaire, followed by initial testing to ensure clarity of questions. Afterwards, questionnaires will be distributed to selected students and interviews will be arranged to obtain additional information. The research is scheduled to take place over two months at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta, which is one of the high schools with a good English program

The data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of students' difficulties, while the interviews will be analyzed by thematic analysis to identify the main themes of students' experiences. With this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive insight into students' difficulties in developing English listening skills as well as the influencing factors

Results and Discussion

Result

This study involved 30 grade XI students at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta, with data collection using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. From the questionnaire results, it was revealed that 70% of respondents experienced difficulties related to vocabulary limitations, which indicated that many students did not recognize the words in the listening material presented. This hinders their understanding of the context of the conversation and the information conveyed. In addition, 60% of respondents also indicated that a lack of grammatical understanding was a problem, especially when they were faced with complex sentence structures in listening. Audio quality and environmental distractions also contributed, with 50% of respondents reporting that non-ideal learning conditions worsened their listening experience. The anxiety that comes with listening to English material is another significant factor,

expressed by 65% of respondents who feel pressured to understand the material quickly and effectively. Finally, preferences for learning media varied widely, with 80% of respondents favoring digital media such as videos and interactive audio, which they found more engaging and helpful in understanding the material.

From the results of this study, it can be seen that several interrelated factors affect students' listening skills. This is in line with previous research which explains that limited vocabulary and grammar understanding not only hinder students' ability to digest information, but also increase their anxiety levels when faced with listening tasks (Ulfa & Siti, 2022; Rahayu, 2024). In this context, the use of digital media becomes highly relevant, as 80% of respondents showed greater interest in interactive and engaging learning formats. Digital media, such as video and audio, not only provide visual context that aids comprehension, but can also increase students' motivation to actively engage in learning (Anggreani & Mandarani., 2023). In addition, environmental factors, such as poor audio quality, are also a major concern, as they can break students' focus and worsen their learning experience. By understanding these challenges, it is important for educators to design more effective and adaptive learning strategies, so that students can overcome difficulties in developing their listening skills. This also creates opportunities for teachers to integrate technology in teaching, which can help overcome some of the obstacles students face during the learning process

Discussion

Level of Material Understanding and the Effect of Environmental Accommodation in Listening Learning

Many students have difficulty in understanding listening material due to their limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge. When listening, students need to recognize and understand spoken words as well as sentence structures used in different contexts. If their vocabulary is limited, they will find it difficult to capture the meaning of what they are listening to, which can lead to confusion and frustration (Syafitri et.al., 2023). In addition, a lack of understanding of grammar can hinder students' ability to interpret the overall meaning. This is especially true when they are faced with complex phrases or expressions, which often appear in more challenging listening materials. Therefore, it is important for educators to strengthen students' mastery of vocabulary and grammar so that they can more effectively understand listening materials

The quality of the learning environment, including audio quality, plays an important role in students' listening skills (Robah & Anggrisia, 2023). When the sound presented is unclear or interrupted by surrounding noise, students will find it difficult to focus and understand the material being listened to. For example, background noise or poor audio can result in missing important information, so students cannot capture the essence of what is heard. These distractions not only interfere with concentration, but can also increase students' anxiety levels, further hindering the learning process. Therefore, creating a conducive learning environment, using quality audio equipment and minimal distractions, is very important to support students' listening skills (Sujarwo & Akhiruddin, 2020). By paying attention to aspects of environmental accommodation, it is hoped that students can more easily understand listening material and improve their overall English skills.

By paying attention to these two aspects, it is hoped that students can improve their understanding of listening materials, so that they can communicate more effectively in the language they are learning. This is not only important for academic success, but also for life skills in an increasingly connected world.

Anxiety and Motivation

Anxiety and motivation are crucial factors in developing English listening skills, especially in the context of the SMA 3 Yogyakarta Case Study. Based on the analysis of student difficulties at the school, the anxiety experienced by students is often triggered by a lack of confidence in understanding vocabulary, native accents, and speaking speed. This has an impact on concentration problems that make it difficult for students to capture important information from the material presented. This condition exacerbates the obstacles in developing their listening skills.

On the other hand, students' motivation also affects their learning outcomes. Many highly motivated students, whether due to academic or professional goals, strive to improve their listening skills. However, the high level of anxiety among these SMA 3 Yogyakarta students may weaken the

positive effects of such motivation. Thus, while motivation is a driver to continue learning, excessive anxiety can hinder the learning process (Karakus, 2019). It is important for the school to not only focus on increasing motivation, but also provide support to reduce students' anxiety in facing the challenge of listening to English materials.

The Effect of Using Learning Media on Pre-Reading and Listening Skills by Considering Differences in Student Learning Styles

The use of digital media, such as video and audio, has a significant role in improving students' listening skills, especially in the SMA 3 Yogyakarta Case Study. Based on the analysis of the difficulties faced by students, digital media helps them to be exposed to more authentic English communication situations, such as listening to native speakers with various accents and intonations. Students who utilize videos can get additional visual support, making it easier for them to understand the context, while the use of audio allows students to focus more on the sound without visual distractions. Students' preference for this type of media is also a factor that affects the effectiveness of learning (Asi & Fauzi, 2023). Some students at SMA 3 Yogyakarta prefer videos because of the combination of images and sound, while others feel more comfortable with audio alone. Using media that suits each student's preferences will help overcome their difficulties in developing listening skills.

In addition, the relationship between pre-reading and listening skills is also seen in the case of SMA 3 Yogyakarta students. Students who have good reading skills tend to be better prepared in listening because they are familiar with vocabulary and sentence structure. However, not all students who are strong in reading automatically excel in listening, especially since listening requires the ability to understand information in real-time, including the accent and intonation of diverse native speakers. Therefore, it is important to integrate pre-reading and listening learning so that students can understand English materials thoroughly.

In addition, the different learning styles of students at SMA 3 Yogyakarta, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, also affect how they develop their listening skills. Students with visual learning styles are more helped by visual elements such as text or images that support audio material, while auditory students are more comfortable with learning that is entirely sound-based, such as recordings or podcasts. Kinesthetic students need a more interactive approach, such as role-playing or conversation simulation, to get them more actively involved in the listening learning process. By understanding these learning style differences, teachers at SMA 3 Yogyakarta can design appropriate strategies to overcome students' difficulties in listening, so that they can develop these abilities optimally.

The Relationship Between Learning Strategies and Prior Experience in Listening and its Impact on Speaking Skills

The relationship between learning strategies applied in listening learning and students' previous experiences is very important to understand, especially in the context of analyzing students' difficulties in developing English listening skills, as was done in the case study at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta. Effective learning strategies, such as the use of interactive media, context-based teaching, and varied listening exercises, can help students build a strong foundation in listening skills (Yuniastuti et.al., 2021). At SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta, students who are familiar with supportive approaches, such as listening to audio with a specific cultural context or participation in group discussions, will feel more confident and motivated in learning. These positive experiences then contribute to the development of speaking skills, as students who understand various sentence structures and vocabulary in listening will be better equipped to express themselves fluently when speaking. Conversely, if the learning strategies applied are less effective or monotonous, students may experience repeated difficulties in listening, which can cause frustration and reduce their motivation to learn (Sinulingga, 2020). This creates a negative cycle where a lack of ability in listening hinders the development of speaking skills, which ultimately impacts overall communication skills.

In the context of research at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta, students' previous experiences in listening learning play a major role in shaping the way they respond to strategies used by teachers. Students who have positive background experiences in listening, such as engaging in challenging but fun activities, will be more open to trying new strategies introduced by the teacher (Utomo et.al., 2019). They tend to feel more prepared to face challenges in listening and will try harder in speaking practice.

On the other hand, students who have experienced difficulties without adequate support may feel skeptical of the new strategies offered. These bad experiences may lead to higher anxiety when listening, which in turn affects their desire to speak in English. Therefore, it is important for educators in such high schools to pay attention to students' previous experiences and adjust learning strategies to be more inclusive and supportive.

The impact of this relationship, as observed in this study, is not only seen in technical ability, but also in the psychological aspects of students. When students at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta feel successful in learning listening thanks to the strategies implemented, they will feel more confident in their speaking ability. This confidence is essential to reduce the anxiety that students often experience when speaking in English. Conversely, if students find listening difficult, they may avoid opportunities to speak, which can hinder the development of their language skills. By providing effective learning strategies, teachers can help students overcome existing difficulties and build the confidence needed to speak. This also shows the importance of creating a positive learning environment at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta, where students feel comfortable to practice listening and speaking without fear of making mistakes.

Overall, the relationship between learning strategies, previous experience in listening, and speaking skills is very complex and interrelated, especially in the context of analyzing student difficulties at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta. It is important for educators in this school to design and implement learning strategies that not only focus on mastering listening skills, but also pay attention to their impact on students' speaking skills. By understanding students' backgrounds and experiences, teachers can create more effective approaches that support the simultaneous development of these two skills. In addition, the integration of technology and interactive media in learning strategies can increase student engagement, so they are more motivated to learn. Thus, a holistic and integrated approach to teaching at SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta can create ideal conditions for students to develop their English skills as a whole.

Cultural and Language Background

Cultural background and mother tongue play an important role in Analyzing Students' Difficulties in Developing English Listening Skills: A Case Study of SMA 3 Yogyakarta. Based on the findings of this case study, students at SMA 3 Yogyakarta who generally use a mother tongue other than English often face obstacles in understanding listening materials. One of the main challenges faced is their inability to capture the cultural nuances inherent in English conversations, such as idioms, cultural expressions, and humor that are foreign to them. This ignorance of cultural context can reduce students' comprehension, as language and culture are closely intertwined in communication.

The difference in phonology between mother tongue and English is also a barrier for students in listening. Students who come from a mother tongue background with grammatical structures and intonation that are much different from English have difficulty recognizing certain sounds in English. For example, some sounds in English may not exist in students' mother tongue, so they tend to have difficulty distinguishing similar sounds or understanding words that are spoken quickly. This can be seen from the results of observations at SMA 3 Yogyakarta, where students often complain about difficulties in capturing the pronunciation of certain words or phrases in listening materials involving native speakers.

However, there are also students whose native language has some similarities with English, such as similar vocabulary or grammatical structures. These students tend to have an easier time understanding listening material because they are more familiar with similar language patterns. Thus, it is important for educators at SMA 3 Yogyakarta to be aware of the influence of cultural background and mother tongue in listening learning. Teachers need to provide additional materials that introduce students to cultural contexts and English phonology that are different from their background, as well as provide intensive practice to improve their ability to recognize language sounds and nuances that are not found in their native language (Dewi & Widyaningrum, 2018). This step can help students overcome the difficulties they face in developing English listening skills.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the difficulties of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta in English listening are mainly caused by limited vocabulary (70%), grammar comprehension (60%), audio quality and environmental distractions (50%), and anxiety while listening (65%). Most students felt

pressured to understand the material quickly, which further deteriorated their abilities. However, 80% of students showed a preference for interactive digital media, such as video and audio, which helped them better understand the material and reduce anxiety. Therefore, the integration of technology in learning can be an effective solution to improve students' listening skills and learning motivation.

References

- Anggreani, V., & Mandarani, V. (2023). Student's Response to the Google Classroom Application in Learning English of Junior High School Students. *Indonesian Journal of Education Methods Development*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijemd.v21i.716>
- Asi, N., & Fauzi, I. (2023). Pengembangan eBook Bergambar Cerita Rakyat Berbahasa Inggris untuk Mendukung Pembelajaran Teks Naratif Berbasis Kearifan Lokal. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 12(1), 61-81.
- Dewi, N. M., & Widyaningrum, L. (2018). Pendampingan Penguatan Literasi Bahasa Inggris Anak melalui "Multiple Stories-Reading". *Dimas: Jurnal Pemikiran Agama untuk Pemberdayaan*, 18(1), 143-158.
- Fadhilah, I. (2022). Faktor Kecemasan Siswa Dalam Berbicara Bahasa Inggris pada Mahasiswa Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education*, 2(1), 96-105. <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v2i1.248>
- Iriance, I. (2018, October). Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa lingua franca dan posisi kemampuan Bahasa Inggris masyarakat Indonesia diantara anggota MEA. In *Prosiding Industrial Research workshop and national seminar (Vol. 9, pp. 776-783)*.
- Karakus Taysi, E. (2019). The Effect of Listening Attitude and Listening Anxiety on Listening Comprehension: A Regression Model. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(2), 356-364. [10.13189/ujer.2019.070207](https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.070207)
- Melati, E. (2024). Analisis Efektifitas Penggunaan Media Digital Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran (JRPP)*, 7(3), 7080-7087. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v7i3.29469>
- Muliana, I. N. (2020). Mengatasi kesulitan dalam berbahasa inggris. *Linguistic Community Services Journal*, 1(2), 56-63. <https://doi.org/10.55637/licosjournal.1.2.2659.56-63>
- Qowimah, N. (2022). Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Siswa Melalui Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif Untuk Tingkat Pemula Di Desa Inggris Singosari Malang. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Sastra, Lingua, Dan Pembelajarannya (Salinga)*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.33503/salinga.v2i1.2246>
- Rahayu, A. P. (2024). The Teachers' Effective English Listening Comprehension Strategies for Senior High School Students. *Journal of Nusantara Education*, 3(2), 48-59. <https://doi.org/10.57176/jn.v3i2.96>
- Robah, A., & Anggrisia, N. F. (2023). Exploring challenges and strategies in English speaking among Indonesian university students: A case study of AKM university. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 11(1), 55-74. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v11i1.19156>
- Sinulingga, J. B. (2020). Meningkatkan Penguasaan Vocabularies Siswa Melalui Lagu-Lagu Bahasa Inggris Di Kelas VIII-2 Smp Negeri 2 Mardinding Semester Ganjil Tahun Pelajaran 2015/2016. *ELT (English Language Teaching Prima Journal)*, 2(2), 24-59.
- Sujarwo, S., & Akhiruddin, A. (2020). Pendampingan Pembelajaran Ekstrakurikuler Bahasa Inggris Siswa Dalam Menghadapi Revolusi Industri 4.0 Pada Sekolah Dasar Inpres Gowa. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat MEMBANGUN NEGERI*, 4(2), 55-65.
- Syafitri, N., Amiruddin, E. P., & Vinalia, T. (2023). An Analysis Of Factors Causing Anxiety In Speaking English At Smp Negeri 2 Baubau. *English Education Journal*, 126-134.
- Tambunsaribu, G., & Galingging, Y. (2021). Masalah yang dihadapi pelajar bahasa Inggris dalam memahami pelajaran bahasa Inggris. *Jurnal Dialetika*, 8(1), 30-41.
- Ulfa Lifa Bahri, & Siti Ismahani. (2022). An Analysis of Students Difficulties in Listening Comprehension at Senior High School. *ENGGANG: Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Budaya*, 3(1), 268-272. <https://doi.org/10.37304/enggang.v3i1.10192>
- Utomo, S., Kusmaryati, S. E., & Sulistyowati, T. (2019). The challenges and difficulties in teaching listening: An exploratory research in a junior high school in Kudus. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 14(1), 27-38.
- Visakha, J. A. (2019). Pengaruh Penguasaan Kosakata dan Tata Bahasa Terhadap Kemampuan Menulis

Teks Deskriptif Bahasa Inggris. *INFERENCE: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 68-79. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/inference.v2i1.5420>

Yuniastuti, S. H., Miftakhuddin, S. P., Khoiron, M., Fakhri, A., & Cetak, T. T. (2021). *Media Pembelajaran Untuk Generasi Milenial*.