

English Foreign Language (EFL) Students' Listening Strategies and The Challenges in The Digital Era

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Abstract

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When studying a language, listening comprehension helps students comprehend a range of spoken texts, from formal speeches to casual conversations. Students who have good listening skills are able to understand key details, determine the main points of the message, and correctly interpret meaning. The teacher's ability to plan the listening exercise aids the students in developing their listening skills. Understanding students' habits when learning to listen is the first step toward a successful teaching career. This research explains the application that was used, the listening tactics employed by the EFL students, and the challenges they had when completing the application. Eighty-two new students in the English Language Teaching Department (ELTD) comprise the research population, and 15 students were interviewed randomly. This study uses qualitative research methods. The information was gathered from observation and interviews. Coding, example-taking, and description were used to analyze the data findings. The findings indicate that when learning to listen, EFL students are more likely to employ metacognitive strategies than cognitive or socio-affective strategies. Students use YouTube, Twitter, Joox, TOEFL, Spotify, Podcasts, Dou Linggo, BBC Learning, Instagram, Praat, Google Translate, Tune In, and Pronunciation in Use as applications for learning to listen. Students face challenges when using applications due to internal factors (students and listeners) as well as external factors (Internet bandwidth and speakers). This finding should aid teachers in creating a listening lesson plan that takes into account the needs and personalities of their students.

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INTRODUCTION

diverse linguistic backgrounds engage in communication. The English language holds significant communication. Overcoming this hurdle global influence due to its status as an international necessitates exposure to a variety of accents language, facilitating communication among through extensive listening practice. For instance, people worldwide. This enables the sharing of students enrolled in the English Language information across borders, yet differences in Teaching Department at IAIN Syekh Nurjati accents can lead to misunderstandings. Such Cirebon are specifically trained in listening skills to challenges often arise when individuals from comprehend various accents encountered in global

communication. In the process of learning listening English, students practice their listening both on campus and outside campus. Moreover, the students have their media and techniques to improve their listening skills.

Listening is a crucial skill in communication, serving to provide individuals with information before they respond. Its significance extends to the speaking process, as effective communication relies heavily on listening ability. According to Rost (2011), listening is a vital aspect of language processing, implying that students may struggle in interactions without strong listening comprehension. Barker (2010) stated that listening was the deliberate act of focusing attention on hearing, comprehending, and retaining auditory cues. This indicates that listening is a selective process that involves information retention and comprehension. Listening comprehension is also a fundamental component of spoken language; without it, spoken language cannot exist (Rost, 2011).

Furthermore, Brown (2001) argued that listening is a two-way process. It involves more than just hearing audio signals in one way. When individuals need to grasp information accurately, conversations are likely to encounter disruptions due to misunderstandings. These misunderstandings often stem from how listeners interpret the information they receive from speakers. This means that listening is a complex skill that considers some aspects of achieving comprehension of information.

The numerous listening styles available to learners offer a range of characteristics that can facilitate the exploration of various listening tactics. This means that students can pick how they want to enjoy the listening process by having a better awareness of the types of listening.

According to Rost (2011), there are six different kinds of listening: responsive, extensive, interactive, selective, intense, and autonomous.

Listening intensively is to perceive the constituents of a broader linguistic domain, such as words, phonemes, intonation, discourse producers, etc.

Listening selectively involves analyzing brief monologues or other conversation segments in order to look for specific information. Interactive

listening covers students' active engagement, and it's typically combined with speaking and possibly other abilities. The goal of extensive listening is to

acquire a top-down, comprehensive grasp of spoken language. Long lectures and listening are examples of extensive performance. eavesdropping

on a discussion and drawing out the main point or message. Extensive listening includes hearing the core idea, the gist, and concluding. Responsive

listening is responding to brief language segments by listening intently and providing a brief answer. Autonomous hearing encompasses all of the

previously stated listening styles, including responsive, interactive, extensive, selective, and intensive listening. It is defined as independent

listening done without the direct supervision of an instructor. However, Kline (1996) emphasizes that there are five different forms of hearing. They are

relationship-building, critical, discriminating, grateful, and instructive.

In today's digital age, students have access to a plethora of listening materials to enhance their comprehension skills. How students understand

these materials is closely tied to their listening strategies. The internet offers a wide array of resources such as audio clips, videos, movies, and

songs, all readily available for download and playback at the students' convenience. According to Ma'fiyah et al. (2021), virtual learning is one of

the appropriate media for teaching listening. The

research from Asmar and Ardi (2013) mentions that by using application software, listening media producers can produce engaging and challenging content for their students' listening classes.

Furthermore, utilizing audio-visual materials can enhance listening course outcomes and increase student motivation and enthusiasm during lectures (Hardiah, 2019). Despite the abundance of these resources, some students may need to be made aware of their availability and ease of access online. Conversely, others are familiar with platforms like YouTube and Google as sources for listening materials. However, some students need help learning from these sources. These challenges have prompted researchers to investigate EFL students' listening strategies, their application in listening, and the obstacles they face in comprehending listening materials sourced from the internet.

METHOD

The research design used in this study is the descriptive qualitative approach. According to Ary et al. (2010), qualitative research works best with data that are expressed in words as opposed to numbers and statistics. Sugiyono (2014) stated that a qualitative study is utilized to investigate the state of the natural object; the researcher serves as a crucial tool in this process, and data collection is done through triangulation (combined) techniques. Inductive and qualitative data analysis is employed, and the findings of the study highlight the significance rather than making generalizations. Qualitative data are gathered via words or images without numbers (Fraenkel, 2012). The researcher used literature, the internet, and students to gather data for this study. The researcher obtains a wealth of knowledge and a few theories on listening techniques from such data

sources. In addition, the researcher gathers information from primary and secondary sources in two different ways. The main sources of data include observation, interviews, and document analysis. On the other hand, secondary data refers to information gathered that bolsters the researcher's hypothesis in relation to the study question.

The researcher employs four methods, including study documents and interviews, to gather data. Interviews were conducted to get information on respondents' presumptions and points of view as well as any extra information that participants might have to provide. A document analysis was conducted to ascertain the kinds of tactics that students employed. The researcher employed the observation checklist to conduct observations. Additionally, the researcher observed what the teacher and students did in class. Subsequently, the author typed the recorded data transcript. The researcher used interviews so the writer could obtain data from the students. Interviews are defined by Sugiyono (2014) as a meeting between two individuals with the purpose of exchanging ideas and information through questions and replies in order to develop meaning around a specific issue. Studying documents is the final method. A document is an account of past occurrences. The use of study documents in qualitative research is an adjunct to the methods of observation and interviews. The examination of the document in this study relates to the listening tactics and challenges posed by first-year English Department IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon students.

Data analysis is fundamental to the data collection process, and it is not only a response to the logic of the data collection. It started with a review of all the information that was gathered from different sources, including key informant

interviews, field observations that were documented in files, and study documentation results (Moleong, 2019). In this study, the data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed by the researcher using coding, example-taking, and description. The code "St" was utilized by the researcher to identify the students. Following data analysis, a sample is used to illustrate the process of gathering data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. EFL Students' Listening Strategies

The students must control their learning style, methodology, and techniques to ensure that their listening comprehension is intelligent, appropriate, and consistent with their character. It is not easy to plan a schedule for language acquisition, particularly listening, because students have many responsibilities in their daily lives, including attending classes, completing assignments, and participating in extracurricular activities, all of which have an impact on their ability to learn listening. For first-year English Language Teaching Department (ELTD) students with a plethora of extracurricular and on-campus activities, it occurs. Additionally, as they are new, they must acquaint themselves with a different learning environment than their prior school. It is crucial to record students' backgrounds and their approach to learning listening skills, as this has a significant influence on how listening is taught and learned. ELTD IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon's new students use a variety of listening tactics to learn listening skills, according to data gathered by the researcher. The students at ELTD employ the following listening strategies:

a. Cognitive Strategy (CS)

The study discovered that ELTD IAIN Syekh Nurajati Cirebon's new students come from a variety of educational institutions, including SMA, MA, and SMK. Their prior knowledge helps them apply listening techniques in the listening section of the classroom. English language learners from senior high schools in the state say that they have extensive experience with listening. Students from private schools experience the reverse. They contend that because their school lacks the necessary facilities for listening practice, they hardly ever engage in listening activities in class.

Furthermore, according to the students, they begin studying English in elementary school and continue through senior high school. Their ability to comprehend information from audio has been impacted by their varied English language acquisition initiation points. Senior high school students who are learning listening skills report that they frequently utilize CS before listening to the audio.

St. 5: "I study presumption of listening topic and content beginning in senior high school when the teacher asks me to select the conversation's topic."

Students with prior knowledge of computer science are exemplified by the statement above. This implies that the students have an opportunity to speculate on the subject matter or content of the audio. Students who comprehend this method have a great chance to absorb all of the information that comes from the listening process. Furthermore, they do not take their time this time around in order to extract the most pertinent information from the audio by taking note of the key terms. Additionally, the process of selecting the listening task's topic and substance can stimulate their specific listening skills no matter

where they are. Additionally, because they have some knowledge based on what they have heard, students who are proficient in guessing the information's substance feel more confident while they work on the job.

Students who are supported by certain factors can employ cognitive techniques to complete the listening assignment. The two types of factors are external and internal. The internal factor is the students' enthusiasm to participate in the entire listening activity process and their want to practice the method that they acquired in their daily rehearsal. Rehearsal is an essential component of mastering English, and it cannot be separated from learning other abilities. On the other hand, teachers and the environment are external factors that influence students' listening habits. The teacher's role in teaching listening has a significant impact on the student's comprehension of the technique for approaching listening tasks. The environment is another aspect that influences students' listening habits. Students who can be inspired to learn to listen are occasionally inspired by relatives or friends.

b. Metacognitive Strategy (MS)

The metacognitive method (MS) provides flexibility in the process of extracting information from audio. The metacognitive technique includes listening exercises that are relevant to learning in general and benefit students in the long run (Wilson, 2008). It is evident that the broad information found in the listening source is the main emphasis of this method. The relevance of language acquisition, particularly listening, enables students to regulate their own time while learning a language. Students who listen well can gain from utilizing Microsoft, as it can become a regular part of their day. Students can study

according to the resources they find interesting or necessary to develop their listening abilities.

Furthermore, MS will not will have a limited impact because it prepares kids for listening activities through familiar media. When the students practice a lot, they will get the benefits. While students encounter words or phrases that they have already heard, the effect of MS becomes apparent.

The aforementioned requirement helps the students quickly grasp the overall meaning of the listening resources they have selected. In addition, the students can take pleasure in the listening process as they know they will understand every detail that is presented. Students will seek out intriguing sources when they find listening to be enjoyable, and this will encourage them to practice using new sources whenever and wherever they are regularly. This behavior will benefit the students much in terms of speaking and listening comprehension. These abilities are inseparable since each plays a unique part in learning the English language. It indicates that the students have mastered the pronunciation of words or phrases based on the input from the listening part. When students practice regularly and in a medium amount, they can say that they are using MS to improve their listening skills. The researcher learns that new ELTD students at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon utilize music, films, and serial films as a means of honing their listening skills. Students can develop their listening skills by practicing through such mediums.

St. 3: "I watch films at home to improve my listening skills because they help me pronounce words correctly and build my vocabulary."

St. 7: "I can find the lyrics and practice singing the song by listening to the music. My speaking and listening abilities can be strengthened."

The student's response above demonstrates how they use MS to hone their listening comprehension. Some students practice listening to watching films and listening to music on the computer. They claim that by listening to the movie's soundtrack, viewers can improve their listening skills because the dialogue in the film provides precise examples of how to pronounce various words and phrases. Students have the opportunity to learn a new language that they may need help with, such as how to pronounce it by mimicking the audio that they are listening to. It is conceivable for newly learned vocabulary to reappear in different sources. Students find it easier to comprehend the audio's general content when that occurs. Furthermore, some students believe that music has a significant role in enhancing their listening comprehension. This is in line with Sukmawati (2018), who discovered that students' opinions of listening to English audio applications were favorable and that it was successful in enhancing their listening abilities.

c. Socio-Affective Strategy (SAS)

The information that the other person communicates should be understandable to students who wish to interact with others. Since students must manage the information before they can answer appropriately, listening skills are necessary for the understanding process. The communication process—which involves both giving and receiving information—is an illustration of how SAS is used in listening. According to Habte-Gabr (2006), SAS takes place in natural settings outside of the classroom. It encourages students to improve their listening skills by building a rapport of empathy between the teacher and the students. The strategies employed by listeners to gauge knowledge, lower

anxiety, or engage in interpersonal communication are identified as the SAS (Vandergrift, 2003).

The above statement provides an illustration of the SAS function within the listening learning process, occurring organically without any specific arrangement or setting. It is hoped that students will adopt this strategy as it can enhance both their listening and speaking abilities. Upon examining the listening strategies employed by new students of ELTD at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, the researcher discovered that SAS is rarely utilized in their efforts to enhance their listening skills.

St 12: "I rarely engage in conversations related to the information I acquire from audio sources because I mainly focus on practicing pronunciation alone. Occasionally, I desire to share the information I've gathered, but I lack friends who are committed to engaging in such discussions."

The data provided indicates that many students need to consistently engage in the SAS approach to improve their listening skills, a challenge also encountered by some ELTD students. This tendency arises because some new students prioritize practicing pronunciation over engaging in conversations about the topics or contents of the information they encounter. While they recognize the contextual relevance of conversation practice, they need help finding suitable time due to their numerous activities. Additionally, even when they have partners for conversation practice, some need more commitment to establish a regular schedule for enhancing their listening skills. Furthermore, varying hobbies contribute to the effectiveness of SAS in listening; not all students enjoy listening to music or watching movies or TV series. With diverse genres available, students have different

interests when it comes to practicing listening skills. Indeed, SAS provides engaging activities for students as they involve interaction with others to communicate. This strategy does not require listeners to possess the same information; instead, they can share or retell what they have heard as a way to practice SAS.

St 15: "Yes, I practise the sentences I've learned by talking to people about my opinions. I also use words, phrases, and sentences in my regular chats with classmates to help me remember the material."

The provided data serves as an example of how students incorporate SAS into their daily routines. Some students focus on practicing the pronunciation of words, phrases, and sentences they encounter in listening materials. Through rehearsals like engaging in conversations, they reinforce their memory and comprehension of the information's content. Moreover, students can directly share these linguistic elements with their peers, fostering a positive atmosphere and motivation to utilize SAS in their listening learning, especially among those who initially claimed not to practice this strategy.

Students' readiness to learn listening plays a crucial role in inspiring them to engage in rehearsal after comprehending the content of listening materials. External factors such as family, friends, and environment influence students' motivation levels. When students receive encouragement from their families, they often feel a significant boost in their enthusiasm for learning listening skills. Additionally, when classmates share the same goals of improving their listening abilities, it becomes easier for students to exchange information related to the content of listening sources. Furthermore, the learning environment also plays a vital role in practicing

SAS; when the environment is conducive, students are less likely to lose concentration.

2. Listening Apps in the Digital Age Used by Students

In today's world, it is impossible to overlook the rapid advancements in technology. Numerous manufacturers and tech companies are continuously developing applications that provide a myriad of benefits across different aspects of life. Those residing in the digital era can readily acknowledge the diverse ways in which technology enhances their daily routines. Technology plays a pivotal role in human life by simplifying daily tasks both at home, work, and school. Given its widespread coverage and support across virtually all human activities, it is undeniable that technology greatly assists in facilitating various tasks in daily life. Applications represent a rapidly evolving sector of technology. Almost everyone relies on applications regularly to aid in tasks such as communication, bill payments, and purchases. Applications enable individuals separated by distance to stay connected. This trend also extends to the realm of education.

Technology offers numerous applications for language learners that are both portable and beneficial across various settings. However, it is important to recognize that while applications can be invaluable tools, they cannot replace the role of a teacher in the teaching-learning process. Instead, their purpose is to assist instructors in managing the class, materials, and rehearsal processes and assessing students' language-learning proficiency. Applications for listening are easily accessible, as students do not solely depend on the teacher's explanations in the classroom. This allows learners to practice listening skills outside of class. They have the freedom to choose applications that

align with their needs, preferences, and learning styles. For example, students who are fond of movies can opt for applications that provide movies, while those who enjoy music can download music applications.

Based on the data collected for this study, students utilize a variety of applications to enhance their English language acquisition. Some applications focus on enhancing specific English skills, while others are more generalized and cater to all four language skills. The applications mentioned by the students include:

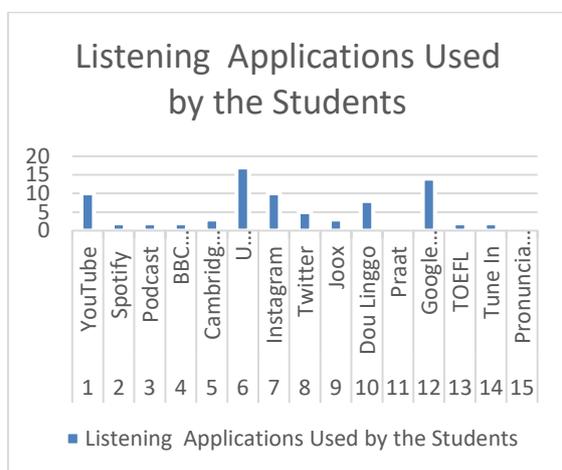


Figure 1: Listening Applications Used by the Students

Students have downloaded these apps onto their smartphones from the Play Store, customizing them to suit their individual learning needs. Those who enjoy watching films or listening to music on YouTube find that these activities can significantly improve their English skills.

St 10: "I use YouTube to expand my vocabulary, learn the pronunciation of native speakers, and understand intonation."

St 3: "I installed YouTube to learn pronunciation and accents, and the best part is its portability, allowing me to use it anytime and anywhere."

The provided information highlights how the application offers convenient access based on the available time. Students find it advantageous

to study, review, and practice their English at home due to time constraints at school. Moreover, both applications aid students in comprehending a native speaker's accent. Furthermore, students can replay the content if they need help understanding it. It was also claimed by Zhang (2021), who emphasized how using English learning apps can assist teachers in modifying their pedagogical approaches while also boosting student enthusiasm and confidence in speaking and listening in the language.

3. Students' Challenge in Using Listening Application

Applications play a crucial role in bolstering students' language development, particularly in listening skills. Nevertheless, students may need help in applying what they learn. Some of these challenges are closely linked to their immediate surroundings. The environment, the message, the speakers, and the students themselves pose challenges. Internally, students may struggle due to factors such as preparation, past experiences, and familiarity with terminology.

St. 11: "I find it hard to understand the important information in the application when there are a lot of unfamiliar words, so I feel lazy to listen."

The student's response indicates that while they recognize the value of the app, they sometimes face challenges due to unfamiliarity with new vocabulary terms used within it. This situation can lead students to perceive using the application as difficult, potentially resulting in them either quitting or uninstalling the program. This finding, in line with Trisno (2019) and Tersta (2017), draws attention to the difficulties that students encounter when developing their sub-listening abilities, including comprehending accents and unfamiliar vocabulary. Another obstacle arises from the speed at which native

speakers deliver their message. It is widely known that native speakers often speak quickly and may forget to adjust their pace for the listener. This can make it challenging for students to understand the material. Furthermore, if the content of the message is unfamiliar to the students, it can make them feel uncomfortable using the application.

The final challenge for students in applying applications stems from the environment. The condition of the environment can significantly impact the learning process.

St 2: "Lack of motivation from family, noisy surroundings, and limited internet bandwidth."

The provided information underscores the importance of family support in students' language acquisition through smartphone applications. Moreover, students living near busy roads often need help to maintain focus as the noise of passing cars disrupts their concentration while trying to absorb crucial information from the application. Additionally, the effectiveness of using an application at home is heavily reliant on the quality of the internet connection. Bandwidth limitations frequently lead to significant issues, as the application may not function properly without sufficient internet access.

CONCLUSION

The development of students' listening skills greatly relies on the utilization of effective listening techniques. With proper instruction in listening skills, students may be able to recall their previous actions or the tasks they engaged in during the listening process. The findings of the research enable the investigator to make significant conclusions regarding children's listening strategies and the challenges posed by the digital age. To facilitate listening skill development, new ELTD students at IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon employ various listening tactics,

including cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective techniques. Among these, the metacognitive strategy is the most frequently utilized by students when learning a language. This preference stems from students' enjoyment of watching movies and TV series and listening to music. Regular implementation of this method in their daily lives proves beneficial for students.

The students' learning strategy is closely intertwined with the plethora of applications available in this digital era. They utilize various applications to aid them in learning listening skills. These include YouTube, Spotify, Podcasts, BBC Learning, Cambridge Dictionary, U Dictionary, Instagram, Twitter, Joox, Dou Linggo, Praat, Google Translate, TOEFL, TuneIn, and Pronunciation in Use. These applications are instrumental in facilitating the practice of metacognitive strategies among students.

Students often encounter challenges when using applications, which can be attributed to both internal and external factors. Internally, students may need help with self-management or preparing the application. Externally, challenges arise from factors such as the quality of speakers, the content of the message, the setting, and the reliability of internet bandwidth.

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