



## Students' Difficulties in Listening Comprehension at a Senior High School in Medan

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Article history:</b> Received Accepted	<p>Difficulties in learning listening skills occur in students at school, especially in listening comprehension. The aim of this study was to examine students' difficulties in listening comprehension, based on the theory proposed by Hamouda in 2013. This research was conducted at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan in class X. Descriptive qualitative research was used as the method in this study. The subjects of the study were 20 students. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires. The results of the study revealed that the seven categories of difficulties existed in 16 items of the questionnaire. The finding showed the following percentages for each category: Based on the first category that consist of Items 1 and 2 (58%), and the second category that consist of Items 3 and 4 (61.5%), next the third category that consist of Items 5 and 6 (61%), the fourth category that consist of items 7 and 8 (58%). The fifth category that consist of items 9, 10, and 11 (94.5%), and the sixth category that consist of Items 12, 13, and 14 (98.5%), and finally, the seventh category that consist of Items 15 and 16 (75.5%).</p>
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## **INTRODUCTION**

English is the dominant language in all forms of global communication. The Indonesian Ministry of Education has realized the importance of English as a means of oral and written communication around the world, so the Indonesian Ministry of Education has integrated English as a compulsory subject that must start from junior high school to senior high school. As in SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan, English is one of the compulsory subjects in accordance with the curriculum that is still being implemented in that school, namely the 2013 curriculum. In line with the regulation, the Government of Indonesia through the Minister of Education and Culture issued decree number 24/2016 stating the Core Competencies and Basic Competencies of the 2013 Curriculum in Primary and Secondary Education. As an implication in the curriculum of primary, secondary and tertiary education, English is one of the subjects that must be given. Students must have language skills in learning. The four competencies in language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each of these skills is interrelated with each other.

In this study focused on listening skills, more specifically listening comprehension. In the 2013 curriculum (revised in 2017), the basic competencies of listening to functional texts are included in KD 4.4.1, 4.5.1, 4.7.1, 4.8, 4.9. That is: “menangkap makna secara kontekstual terkait fungsi sosial, struktur teks, dan unsur kebahasaan teks” (*capture meaning contextually related to social functions, text structure, and linguistic elements of texts*). *Menangkap Makna* has two different skills,

namely Reading and Listening, but in this study focused on listening skills. This means that listening comprehension is a skill that needs to be implemented when learning English, and it is also an important part of learning English. Listening is very important because it is the skill that is most often used in everyday life. In fact, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) explain that listening has a significant role in human life. Learning listening comprehension will allow us to improve our communication skills.

Hamouda (2013) defines listening comprehension as an interactive process in which the listener is involved in constructing meaning. Therefore, listening comprehension refers to the various processes for understanding and comprehending spoken language, processing information, and deriving meaning from oral communication. In the learning process, listening comprehension will greatly help students understand the topic or lesson being studied. Listening comprehension plays an important role because it serves as a foundation for various aspects of language acquisition, which include speaking, reading, and writing skills. Considering these four skills, the researcher chose listening as the focus of study in this study to find out the difficulties faced by students in listening comprehension.

Students who struggle with listening comprehension have difficulty grasping the meaning conveyed through audio, which in turn impairs their participation in class and hampers their language learning progress. As Rost said in Hien (2015), listening is very important because it provides language input. As an input skill, listening plays an important role in students' language development. Therefore, improving listening comprehension skills is essential for students to learn to listen.

Listening comprehension skills requires more attention to develop students' language. Listening Comprehension is considered the most difficult language skill in language classes because it requires more attention and concentration to understand the material. Moreover, listening comprehension can be stressful. Yang (2009) stated

in his study that students feel frustrated and helpless in listening. It can be a complex process that requires concentration, focus, and the ability to decode and interpret spoken language in real-time. Students may struggle with understanding different accents, rapid speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and the overall context of the conversation. That's why listening comprehension requires processes to complete the material or task.

This study utilizes seven indicators by Hamouda (2013) to analyze students' difficulties in listening comprehension at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan. They are, listening materials, linguistic features, lack of concentration, psychological characteristics, the listener, the speaker and physical settings. There are some difficulties experienced by tenth grade students of SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan based on preliminary observation. Students struggle with understanding the vocabulary and language complexity present in narrative texts, especially if the text contains figurative language or unfamiliar terms. Example In a narrative text, phrases like "the apple of my eye" or "raining cats and dogs" can pose challenges for students who are not familiar with these figurative language. Students also struggle to interpret the conjunction like: Long, convoluted sentences or the use of discourse markers like "meanwhile," "however," or "furthermore" can confuse students and disrupt their understanding of the narrative flow.

## **METHOD**

Descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze and to find the solution about the difficulties of listening comprehension. The researcher used observation and questionnaire to gain data. Observation was used to confirm students' answer about questionnaire. It was distributed to know the students' difficulties in listening comprehension at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan. Then, all of the result questionnaire were analyzed.

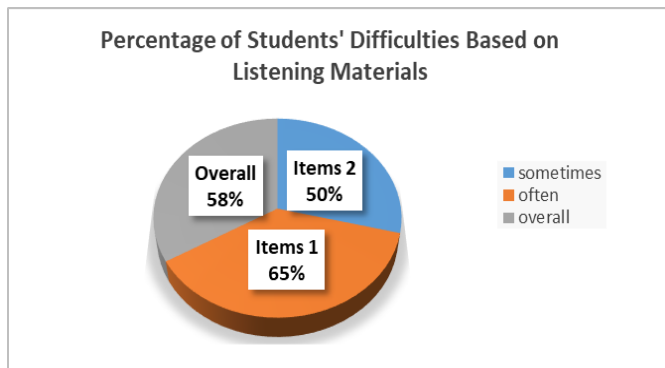
The data would be analyzed by applying three stages, namely interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), they are:

1. Data Condensation, data condensation involves selecting, simplifying, and transforming information from sources like questionnaire, interviews, and documents. By condensing student responses gathered during learning create a clear, usable set of data. This study specifically examines the difficulties students face in learning listening comprehension.
2. Data Display, data displays organize information to support decision-making by presenting it in various formats, such as charts, graphs, and flowcharts, allowing researchers to analyze and act on the findings effectively.
3. Drawing Conclusions/Verification, after data processing, researcher interpret the findings to conclude students' listening comprehension difficulties based on participant input and analysis stages.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings showed the following percentages for each category: Students' Difficulties Based on Listening Materials, Items 1 and 2 (58%), Students' Difficulties Based on Linguistic Features, Items 3 and 4 (61.5%), Students' Difficulties Based on Lack of Concentration, Items 5 and 6 (61%), Students' Difficulties Based on Psychological Characteristics, Items 7 and 8 (58.5%), Students' Difficulties Based on the Listener, Items 9, 10, and 11 (94.5%), Students' Difficulties Based on the Speaker, Items 12, 13, and 14 (98.5%), and finally, Students' Difficulties Based on Physical Settings, Items 15 and 16 (75.5%).

- Students' Difficulties Based on Listening Materials

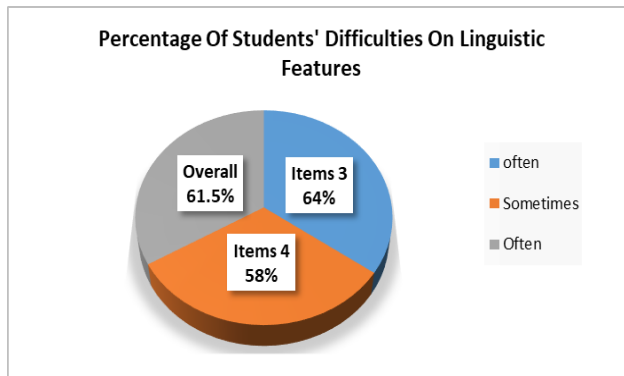


**Figure 1**

Based on figure 1 shows that the index percentage is 58%. According to the assessment interval, 58% is sometimes. The conclusion from the statements contained in this study regarding student difficulties based on listening material with statements from 20 students with an index of 65% means often. and 50% means

sometimes. This can be seen from the students' responses to the statement. The students stated that they found difficulty understanding listening texts with too many and familiar words, including jargon and items. They were also challenged to interpret the meaning of the long text.

- Students' Difficulties on Linguistic Features

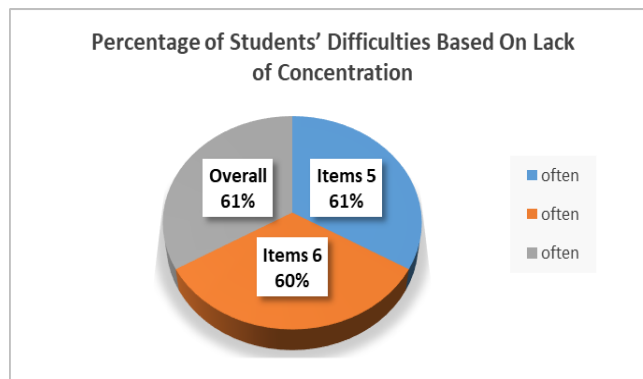


**Figure 2**

where students have difficulty when finding unfamiliar words.

Based on the figure 2 show that the index percentage is 61.5%. According to the rating interval, 61.5% is often. In conclusion, from the statements contained in this study regarding students' difficulties in linguistic features that of the 20 students with an index of 61.5% it means often. From the table, the highest percentage is 64% which is

- Students' Difficulties based on Lack Of Concentration



**Figure 3**

From the figure 3 show that the index percentage is 61%. According to the rating interval, 61% is often. In conclusion, from the statements contained in this study regarding students' difficulties with lack of concentration. Had difficulty concentrating when thinking about the meaning of new

words with a percentage of 60%, and could not concentrate due to poor recording quality with a percentage of 61%.

- Students' Difficulties on Psychological Characteristics

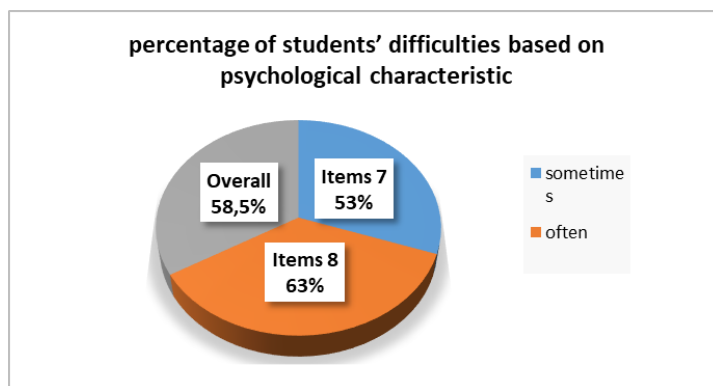


Figure 4

From figure 4 show that the index percentage is 58.5%. According to the rating interval, 58.5% is sometimes. In conclusion, from the statements contained in this study regarding students' difficulties on psychological characteristics with 2 statements from 20

students with index 58.5% means

sometimes. in the table shows that the percentage 63% the students feel disappointed if they are not really get into the oral text.



- Students' Difficulties Based on Listener

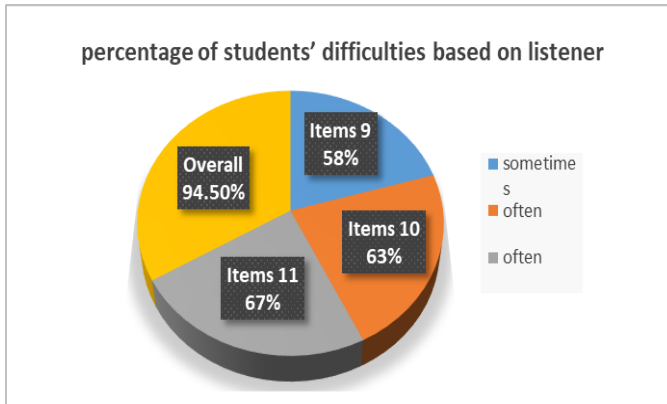


Figure 5

From the figure 5 show that the index percentage is 94.5%. According to the rating interval, 94.5% is always. In conclusion, from the statements contained in this study regarding students' difficulties term on the listener with 3 statements, the highest percentage is 67% with

statement find it difficult to listen to English without transcript.

- Students' Difficulties Based on Speaker

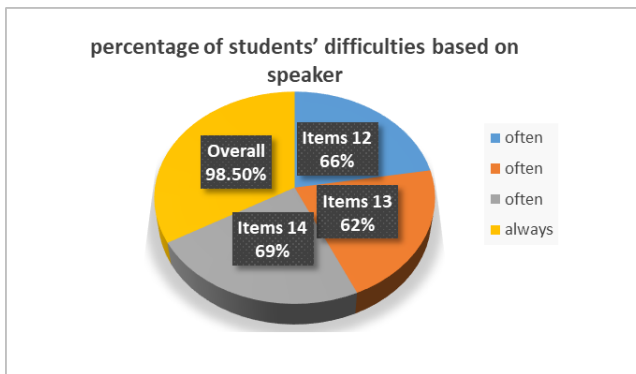
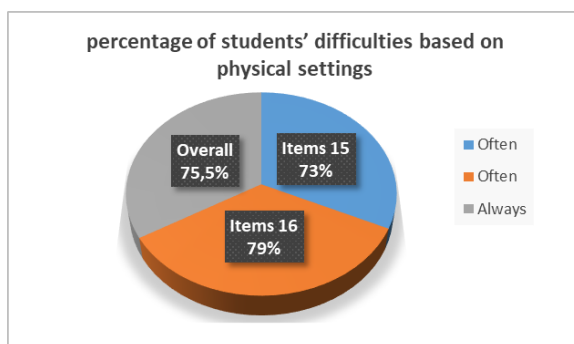


Figure 6

From the figure 6 show that the index percentage is 98.5%. According to the rating interval, 98.5% is always. In conclusion, from the statements contained in this study regarding students' difficulties term on the speaker with 3 statements. it shows that the highest

percentage is 69% with statement find it difficult to understand when the speaker speaks too fast.

- Students' Difficulties Based on Physical Settings



From the figure 7 show that the index percentage is 98.5%. According to the rating interval, 98.5% is always. In conclusion, from the statements contained in this study regarding students' difficulties term on physical settings with 2 statements. it shows that the highest percentage is 79% with statement due to the bad

recording quality or poor quality that affect students' hearing

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The research conducted identified seven categories of listening comprehension difficulties based on Hamouda's (2013) theory: listening materials, linguistic features, lack of concentration, psychological traits, the listener, the speaker, and physical settings. The study, which focused on understanding the listening challenges faced by tenth-grade students at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan, confirmed that all seven difficulty categories were represented across 16 questionnaire items. The findings revealed the following percentages for each category: Listening Materials, Items 1 and 2 (58%); Linguistic Features, Items 3 and 4 (61.5%); Lack of Concentration, Items 5 and 6 (61%); Psychological Characteristics, Items 7 and 8 (58.5%); Listener-Related Difficulties, Items 9, 10, and 11 (94.5%); Speaker-Related Difficulties, Items 12, 13, and 14 (98.5%); and Physical Settings, Items 15 and 16 (75.5%).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the result and discussion above, questionnaires were distributed in the classroom to identify the difficulties each student faced. Data analysis revealed seven categories of difficulties in listening comprehension: difficulties related to listening materials, linguistic features, lack of concentration, psychological characteristics, listeners, speakers, and physical settings. All these types of difficulties were identified in the research data collected through the questionnaires. The most dominant difficulty experienced by students was speaker-related problems, with a percentage of 98.5%. The least dominant difficulty was related to listening materials, with a percentage of 58%.

## **THE AUTHOR**

Uci Nurdiyani Saragi is the name of the author. She was born on May 7, 2001 in Tanjungbalai. She graduated from high school at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjung Balai in 2019. After graduating from high school, she enrolled in UINSU's Islamic Political Study Program. Furthermore, in 2020 she re-took the SBMPTN and took the English Education Study Program at UNIMED. She studied there from 2020 and earned her Sarjana Pendidikan degree in 2024.

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