CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION: A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS

M. Arbain
muhammadarbain1973@gmail.com
Islamic University of Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari Banjarmasin

Abstract
This study investigates the listening comprehension challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners and the strategies they employ to overcome these difficulties. Using a mixed-methods approach, both quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews were analyzed. Quantitative findings reveal that the most significant linguistic challenge was understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, while the primary cognitive difficulty was retaining information before the speaker finishes talking. Affective challenges were led by anxiety during exams, and environmental distractions, such as background noise, also hindered comprehension. In contrast, informal language, organizing information, and relying on visual cues were perceived as less problematic. Qualitative data further illuminated individual strategies used by learners, including repeated listening, the use of subtitles and transcripts, prediction, note-taking, and focusing on keywords, tone, and context. Learners emphasized the importance of consistency, selecting enjoyable content, and gradually reducing reliance on translation and subtitles. These findings highlight the complex nature of listening in EFL contexts and underscore the value of learner-driven, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies in building listening proficiency. The study offers practical insights for educators aiming to support listening development in similar language learning environments.
Keywords: challenges, learning strategies, listening comprehension, efl learners

A. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially in non-native contexts like Indonesia. Listening, as a receptive skill, requires not only understanding phonetic sounds but also grasping meaning in real-time, which can be difficult for learners who lack exposure to native speech (Rost, 2020). In fact, Field (2021) posits that listening involves intricate cognitive processing where learners must decode, recognize, and interpret spoken language, often under time constraints. This

complex process is even more challenging for Indonesian EFL learners due to limited access to authentic English listening materials and exposure to various English accents (Siegel, 2021; Graham & Santos, 2022).

Research identifies key factors affecting listening comprehension, including linguistic complexity, cognitive overload, and limited metacognitive strategies (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018). Speaker speed and unfamiliar accents pose major challenges (Cross, 2021), especially for learners used to slower, classroom English. A lack of inferencing, prediction skills (Goh, 2020), limited vocabulary, and difficulty recognizing discourse markers also hinder comprehension (Bloomfield et al., 2019).

To improve EFL listening comprehension, researchers recommend strategies like planning, monitoring, and self-evaluating (Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, 2022). Learners using metacognitive strategies such as reflection and self-monitoring show notable progress (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2021). Cognitive strategies like note-taking and summarizing also aid retention and reduce overload (Rahimi & Katal, 2020).

Despite their effectiveness, these strategies are limited by challenges specific to Indonesian EFL learners. Teacher-centered methods and curriculum constraints reduce focus on listening (Siegel, 2021), while reliance on L1 translation hinders comprehension (Rahimi & Katal, 2021). These issues highlight the need for further research into learners' challenges and strategies.

Thus, the present study seeks to explore the listening comprehension challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners and to identify the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. By examining these factors, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on EFL listening comprehension and offer practical insights for language educators in similar contexts.

B. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology of the study "Challenges and Strategies in Listening Comprehension: A Case Study of Indonesian EFL Learners," focusing on the challenges and strategies learners face. It includes five

sections: research design, participants, data collection, data analysis, and procedure, all based on relevant theories and recent studies for academic rigor.

1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. Case studies offer context-specific insights into learner experiences (Creswell, 2021; Yin, 2021).

Participants

The study involves 50 Indonesian English Language Education students from UNISKA MAB Banjarmasin, selected through purposive sampling to target those with relevant listening comprehension experience (Etikan et al., 2021). Focusing on intermediate and advanced learners provides valuable insights into both common and complex challenges (Siegel, 2021). The sample size ensures in-depth analysis while maintaining feasibility (Dörnyei, 2020).

2. Techniques and Instruments of Data Collection

- Questionnaire

A 40-item questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale, collected data on learners' perceptions of listening challenges and strategies. It covered linguistic, cognitive, affective, contextual factors, strategy use, and learning experience, following best practices in language assessment (Brown, 2021).

The questionnaire was piloted for clarity and reliability, with revisions made based on feedback (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2019). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability, with a score of 0.70 or higher deemed acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2021).

- Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data, allowing flexibility while addressing key topics on listening challenges and strategies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021). This approach provides deeper insights into learners' subjective experiences (Bryman, 2021) and aligns with the questionnaire themes for consistency.

Four participants voluntarily participated in interviews, each lasting 30-40 minutes, conducted in their native language for clarity. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Qualitative data from interviews provide depth and context, complementing the quantitative data with rich insights (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

3. Data Analysis

The study uses a sequential explanatory design, analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to expand on the findings (Creswell, 2021). This approach enhances understanding in mixed-methods research.

- Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency) to summarize responses (Pallant, 2020). Factor analysis identified dimensions of listening challenges and strategies, while correlation analysis explored links between strategy use and comprehension difficulties (Field, 2021; Graham, 2021).

- Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis framework. This revealed recurring themes such as anxiety, vocabulary gaps, and cognitive strategies, offering deeper insights into learners' challenges and strategies, complementing the quantitative findings (Vandergrift & Goh, 2021).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. FINDINGS

a. Listening comprehension challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners.

Table 1 Linguistic Challenges

	Items	Means ($\overline{x}$)	SD
1.	I have difficulty understanding spoken English when the speaker uses unfamiliar vocabulary.	3,36	1,306
2.	Complex grammar structures in spoken English make listening difficult for me.	3,18	1,273
3.	I often miss the meaning when native speakers use phrasal verbs.	3,12	1,350

4.	When the speaker uses idiomatic expressions, I find it hard to follow.	3,10	1,165
5.	I cannot understand fast speech even if I know the words.	3,04	1,324
6.	Different accents (e.g., British, American, Australian) confuse me when listening.	2,96	1,142
7.	I struggle to recognize words I know when they are spoken quickly or reduced.	2,76	1,422
8.	I find it hard to understand connected speech (e.g., linking, contractions).	2,76	1,349
9.	Pronunciation differences between written and spoken English affect my understanding.	2,70	1,529
10.	I have trouble identifying the main idea because of unfamiliar words.	2,60	1,088
11.	My listening comprehension drops when the speaker uses advanced vocabulary.	2,52	1,165
12.	I find it challenging to understand speakers who use informal or slang language.	2,48	1,074
	Total	2.88	

Note. SD=Standard Deviation

The highest challenge was understanding spoken English with unfamiliar vocabulary (Mean = 3.36), while the lowest was understanding informal or slang language (Mean = 2.48), indicating participants found slang less difficult.

Tabel 2 Cognitive Processing Challenges

	Items	Means ($\overline{x}$)	SD
1.	I often forget what I have just heard before the speaker finishes talking.	3,80	1,161
2.	I need more time to process spoken English compared to written English.	3,75	1,152
3.	I lose concentration easily when listening to long spoken texts.	3,64	1,290
4.	I struggle to keep up when speakers talk too quickly.	3,46	1,110
5.	I find it difficult to understand spoken English if the topic changes suddenly.	3,42	1,357
6.	I have trouble understanding a speaker if they do not speak clearly and slowly.	3,26	1,306
7.	I find it hard to listen and take notes at the same time.	3,24	1,255
8.	I get confused when there are too many ideas presented at once.	3,18	1,155
9.	I have difficulty organizing the information I	3,08	1,496

hear while listening.
Total   3.34
Note. SD=Standard Deviation

The most significant cognitive challenge was forgetting what was heard before the speaker finished (Mean = 3.80), while the least challenging was organizing information (Mean = 3.08), indicating it was more manageable.

Tabel 3 Affective and Psychological Factors

	Items	Means (x̄)	SD
1.	I feel nervous when I listen to spoken English, especially in exams or tests.	3,52	1,474
2.	My anxiety increases when I cannot understand every word the speaker says.	3,22	1,502
3.	I lose confidence quickly if I miss part of what the speaker is saying.	3,22	1,456
4.	I feel discouraged when I do not understand listening passages easily.	3,22	1,447
5.	I worry too much about making mistakes while listening.	3,10	1,216
6.	I find it hard to focus on listening tasks because of my fear of failure.	3,10	1,282
7.	I feel less motivated to improve my listening because it feels too difficult.	3,06	1,420
8.	I become frustrated when I cannot ask the speaker to repeat or clarify.	3,06	1,517
9.	I feel embarrassed when I fail to understand spoken English in front of others.	2,98	1,392
10.	I often avoid listening activities because they make me feel uncomfortable or anxious.	2,84	1,267
	Total	3,13	

Note. SD=Standard Deviation

The highest affective challenge was anxiety during listening tasks, especially exams (Mean = 3.52), while the lowest was avoiding activities due to anxiety (Mean = 2.84), indicating anxiety doesn't often lead to avoidance.

Tabel 4 Contextual and Situational Factors

	Items	Means (x̄)	SD
1.	I find it difficult to understand spoken English when there is background noise	3,00	1,309

		Means ($\overline{x}$)	SD
	(e.g., in public places or group settings).		
2.	Poor audio quality (e.g., unclear recordings or low volume) affects my listening comprehension.	2,74	1,242
3.	I understand spoken English better when I can see the speaker's face or body language (e.g., in videos or face-to-face communication).	2,72	1,429
Total		2,82	

Note. SD=Standard Deviation

The most challenging factor was background noise (Mean = 3.00), which hindered comprehension, while relying on visual cues like body language (Mean = 2.72) was helpful but not essential.

Tabel 5 Strategy Use

	Items	Means ($\overline{x}$)	SD
1.	I use listening strategies such as predicting content or focusing on key words to help me understand better.	3,04	1,195
2.	I pause or replay audio when I do not understand something during listening practice.	2,78	1,314
3.	I try to guess the meaning of unknown words from context while listening.	2,70	1,298
4.	I listen to English media (like songs, movies, or podcasts) to improve my listening skills.	2,64	1,241
	Total	2,79	

Note. SD=Standard Deviation

The biggest challenge was listening in noisy environments (Mean = 3.00), while visual cues like body language (Mean = 2.72) were helpful but not crucial for comprehension.

Tabel 6 students learning experience

	Items	Means ($\overline{x}$)	SD
5.	I prepare for listening tasks by reviewing related vocabulary or background information.	3,28	1,341
6.	I reflect on my listening strengths and weaknesses to improve my performance	2,82	1,224

over time.

Total   3,05

Note. SD=Standard Deviation

The highest learning experience was reviewing vocabulary before listening tasks (Mean = 3.28), while the lowest was reflecting on strengths and weaknesses (Mean = 2.82).

b. The strategies EFL students use to overcome their own challenges

Interview Interpretation – Participant A (Ali)

Here are the following semi-structured interview with five different questions:

1. What are some common difficulties you experience when listening to English, and how do you usually try to overcome them?
2. Can you share any specific listening strategies that have helped you understand English better?
3. How do you handle moments during a listening task when you miss or don't understand part of what was said?
4. Do you practice listening outside of class? If yes, what kind of materials do you use and why?
5. What advice would you give other EFL students who want to improve their listening skills, especially when they face difficulties?

The result of interview with Participant A

1. *Sometimes the speakers talk too fast, and I can't keep up. I usually use subtitles when watching videos, and then later I try to watch the same video again without them to see how much I understand. Accents are a big problem for me. I understand American English better, but British or Australian is difficult. I try to listen to different accents on YouTube to train my ears.*
2. *Yes, I try to listen for key words and phrases, especially when I'm taking a test or doing an assignment. It helps me catch the main idea even if I don't understand every word. I learned to predict the topic from the title or the first few sentences. That way, I'm more prepared to catch important details. Also, focusing on intonation helps me understand when something is important or when the speaker is giving an example.*
3. *If I miss something, I don't panic. I keep listening because sometimes the speaker repeats or explains it in another way. I usually take quick notes and mark where I got confused, then go back and replay that part after finishing the task. It helps me learn from my mistakes.*
4. *Yes, I listen to English podcasts about topics I enjoy, like football or travel. They're fun and help me hear how people speak naturally. I watch English movies and series with subtitles. Later, I re-watch without subtitles. It's a good way to enjoy learning and see how language is used in real life.*

5. *Don't be afraid of not understanding everything. Focus on the general idea first, and don't try to translate every word. It's okay to miss some parts.Try to listen to English every day—even just for 10 minutes. Choose topics you like so you stay motivated. And repeat listening—it helps a lot!*

Participant A struggles with fast speech and unfamiliar accents, especially British and Australian. They use subtitles, repeated listening, and focus on keywords and intonation. When they miss something, they stay calm, take notes, and review later. They recommend focusing on the main idea, listening daily, and choosing enjoyable content.

The result of interview with Participant B

1. *For me, the hardest part is when native speakers speak too fast or use informal language. Sometimes they blend words together, and I can't catch anything. I try to slow down the video or use subtitles at first. Then I replay the audio and try to listen without looking at the subtitles.*
2. *One strategy that really works for me is predicting the topic. If I know what the speaker will talk about, I can guess some of the vocabulary and follow along more easily. Also, I try to focus on key words, not every single word, because that helps me not get overwhelmed.*
3. *If I miss something, I don't stop the task. I keep listening and try to guess the meaning from the rest of the sentence. After the task, I go back and replay the difficult parts. I also note down new words or expressions to check later.*
4. *Yes, I listen to English songs and watch short videos on YouTube. I like watching interviews and vlogs because the language is more natural. I also use English learning apps that have listening exercises. These materials help me get used to different accents and speaking speeds.*
5. *Don't try to understand everything. Focus on the main idea first. Use subtitles if you need them, but try to reduce your dependence over time. Be patient and listen regularly—even if it's just a few minutes a day. That really helped me improve.*

Participant B struggles with fast, informal speech and blended words. They use subtitles and slow down videos before replaying without them. Key strategies include predicting topics, focusing on keywords, staying calm, and using context to guess meaning. They recommend focusing on the main idea, using subtitles wisely, and building a daily listening habit with patience.

The result of interview with Participant C

1. *One challenge I often face is when the speaker uses a lot of idioms or informal expressions that I'm not familiar with. Also, when the speaker talks too fast, I get confused. To overcome this, I slow down the audio, and*

I sometimes read the transcript afterward to check what I missed. Subtitles really help me too, especially at the beginning.

2. *A strategy that works for me is focusing on keywords and linking them to the main idea. I don't try to understand every word anymore. Also, I pay attention to the speaker's tone and stress—this helps me know when they are emphasizing something important.*

3. *If I don't understand something, I don't panic. I try to guess from the context or continue listening to get the bigger picture. If it's a recording, I usually go back and replay the part I didn't get. If it's a live situation, I sometimes politely ask the speaker to repeat or explain.*

4. *Yes, I do! I love listening to podcasts—especially ones about health and self-improvement. I also watch English TV shows and YouTube videos with subtitles. These materials are more natural and help me get used to different accents and casual conversations.*

5. *I would say, don't be afraid of making mistakes or not understanding everything at once. Be consistent—listen every day, even if just 10 minutes. Start with easier content and slowly move to more difficult ones. Also, choose topics that interest you; it makes listening more fun and less stressful.*

Participant C struggles with fast speech and idiomatic language. They slow down audio, use subtitles, and focus on keywords and tone to understand the main idea. When unclear, they stay calm, use context, and replay or ask for clarification. They recommend starting with easier content, being consistent, and choosing enjoyable topics to stay motivated.

The result of interview with Participant D

1. *I struggle most when people speak with strong accents or use slang. Also, sometimes I find it hard when they speak very fast. To deal with that, I often use subtitles or slow down the playback speed. If it's a recording, I listen more than once and write down new words.*

2. *One strategy that helps me a lot is trying to predict what the speaker might say next based on the topic. I also focus on tone and stress because that tells me which parts are important. Listening for signal words like "however" or "for example" really helps me follow the structure.*

3. *Usually, I try not to stop listening because I might miss more. I write a quick note or mark the time and then come back to it after the task. I try to guess the meaning from the context, especially if I understand the general idea.*

4. *Yes, I try to listen to English every day. I love watching Netflix shows with English subtitles—it's entertaining and helps me learn how people speak naturally. I also listen to TED Talks and English audiobooks to get used to different speaking styles.*

5. *I would say don't give up. Listening is hard at first, but if you keep practicing, it gets easier. Start with topics you enjoy and use subtitles to*

help you in the beginning. But don't rely on them too long—try to listen without them once you feel more confident.

Participant D struggles with strong accents, slang, and fast speech. They use subtitles, slow playback, and repeat listening. Their strategies include predicting content, focusing on tone, and using context to infer meaning. They recommend staying patient, practicing daily with enjoyable content, and gradually reducing reliance on subtitles.

The result of interview with Participant E

1. *One big challenge for me is when speakers use connected speech or contractions—I can't always recognize the words because they sound different from how they look in writing. To overcome this, I watch videos with subtitles first, and then rewatch without them. I also use transcripts to compare what I heard with what was actually said.*
2. *Yes, I usually try to identify the topic and predict what the speaker might say based on that. Also, I listen for keywords and transition signals like "first," "however," or "in conclusion." These help me organize the information in my mind. Sometimes I also focus on the speaker's tone to catch when they're emphasizing something.*
3. *If I don't understand something, I don't stop the whole task. I keep going and try to guess the missing parts using the context. Afterward, I replay the audio and focus only on the parts I found difficult. I also sometimes take quick notes while listening so I can review later.*
4. *Yes, I like to listen to English-language podcasts about science and health because those topics interest me. I also enjoy watching documentaries on YouTube. I think it's useful because I learn vocabulary while also getting exposed to real spoken English, not just classroom language.*
5. *I would tell them not to be afraid of repetition—listening to the same content more than once really helps. Also, don't get frustrated if you don't understand everything. Focus on the main idea, and try to enjoy the process by choosing content you actually like. I would avoid using translations too much, because it slows down your thinking in English.*

Participant E struggles with connected speech and contractions. They use subtitles, transcripts, and rewatch videos. Their strategies include predicting content, focusing on keywords, and using context to clarify meaning. They recommend embracing repetition, staying focused on the main idea, and minimizing translation use.

2. DISCUSSION

1. Listening comprehension challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners.

Based on Table 1, the biggest challenge reported was understanding spoken English with unfamiliar vocabulary (Mean = 3.36), highlighting the impact of limited vocabulary on comprehension, as supported by Bloomfield et al. (2019). In contrast, understanding informal or slang language was the least challenging (Mean = 2.48), likely due to learners' exposure through media and social interactions (Graham & Santos, 2022). Thus, while complex vocabulary significantly hinders comprehension, slang appears to be more familiar and less problematic.

According to Table 2, the main cognitive challenge was forgetting what was just heard before the speaker finishes (Mean = 3.80), reflecting difficulties with memory and real-time processing. Vandergrift and Goh (2018) link this to speech speed and cognitive overload, while Cross (2021) notes that fast-paced speech can cause cognitive exhaustion, worsening memory retention.

The least challenging cognitive task was organizing information while listening (Mean = 3.08), suggesting participants found it relatively manageable. This may indicate their ability to structure incoming information, consistent with cognitive load theory (Sweller, 2011). With experience, learners likely develop strategies to chunk content and reduce processing demands (Goh, 2020).

Table 3 shows that the top affective challenge was feeling nervous during listening tasks, especially exams (Mean = 3.52), highlighting the impact of performance anxiety on comprehension. Graham, Santos, and Vanderplank (2022) note that test anxiety consumes cognitive resources, while Vandergrift and Goh (2018) add that it can lead to overload, reducing processing efficiency in evaluative settings.

The lowest affective challenge was avoiding listening activities due to anxiety (Mean = 2.84), suggesting that while discomfort exists, it rarely leads to full avoidance. Learners may persist due to motivation or the importance of listening skills. Goh (2020) notes that despite anxiety, many continue engaging thanks to commitment or coping strategies.

Table 4 shows that background noise was the most challenging contextual factor (Mean = 3.00), highlighting its impact on listening comprehension. Noise

competes for cognitive attention, making it harder to focus. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2021) note that real-world noise is often overlooked in classroom settings, and Rahimi and Katal (2020) stress the need for authentic listening practice that includes such challenges.

The least challenging factor was relying on visual cues like facial expressions or body language (Mean = 2.72), suggesting they are helpful but not essential. Goh (2020) notes that visual support aids in interpreting context and emotions but isn't crucial for overall comprehension. Similarly, Siegel (2021) explains that while multimodal input enriches understanding, learners often prioritize auditory input in formal listening tasks.

Table 5 shows that the biggest challenge was listening in noisy environments (Mean = 3.00), highlighting the impact of external distractions on comprehension. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2021) note that background noise competes with auditory input, hindering message processing. Rahimi and Katal (2020) argue that noisy, real-world tasks are underrepresented in classrooms, leaving learners unprepared. Noise causes cognitive overload, reducing comprehension (Goh, 2020), so simulating noisy environments in learning could help learners develop better coping strategies.

The least challenging factor was relying on visual cues like facial expressions or body language (Mean = 2.72), suggesting that while helpful, they are not essential for comprehension. Goh (2020) notes that visual cues aid in interpreting emotions and clarifying ambiguity, but learners prioritize auditory input. Siegel (2021) adds that while multimodal input can support comprehension, it's less critical in formal educational settings where such cues are less common.

Table 6 shows that the highest reported learning experience was preparing for listening tasks by reviewing related vocabulary or background information (Mean = 3.28), suggesting that participants take a proactive approach. Vandergrift and Goh (2018) emphasize that pre-listening activities, such as reviewing vocabulary, reduce cognitive load and enhance comprehension. This aligns with Goh (2020) and best practices in language learning, which highlight the

importance of preparation for optimizing listening outcomes (Graham & Santos, 2022).

The lowest reported learning experience was reflecting on listening strengths and weaknesses (Mean = 2.82), indicating that participants placed less emphasis on self-reflection. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2021) highlight metacognitive reflection as a key strategy for improving comprehension, but many learners may not engage in it, missing opportunities to refine their listening strategies. This suggests a need for interventions that promote self-reflection and raise awareness of listening habits (Goh, 2020).

2. The strategies EFL students use to overcome their own challenges

The Participant A's experience highlights key strategies and challenges in listening comprehension, reflecting broader trends in language learning research. A notable challenge is understanding fast speech and unfamiliar accents, particularly British and Australian, which aligns with previous studies (Siegel, 2021; Field, 2021). Participant A's use of subtitles and repeated listening is consistent with effective strategies, as these help reinforce comprehension by offering visual support and repetition (Graham & Santos, 2022).

The participant uses cognitive strategies like focusing on keywords, predicting topics, and listening for intonation cues, which are effective for improving listening comprehension by helping learners process information, even when some details are missed (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018). Staying calm when missing speech parts, taking notes, and reviewing later demonstrates metacognitive awareness, crucial for managing cognitive load and enhancing comprehension (Goh, 2020).

Participant A highlights the value of regular, enjoyable listening practice, such as podcasts and shows on topics of interest. This aligns with recommendations that engaging, authentic materials improve listening skills (Graham & Santos, 2022). Content that is enjoyable and relevant boosts motivation, which is key for sustained language learning (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2021).

Participant A emphasizes the importance of enjoyable listening practice, like podcasts on interesting topics, which aligns with research showing that engaging materials enhance listening skills (Graham & Santos, 2022). Such content also boosts motivation, crucial for sustained language learning (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2021).

Participant B's experience reflects common challenges in listening comprehension, particularly with fast, informal native speech and word blending. This aligns with Field (2021), who identifies rapid speech and colloquial language as major hurdles for learners. To cope, Participant B uses strategies like subtitles and slowing down videos—tactics supported by Graham and Santos (2022) for enhancing comprehension through visual aid and focused listening.

Replaying videos without subtitles after initial viewing is a progressive strategy that helps learners test comprehension and reduce reliance on aids, supporting long-term listening improvement (Goh, 2020). Participant B also uses cognitive and metacognitive strategies—like predicting topics, focusing on keywords, and staying calm when missing parts—which help manage cognitive load and enhance understanding through contextual inference (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018).

Participant B's use of English songs, interviews, vlogs, and listening apps reflects a strong engagement with authentic materials. This aligns with recommendations to expose learners to varied accents and speech patterns to improve comprehension (Graham & Santos, 2022). Regularly engaging with diverse content helps build understanding of informal language and real-world communication.

Participant B's advice—to focus on main ideas, use subtitles strategically, and build a daily habit—echoes key research recommendations. These strategies promote motivation, gradual improvement, and emphasize consistency and patience in language learning (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2021).

In summary, Participant B's experience highlights effective strategies for improving listening comprehension, including exposure to diverse materials, use of cognitive and metacognitive techniques, and consistent practice.

Participant C's experience offers insight into strategies for handling fast speech and idiomatic language—common barriers in second-language listening (Field, 2021). Slowing down audio, using subtitles, and reviewing transcripts help learners process meaning at their own pace, reducing cognitive overload and supporting comprehension (Goh, 2020).

Participant C's focus on keywords and tone reflects effective cognitive strategies that help learners grasp the main idea without needing to understand every word. This approach supports listening efficiency by easing pressure and enhancing overall comprehension (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018).

When facing difficulties, Participant C stays calm, uses context, replays recordings, or asks for clarification—an approach aligned with metacognitive strategies. These techniques support self-regulation and problem-solving, helping learners stay focused and improve over time (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2021).

Participant C's routine of listening to podcasts and English shows reflects consistent exposure to authentic language. Research shows that engaging with diverse, interest-based content boosts comprehension by increasing familiarity with accents and speech patterns, while also enhancing motivation—crucial for long-term success (Graham & Santos, 2022; Vandergrift & Goh, 2018).

In conclusion, Participant C's strategies align with best practices in listening comprehension, using cognitive, metacognitive, and affective approaches to tackle challenges like fast speech, idiomatic language, and anxiety. Their method highlights the importance of consistency, varied content, and effective strategies for improving listening skills.

Participant D's strategies—using subtitles, slowing playback speed, and repeating tasks—effectively address challenges like strong accents, slang, and fast speech, which are common in language learning (Field, 2021). These techniques reduce cognitive overload by allowing learners to process speech at a manageable pace, improving comprehension without overwhelm (Goh, 2020).

Predicting content and focusing on tone, stress, and signal words aligns with cognitive strategies for improving listening comprehension. Vandergrift and Goh (2018) highlight the value of context cues like tone and stress, which help

learners follow the speaker's intent and argument, even without understanding every word.

Participant D's avoidance of pausing during listening tasks is a technique that encourages continuous processing of information, preventing learners from becoming overly reliant on frequent breaks. This is consistent with the idea of fostering "real-time" listening skills, which is essential for developing fluency. According to Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2021), continuously processing information without pausing can help learners develop better listening stamina and resilience, which are important skills for handling authentic listening tasks in the real world.

Furthermore, Participant D's practice of watching Netflix shows with subtitles, listening to TED Talks, and audiobooks aligns with the growing body of research that advocates for consistent exposure to diverse, authentic listening materials. Regular engagement with various accents, speech rates, and informal language provides learners with the necessary exposure to improve their comprehension skills (Graham & Santos, 2022). Listening to content that is both enjoyable and informative also boosts motivation, which is crucial for maintaining long-term language learning progress (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018).

Finally, Participant D's advice to gradually reduce reliance on subtitles is supported by research that suggests minimizing the use of subtitles over time can help learners improve their ability to understand spoken language in more authentic contexts (Siegel, 2021). This gradual reduction encourages learners to develop more independent listening skills and rely on context, prior knowledge, and linguistic cues to understand speech.

In conclusion, Participant D's strategies reflect a well-rounded and effective approach to overcoming common challenges in listening comprehension. By employing a combination of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies, they are able to enhance their listening skills and improve their ability to understand spoken English in a variety of contexts.

Participant E faces challenges with connected speech and contractions, often finding spoken English different from the written form. To improve, they

use subtitles, transcripts, repeated listening, and predict content based on the topic, focusing on keywords, tone, and transition signals. When unclear, they rely on context, continue listening, and revisit difficult sections with quick notes. They enjoy science, health podcasts, and documentaries, and recommend embracing repetition, avoiding overuse of translation, and selecting interesting content to stay motivated.

Participant E's strategies, such as using subtitles and repeated listening, align with research that emphasizes exposure to authentic spoken language to help learners internalize natural speech patterns (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018). Their use of metacognitive strategies, like predicting content and focusing on key linguistic features, enhances comprehension by reducing cognitive load and engaging active processing (Goh, 2020; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2021). By relying on context and taking quick notes, they follow best practices for managing comprehension gaps (Siegel, 2021; Graham & Santos, 2022). Engaging with authentic materials, such as podcasts and documentaries, also helps improve listening skills by exposing learners to different accents, speech rates, and technical vocabulary (Goh, 2020; Bloomfield et al., 2019). Finally, their advice on repetition and minimizing translation supports language learning by reinforcing skills and boosting fluency (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018; Siegel, 2021).

In conclusion, Participant E's mix of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies effectively helps them overcome listening challenges and improve their comprehension skills over time.

D. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the multifaceted challenges Indonesian EFL learners face in developing effective listening comprehension skills, particularly due to limited exposure to authentic English input and diverse accents. Factors such as fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and a reliance on L1 translation complicate the listening process, while cognitive and metacognitive strategies—like note-taking, prediction, and self-monitoring—emerge as valuable tools for improvement. However, institutional and instructional limitations often hinder the development of these skills. By examining both the obstacles and learner strategies, this

research offers practical insights for enhancing listening instruction and underscores the importance of fostering autonomous, strategy-based learning in EFL contexts.

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