

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' FOCUS ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION AT THE FOURTH SEMESTER OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM IN MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF KOTABUMI ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi fokus siswa dalam pemahaman mendengarkan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan 25 mahasiswa semester empat Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi Tahun Akademik 2025/2026. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, yang memungkinkan peneliti untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman, perspektif, dan hambatan yang dihadapi siswa selama proses mendengarkan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat dua kelompok utama faktor yang memengaruhi fokus siswa, yaitu faktor internal dan faktor eksternal. Faktor internal meliputi motivasi, kosakata terbatas, kurangnya fokus, dan pengetahuan sebelumnya. Siswa cenderung lebih fokus ketika materi menarik, relevan dengan kehidupan sehari-hari mereka, dan sesuai dengan minat mereka. Sebaliknya, kosakata terbatas dan motivasi rendah dapat menyebabkan hilangnya fokus. Sementara itu, faktor eksternal meliputi aksen pembicara, kecepatan berbicara, kejelasan penyampaian, dan lingkungan belajar. Aksen yang tidak familiar, kecepatan berbicara yang terlalu cepat, dan kondisi kelas yang kurang kondusif terbukti menjadi hambatan utama untuk mempertahankan fokus. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa metode penyampaian dosen yang menarik dan penggunaan media pembelajaran yang tepat dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Jadi, dapat disimpulkan bahwa fokus dalam pemahaman mendengarkan dipengaruhi oleh kombinasi faktor internal dan eksternal yang saling terkait. Oleh karena itu, strategi pembelajaran yang efektif dan lingkungan pembelajaran yang mendukung diperlukan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mendengarkan siswa secara optimal.

Kata Kunci: Pemahaman mendengarkan, Fokus siswa, Faktor internal, Faktor eksternal, Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris

Abstract: This research aims to analyze the factors influencing students' focus in listening comprehension. The research used a qualitative descriptive approach with 25 fourth-semester students of the English Language Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi Academic Year 2025/2026. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing researchers to explore students' experiences, perspectives, and obstacles encountered during the listening process. The results showed that there are two main groups of factors influencing student focus, internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, limited vocabulary, lack of focus, and previous knowledge. Students tend to be more focused when the material is interesting, relevant to their daily lives, and suits their interests. Conversely, limited vocabulary and low motivation can lead to loss of focus. Meanwhile, external factors include speaker's accent, speaking speed, clarity of delivery, and learning environment. Unfamiliar accent, speaking speed that is too fast, and classroom conditions that are less conducive proved to be the main obstacles to maintaining focus. This research also found that interesting teacher delivery methods and appropriate learning media can increase student involvement. So, it can be concluded that focus in listening comprehension is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors that are interrelated. Therefore, effective learning strategies and a supportive learning environment are needed to improve students' listening ability optimally.

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Keyword: *Listening comprehension, Student focus, Internal factors, External factors, English learning*

I. INTRODUCTION

Listening is a basic skill in language learning that is often considered easier than speaking, reading, or writing. However, in practice, many students have difficulty understanding what they hear. In the learning process at university, listening skills play a crucial role in developing communication skills and understanding information. According to Su et al. (2021), students as individuals who are in the intellectual development phase are required to be able to understand the material presented through verbal communication, whether in class, seminars, or group discussions.

However, not all students are able to maintain their focus when listening to learning materials, which can have a negative impact on their understanding and academic achievement. This phenomenon

also occurred in the fourth semester of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi. In several listening comprehension class sessions, some students appeared unable to maintain focus throughout the material, resulting in incomplete information acquisition. This situation indicates factors, both internal and external, that influence their ability to maintain focus during the listening process. Episiasi et al. (2023) stated that, this difficulty does not only come from the language factor itself, but also from various other factors that affect students' focus when listening. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence students' focus in listening is important to learn.

According to Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016), one of the factors that influences students' focus in listening is internal factors, such as interest, motivation, and

mental condition. Students who have a high interest in the material being discussed tend to be more focused on listening. Conversely, lack of interest or motivation can cause attention disorders. In addition, mental factors, such as levels of fatigue, stress, or emotional disturbances, can also affect students' ability to concentrate while listening. Supported by the opinion of Kurniawati (2019), external factors also play an important role in influencing students' focus. The learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom, can affect concentration. For example, noise, distractions from friends, or inappropriate use of technology can interfere with students' concentration. In addition, the teaching methods used by lecturers, such as the use of multimedia, group discussions, and active methods, can affect the extent to which students can maintain their concentration in the listening process.

This loss of focus phenomenon becomes more evident when students encounter listening materials that use native speaker speaking speeds or unfamiliar accents. Some students report difficulty understanding key words, especially if the vocabulary used is unfamiliar. This condition is exacerbated by distractions in the learning environment, such as noise from outside the classroom or interruptions from peers. As a result, even

though the material is presented comprehensively, students' comprehension of the message is suboptimal, impacting their learning outcomes. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of focus in listening comprehension skill. Without proper focus, the process of understanding, interpreting, and remembering information will be disrupted. Given that listening comprehension is the foundation for other language skills, poor listening focus can directly impact students' speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Therefore, identifying factors that influence student focus is not only academically relevant but also crucial for developing more effective English learning strategies.

Supported by the opinion of Yiquan (2016), current advances in technology and teaching methods offer significant opportunities to improve students' listening skill. However, the use of new media and strategies will be less than optimal if students are unable to maintain their focus (Ikhsanudin et al., 2019). This means that before improving the quality of learning materials and media, lecturers need to first understand the factors that cause students to lose or maintain focus while listening. By understanding these factors, teachers can adjust their learning approaches to better suit student characteristics (Kharzhevskaya et al., 2019).

Previous research has identified various factors that influence listening skill, ranging from learning motivation and psychological state, language proficiency, to the quality of instruction and the learning environment. However, most of this research has focused on listening comprehension skill in general, rather than specifically on students' focus during the listening process. Focus is a key prerequisite for successfully understanding spoken messages. This research gap provides an opportunity for further research.

Based on the background explained previously and the absence of previous research related to discussing the focus of listening comprehension, the researcher will conduct this research to fill the gap and provide novelty related to the students' focus topic. Therefore, the researcher will conduct a research with the title "Factors Affecting Students' Focus on Listening Comprehension at The Fourth Semester of English Education Study Program in Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi Academic Year 2025/2026."

II. METHOD

The research method in this research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the factors that influence students'

focus in listening comprehension. This research aims to explore various internal and external factors that can affect students' focus when listening to material, both in the context of English learning and other listening activities.

According to Fadli (2021), this approach allows researchers to gain deeper insight into the obstacles or factors that affect students' focus in listening comprehension, such as noise in the classroom environment, motivation levels, or the influence of the learning media used. In line with Adlini et al. (2022), by using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research can provide a clearer picture of the real situation in the field and help develop more effective learning strategies to improve students' focus in listening activities. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the development of better teaching practices and can help overcome problems that students often face in improving their listening skill.

In this research, the instrument used was a semi-structured interview. This instrument was chosen because it allowed researcher to obtain in-depth data while remaining flexible and reflecting the respondents' real-life experiences. Makbul (2021) stated that, semi-structured interviews used pre-prepared main question guides, yet still allowed researchers to explore the answers further. Interviews were

conducted face-to-face in Indonesian to ensure respondents felt comfortable expressing their experiences. Interview questions were designed to explore internal factors, such as motivation, interest, and prior knowledge, as well as external factors, such as the learning environment, speaker clarity, accent, and speaking speed.

The primary subjects of this research were 25 student participants at the fourth semester of English Education Study Program in Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi academic year 2025/2026. To maximize interview effectiveness while maintaining data quality, the researcher developed an interview schedule by dividing the 25 students into 5 interview sessions. Each session involved 5 students in day, allowing the entire interview process to be completed within 5 days.

In this research, the instrument validation process was carried out through expert judgment involving Ms. Sinta Nova, S.Pd., M.A., as an expert validator and Head of the Study Program of English Education at Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi. She assessed the suitability of the content, the clarity of the question formulation, and its relevance to the research objectives.

Based on the validation results, the instrument was declared valid because each item contained indicators that represented the main factors in listening focus, such as motivation and interest, vocabulary mastery,

lack of focus, prior knowledge, speakers' accent, speed rate, speaker clarity, and the learning environment. Data validity was ensured through a rigorous data validation process using member checking to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information obtained from participants. After the interviews, the researcher reconfirmed the transcripts and data interpretations with the respondents to ensure that each statement was recorded and interpreted correctly. This step was taken to avoid misperceptions and increase data credibility.

In this research, the researcher used the Miles and Huberman data analysis model because it is very useful in qualitative research, especially to understand the various factors that influence students' focus on listening comprehension. According to Thalib (2022) this model includes 3 main stages, namely data collection, data reduction, and data conclusion. In applying the Miles and Huberman model, the data analysis process is carried out iteratively and continues from the beginning of data collection until the research is completed.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

This chapter presents findings based on data obtained through semi-structured interviews with the fourth semester of

English Education Study Program in Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi academic year 2025/2026. The data presented in this chapter were obtained from interviews with 25 students selected as research participants. Through descriptive qualitative analysis, the researcher attempts to describe the views, experiences, and obstacles faced by students during the listening process, both originating from internal and external factors.

In this section, the researcher not only identified factors influencing students' focus in listening comprehension but also attempted to determine which factors were most dominant. To determine this, the researcher conducted an analysis by observing the tendency of each factor to emerge in the interview data. The researcher categorized all respondents' responses into internal and external factors. Each statement made by respondents was analyzed and coded based on predetermined indicators. This coding process aimed to facilitate the researcher in assessing the frequency of each factor's occurrence. The researcher counted how often each factor was mentioned by respondents. The factor that appeared most frequently and was most widely perceived by students was considered the most dominant factor.

Based on the analyzed interview results, the most influential factor in student focus during listening comprehension is

speaker clarity. Nearly all respondents stated that clear pronunciation, appropriate intonation, and a concise sentence structure significantly helped them maintain focus while listening. When a speaker speaks with clear articulation, students can understand each word and the context of the conversation without having to repeat the audio repeatedly. Conversely, if the speakers' pronunciation is unclear, students tend to lose focus and have difficulty understanding the meaning of the material being presented.

In addition to speaker clarity, interview results also indicated that a conducive learning environment significantly impacts students' ability to maintain focus. Many respondents stated that a quiet classroom free from noise distractions and with good audio quality significantly facilitates optimal comprehension. Adequate lighting and a well-organized classroom atmosphere were also considered important in creating a comfortable learning environment. Therefore, external factors such as a quiet learning environment and adequate audio support facilities significantly determine students' success in maintaining their focus during listening activities.

Of all the factors studied, it can be concluded that speaker clarity is the most dominant factor influencing students' focus on listening comprehension. This factor is

considered the most significant because it is directly related to students' ability to capture and understand spoken messages. Without clarity in delivery, even highly motivated students will struggle to follow the material. These results emphasize the importance of clear pronunciation and appropriate intonation in listening comprehension activities, and the need for lecturers to consider these aspects in their teaching practices.

Discussion

The findings of this research indicate that students' focus on listening comprehension is influenced by both internal and external factors. These findings are closely related to research conducted by Aung Myo Hein in 2020 entitled "Factors Affecting Undergraduate EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension: A Case Study at YUFL." Hein found that speech rate and length of listening material were the most dominant factors affecting students' listening comprehension, followed by limited vocabulary and unfamiliar accent. Furthermore, the research revealed that concentration problems, limited background knowledge, and environmental distractions also contributed to students' listening difficulties. Similarities between the two studies can be seen in the presence of common factors such as limited vocabulary, prior knowledge, concentration difficulties,

speaker accent, speech rate, and the learning environment. These similarities indicate that listening comprehension challenges experienced by EFL learners tend to occur across various contexts and educational institutions. Despite these similarities, these studies also reveal some differences. In Heins' research, primarily focused on factors influencing listening comprehension in general, while this research specifically explored factors influencing students' focus during the listening process.

Based on these findings, it can be interpreted that student focus in listening comprehension is shaped by the interaction between internal readiness and external learning conditions. Even students with adequate vocabulary knowledge can lose focus when faced with an unsupportive environment or unclear audio input. Conversely, external challenges can often be minimized when students have strong motivation, sufficient background knowledge, and a genuine interest in the topic. Therefore, improving listening comprehension must involve a balanced approach that addresses both linguistic competence and factors that maintain student focus. This interpretation strengthens the argument that successful listening is a multidimensional process that requires cognitive, psychological, and environmental support.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that students' focus in listening comprehension is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. These factors interact with each other and determine how well students are able to maintain focus and understand the listening material presented during the learning process.

The findings regarding the main factors influencing students' focus in listening comprehension indicate that there are two main categories of factors that influence student focus. Internal factors consist of motivation and interest, limited vocabulary, lack of focus, and prior knowledge or experience. Meanwhile, external factors also play a significant role in influencing student focus. These factors include the speaker's accent, speech rate, speaker clarity, and the learning environment.

Regarding the most influential factors affecting students' focus in listening comprehension, this research found that

speaker clarity and the learning environment play a significant role in maintaining student focus. Most participants stated that they were able to focus better when clear pronunciation, appropriate intonation, and concise sentence structure significantly helped them maintain focus while listening. Meanwhile, a quiet classroom free from noise distractions can help students focus optimally on understanding what is being conveyed.

In conclusion, students' focus on listening comprehension is a complex phenomenon influenced by various interrelated factors. Improving listening comprehension requires not only the development of language skills such as vocabulary mastery, but also the creation of a supportive learning environment and the implementation of teaching strategies that can increase student motivation and engagement. Therefore, lecturers must consider both internal and external factors to help students achieve better listening comprehension and more effective learning outcomes.

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