

Learners' Difficulties and Strategies in Listening English Audio on Eighth Grade Students at SMP 1 Koba

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out listening difficulties most faced by students in listening English and listening strategies most used by students in listening English at eighth grade of SMPN 1 Koba in academic year 2023/2024. The samples of this study were students of class VIII, totaling 185 students. Researcher used descriptive quantitative methods to find students' difficulties and strategies by giving questionnaire and interview. There are 2 questionnaires used in this research: listening difficulties and listening strategy questionnaire. Also, the researcher interviewed 5 students for support the questionnaire data. The findings of this research showed that the most difficulties faced by students was environment (84%) The next difficulty most faced by students was bad recording (80%) and the last problem most faced by students was anxiety (79%). Meanwhile based on this research the most listening strategy used by students was cognitive (78%) and socio affective (78%), And the last metacognitive strategy (68%). From the conclusion above, teachers are recommended to introduce unfamiliar words as a warm-up before practice, allow students to listen to the audio multiple times, choose audio with topics that match the students' level and interests, and ensure the classroom is quiet during listening activities.



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Introduction

Since 2014 in Indonesia, students have started learning English at the junior high school level. Learning English provides opportunities for students to communicate with other people around the world from different cultural backgrounds so that students can gain more knowledge and learn various skills. Learning English at this level focuses on strengthening spoken English and strengthening written language skills so that students can discuss and convey wishes/feelings using English (Ministry of Education 2022.).

For mastering English, people have able to master 4 skills of language namely speaking, listening, reading and writing. One of important skills in English is listening. Listening is an essential component of learning, especially in the process of acquiring a new language (Wilson 2013).

Because listening is an input skill (Dede Purwanto 2021), it will help to develop understanding, increase vocabulary, improve pronunciation and accent, and gain exposure to different types of spoken English. Having good listening skills helps students improve their understanding and comprehension of spoken language. Rost stated in Kurita that the capacity to use listening as a tool for learning makes a significant distinction between more and less successful learners (Kurita 2012).

According to Rost, listening is a skill that made someone comprehend oral communication (Rost 2013). In daily life people always use oral communication to communicate with other else. Listening allows people to receive the information from the oral communication (Orouji 2020). In another word, listening is one of the essential skills which have to be mastered by students thus they can use English well.

Although listening is an important skill in learning English, it's complicated to comprehend by students. As Hamouda told that understanding vocal expression is challenging for learners (Hamouda 2013). Because it needs more attention and concentration to comprehend the material (Ismail 2022). If students lack concentration while listening to something, they will pass the information. Moreover, English pronunciation

is not consistent (A. Hamouda 2013) (Sa'diyah 2016). English is a complex language with many accent and variations in pronunciation. Additionally, English pronunciation is influenced by factors such as native language, regional differences, and cultural background. For example, Kumalasari stated that pronouncing a word in Indonesian is very different from pronouncing a word in English it will make it difficult for students if they rarely practice their listening skill (Kumalasari 2018). Furthermore, Background noise and other distractions can make it difficult to concentrate. This difficulty is exacerbated by textbooks and teachers who do not seem to pay attention to these skills when designing their lessons. evidenced by schools and colleges placing greater emphasis on English grammar, reading, and vocabulary. According to Brownell, language teachers believe that students automatically acquire listening skills when they learn to speak a language, which is one of the reasons why listening is considered a skill that tends to be neglected. These factors really affect students' listening skill (Brownell 2010).

Based on preliminary studies that have been conducted by researchers at SMP N 1 Koba, the researcher gave listening test to 7th grade students consist 5th class. The researcher took 5th students for every class as sample so totally there are 25th students tested be measured. The test and the audio adopted from English for Nusantara. The test consists 11 multiple choice and 9 fills in the blank. The audio also adopted from English for Nusantara. The audio type used for the test is dialogue with the topics about me, culinary and me, my school activity and this is my school.

Based on the test can concluded that students' listening ability scores ranged from 35 to 80 with the average score is 54. After the student test results were calculated using Excel with the average formula, there were 13 students whose test scores were below the average. That means more than half of the students who took the test scored below the average.

Besides that, at SMPN 1 Koba learning English is not only focused on one skill and teachers also use more Indonesian when explaining the material. The infrequency of students practicing their listening skills allows them to experience more difficulties in understanding information when listening to oral communication in English. Otherwise, the teacher isn't using the lab when teaching listening. This will affect students' listening practice because there will be noise around students, which can interfere with students' hearing when practicing listening.

There have been several studies regarding listening difficulties and listening strategies such as these Haloho et al and Purnomowati. In those studies the most difficulties faced by students is fast speech, lack of vocabulary and lack of concentration meanwhile the strategies most used by students is cognitive strategy. Another research conducted by Rodesa Nauli Harianja et al. According to the results of the researchers, the participants experienced problems because the speaker spoke quickly, Students have limited vocabulary which affects overall understanding of the message, and lacked consecration. For overcoming the problem teacher use strategies such as making the situation in the class quiet, identifying the unpopular vocabulary for students and the teachers push the students to become more comfortable in an English-speaking environment. If teachers intend to enhance learners' listening competence, they must learn about the learners' difficulties first. This study aims to learn students listening difficulties and how students' way for overcoming the difficulties thus the research can be a reference for teachers who want to overcome their students' problems in listening.

Method

The aims of this study are for describe students' problem in comprehend listening in English and the students' strategy to overcome it. Researcher will use descriptive quantitative method to find students' difficulties and strategies by giving questionnaire and interview to support questionnaire data. Descriptive study attempts systematically to describe a situation, problem and phenomenon. Arikunto also emphasized that descriptive approach is not to test a particular hypothesis but to describe a variable (Arikunto 2012).

Population is the overall score of the individuals whose characteristics are to be studied and these units are called units of analysis, and can be people, institutions or objects (Sahir 2022). In this study, the population are all of students SMPN 1 Koba consist 711 students which is 189 students of seventh grade, 242 eighth grade and 214 ninth grade.

The sample is the group or single element from which data are obtained and defined sample as representative of that population (Joseph Erba 2018). This study used random sampling. The researcher interviewed a student from every class of eighth grade and gave questionnaire to all students of eighth grade SMPN 1 Koba. Consist:

No	Class	Total Students
1.	VIII A	36
2.	VIII B	38
3.	VIII C	38
4.	VIII D	39
5.	VIII E	38

To collect this research data, researcher used 2 kinds of instruments, namely questionnaire and interview. This study used closed-ended questionnaire with Likert scale. The Likert scale has four or more question items combined to form a score/value representing individual characteristics, such as knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (Joshi 2015) In this study the researcher will use 4 question items with the following information:

Answer	Score
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

The questionnaire used to find listening difficulties faced by students and students' strategy for overcoming the difficulties. The questionnaire about listening difficulties adopted by Pika Purwati 2021, Windamayanti, Haryanto and Munir 2022. and Erza Muhammad Ikhsan and Syofianis Ismail 2022 Meanwhile, the questionnaire about students' strategy adopted by Yanti Ratna Purnomowati 2016 and Lim Kenny Arvando 2020. Based on the validity and reliability test, then the research questionnaire becomes:

Aspect	Indicator	Item Number
Listening Difficulties	Length of Speech	1,2 and 3
	Speed of Speech	4, 5 and 6
	Bad Recording	7
	Environment	8
	Lack Vocabulary	9,10, 11, 12 and 13
	Unfamiliar Topic	14
	Motivation	15
	Anxiety	16 and 17
Listening Strategies	Metacognitive	18,19,20 and 21
	Cognitive	22,23 and 24
	Socio affective	24, 25 and 26

Besides that, the Researcher have conducted interviews with students to get more information for supporting questionnaire data. According to Creswell in interview, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with the participants, telephone interviews, or engage in focus group interviews with six to eight people being interviewed in each group. On this research, the researcher used semi structured interview and interviewed five students which consist a student in each class.

According to Ibrahim, data analysis is the process of performing certain calculations and evaluations to extract relevant information from data, the purpose of which is to summarize and organize the collected data to answer questions (Ibrahim 2015). In this research, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyzed questionnaire data and used data reduction, data display and conclusion to analyzed interview data.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is a type of statistical analysis intends to describe the characteristics of a sample or population (Arikunto 2012). Descriptive statistics is a field of statistics that studies methods of collecting, compiling, summarizing, describing, and presenting data in an easy-to-read form to provide information that is more complete in a study (Parampreet Kaur 2018). Descriptive statistics used by researcher for analysed data from students' questionnaire answers. The scores from the questionnaire results were calculated using the percentage statistics formula as follows (Kamelta 2013):

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Note:

P= Value of the proportion of respondents' answers

F = Respondent's answer frequency

N = Number of respondents

The score interpretation criteria are obtained based on the intervals, the formula:

$$I = 100 / \text{Total Score (Likert)}$$

= 100:4

= 25

The interpretation criteria are as follows:

Answer	Score
Strongly Agree	75% -100%
Agree	50% -74,99%
Disagree	25% -49,99%
Strongly Disagree	0% -24,99%

Conclusion

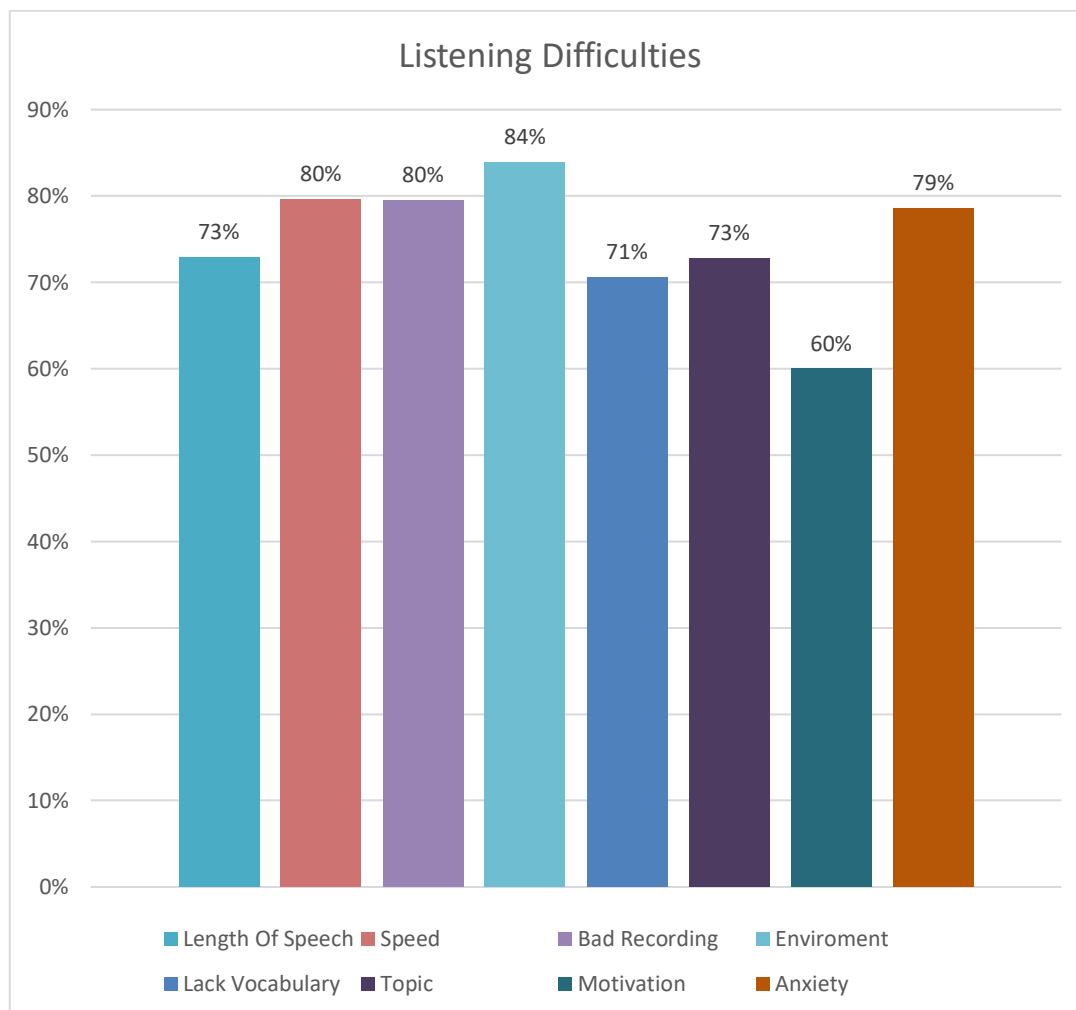
The stage of developing conclusions based on the data verification and results is the final phase. Conclusions must be presented clearly since they represent a new finding that has never been made before and can take the shape of a theory, hypothesis, causal link, or description of an item that was previously still vague or dark. In this research, the researcher concluded from the information or data obtained through questionnaires and interviews and compared the information or data which is the source from previous research.

Results and Discussions

After analyzing each item of both questionnaire and explaining the frequency and percentage of the result. The writer formulated all of kind students' difficulties and strategies in listening English as follows:

1. Listening Difficulties

In this research, the writer analyzed listening difficulties based on Samuels theory. The result of listening difficulties in this research as follows:



From diagram above, it showed that in English listening the most difficulty faced by students is Environment. 84% students strongly agreed that they have difficulty if they listen English in noisy environment. Based on interviews conducted by researchers with students, it was found that students struggled to concentrate and listen well, which affected their ability to comprehend what they were receiving. Its similar with Anderson & Lynch theory one of factor that influencing listening difficulties is the environment in which listening takes place (Lynch 1988).

The second problem most faced by students is bad recording. 80% students strongly agreed they lose concentration if listen bad quality audio. Based on interviews conducted by researchers with students, it was found that students got confused by the speaker's words if heard poor-quality audio thus makes the audio harder to understand. Its similar with Hamouda theory. On the Hamoudas' theory explain that most students believe poor recording quality are the reason for their listening problems. For example, the audio may have been taken when nearby sounds were present. Poor-quality equipment might provide unclear noises that can also affect the listener's understanding (A. Hamouda 2013).

The third difficulty most faced by students is Anxiety. 79% students are strongly agreed they have anxious and worried if they don't get the point of conversation. The results obtained from student interviews found that students experienced anxiety in listening if the speaker spoke quickly and there were multiple questions in one audio these made students feel rushed. Its similar with Hamoudas' theory, on his research 41.7% students admit that when they don't comprehend the spoken material, they constantly get anxious and scared (A. Hamouda 2013).

The next difficulty most faced by students is speed of speech. 78% agreed they faced difficulties if the speaker speaks quickly and without pauses. The results obtained from interviews caused students

experienced difficulties because they were unable to recognize the speaker's words clearly. According to them, it is easier if the audio is played back. Blau even observed that slowing down the speech speed is a useful technique for improving understanding in second language learners (Blau 2010).

The fifth problem most faced by students in listening English is unfamiliar topic. 73% students are agreed they have difficulty if the speaker talk about unfamiliar topic. Based on interviews, students experienced difficulties if the topic was unfamiliar to them because they did not have an idea of what was being discussed. It's supported by Samuels who emphasized that the knowledge the listener has about a topic is one important factor that influences listener (Samuels 1984). Also, some research finds out the topic knowledge proved to have a significant impact at all levels (Schmidt-Rinehart 1994) (Latham 1987).

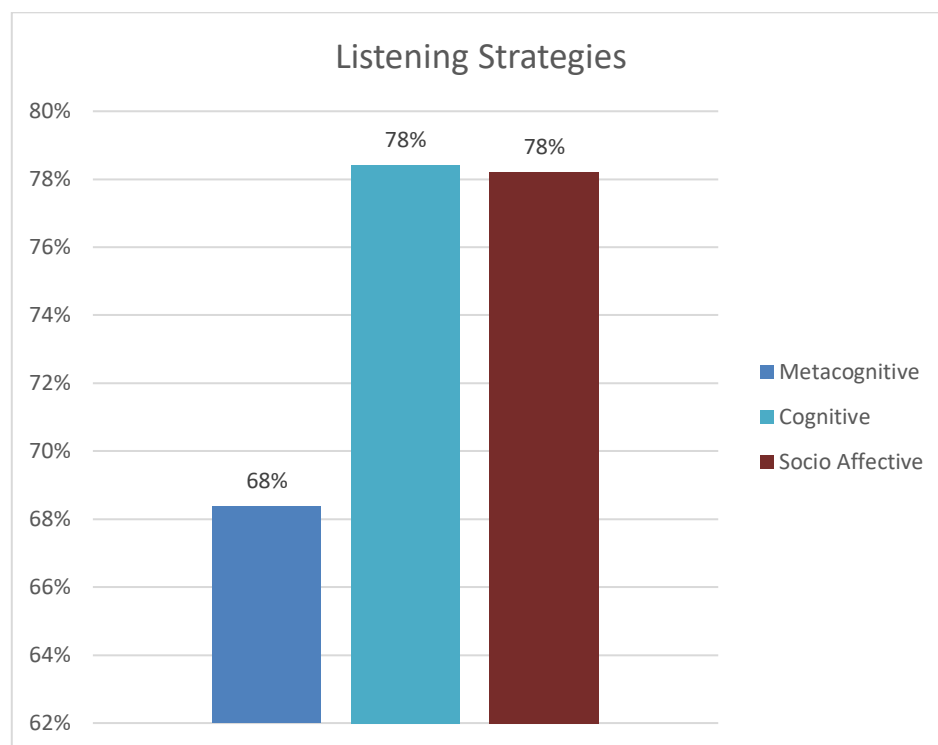
The sixth difficulty most faced by students is length of speech, 72% students are agreed they have difficulty with long audio duration because they are tired to listen, lose focus and don't get the point of conversation. Based on interviews, students experienced difficulties if the audio was in long duration because they had difficulty memorizing the information conveyed by the speaker. Additionally, the long-winded audio caused them to be confused in summarizing the information. It also supports by Carroll as cite by Bingol et al, when listening to a long text, it not be easy to retain all of the material; deep listening skills and comprehension techniques are needed (Bingol 2014).

The next difficulty most faced by students in English listening is lack vocabulary, 71% students are agreed they have difficulty if the audio contain vocabulary they didn't know before because they lose concentration for predict the vocabulary meaning. Based on interviews, students had difficulty if the audio contained unfamiliar vocabulary because they found it difficult to determine the speaker's meaning. Being aware of the word meanings can help learners become more interested in their studies and improve their listening skills. There is also the problem of many words having several meanings, which confuses learners.

The last difficulty most faced by students is motivation, 67% students are agreed they have low motivation in listening English. Based on interviews, among five students One student stated some interest in listening activities, while two felt it was normal, and two didn't like listening exercises. This was because they had trouble understanding what they were hearing and preferred to understand information from the text. Besides that, students only pay attention to information that is related to their interests or passions since it is simpler to comprehend (Anna C.S. Chang 2013). One of the reasons for poor understanding is a lack of motivation, even if the listener has enough knowledge to comprehend the speaker (Samuels 1984).

2. Listening Strategies

In this research, the writer analyzed listening strategy based on Vandergift theory. The result of listening difficulties in this research as follows:



After analyzing the data, the most strategy used by students are cognitive and socio affective. 78% students are agreed they use cognitive strategy such as predict the meaning, write note, and open their dictionary. All students interviewed stated that they used cognitive strategies. One example of a cognitive strategy is writing notes. they write keyword notes so they don't forget important information from the audio. It also supports by Vandergrift and Liu who stated that students who listen to English with only minimal knowledge will miss contextual information and understand terms they are unfamiliar with using cognitive strategies (Vandergrift 2007). Students who used cognitive methods had scores that were greater than other learners (Hidayanti 2016). This finding also supports by Muhammad et al study that found cognitive study is the most strategy used by eight grade students (Muhammad 2013).

In other hand, 78% students are agreed socio affective strategy such as asking their friend and asking for repeat the conversation. Based interview conducted by researcher, students enjoyed ask and discussed with their friends if faced difficulty in listening English. Students stated that it was most helpful when they were having difficulty finding a solution through discussion with their classmates (Inayati 2022). Its supported by Chen, Lee, & Lin that showed socio affective strategy is second strategy most used by students (Purnomowati 2016) (Kate Tzuching Chen 2010). On Christian Albert Lewier and Priska Nendissa study socio affective strategy is the most strategy used by students (Nendissa 2020).

And the last, there are 68% students used metacognitive strategy such as used the general idea of the text to help them guess the meaning of the words that they do not understand. Based on the interview such as comparing their knowledge about the topics discussed with information obtained from audio. This makes it easier for them to understand the information from the audio. This explains why the conversation's topic is so crucial. This result support by Chen, Lee, & Lin study that found metacognitive strategy is the last frequently used by students (Kate Tzuching Chen 2010).

Conclusions

After analyzing data gained from the questionnaire and interview, the writer concluded that there were some difficulties faced by student's environment, length of speech, speed of speech, bad recording, lack vocabulary, unfamiliar topic, motivation and anxiety. Therefore, the most difficulties faced by students was environment (84%), it because that students struggled to concentrate and listen well, which affected their ability to comprehend what they were receiving. A noisy environment made it difficult for students to concentrate so they missed conversations and find it difficult to get information from conversations. The next difficulty most faced by students was bad recording (80%), if the audio had bad quality students have

difficulty for focus on the audio also students got confused by the speaker's words if heard poor-quality audio thus makes the audio harder to understand. And the last problem most faced by students was anxiety (79%). A lot of students felt worried and anxious if they didn't understand the speaker said. Based on interview students experienced anxiety in listening if the speaker spoke quickly and there were multiple questions in one audio these made students feel rushed.

Meanwhile based on this research the most listening strategy used by students were cognitive (78%) and socio affective (78%), students agreed they used cognitive strategy such as predicting, write note, and used dictionary and note book while listen English audio. And students also agreed that they used socio affective strategy such as ask for repeat the audio and cooperate with other friends. Based interview conducted by researcher, students enjoyed ask and discussed with their friends if faced difficulty in listening English. And the last, there are 68% students used metacognitive strategy such as used the general idea of the text to help them guess the meaning of the words that they do not understand. Based on the interview students have used metacognitive strategy such as comparing their knowledge about the topics discussed with information obtained from audio. This makes it easier for them to understand the information from the audio. This explains why the conversation's topic is so crucial.

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